

Active-Learning Revision Clinics for the Intensive-Writing Classroom



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OVERVIEW



OBJECTIVES

- Provide instructors with active-learning based lesson plans designed to teach concrete revision strategies.
- Empower students to become autonomous editors of their own and others' writing by addressing their skill gaps in identifying weak, underperforming writing and revising it for strategic impact.

APPROACH

We believe teaching grammar, syntax, and the fundamentals of composition shouldn't be boring. Quite the opposite! It should be *active, engaging, empowering*.

Most students, whether they consciously articulate it or not, want to vanquish their writing anxiety. They want to develop confidence in their ability to compose and revise strong prose that will help them thrive in the workplace. These students, however, enter writing-intensive college courses with an increasingly-limited foundation in composition knowledge. While they may have "written a lot" in previous high school and college classes, few have taken classes **grounded in teaching the mechanics and fundamentals necessary to break down writing, diagnose and articulate underperforming elements, and strategically implement revisions.**

This kind of instruction takes time and careful scaffolding. We have, therefore, **designed each lesson as a series** that carefully moves students through the progression of Bloom's taxonomy.

Applying Bloom's Taxonomy to Writing Instruction

KNOWING	UNDERSTANDING	APPLYING	ANALYZING	EVALUATING	CREATING
Students demonstrate basic recall of specific composition terms & functions. They can recognize, define, label, and locate grammatical and syntactical functions on quizzes and in examples. They can describe the basic building blocks of writing.	Students understand relationships between composition functions. They can organize, describe, classify, contrast, and illustrate the way distinct concepts work together to construct meaningful writing. They can see the way micro- and macro-level choices relate.	Students can solve problems in new contexts by applying composition concepts. They can thoughtfully employ techniques for drafting, articulate choices, experiment with options, and identify effective writing in terms of audience and purpose.	Students can critically examine writing (their own and others'), breaking it into components. They can dissect sentences and paragraphs, diagnose relationships, deconstruct syntax, distinguish underperforming elements, and prioritize interventions.	Students can evaluate the effectiveness of a piece of writing. They can assess specific choices and constructs, appraise relationships, determine likely outcomes/responses, critique current execution, and recommend specific revisions.	Students can compile information to generate new solutions . They can revise to improve micro- and macro-level execution, implement revision plans, compose new structures, craft sophisticated sentences and paragraphs, and deliver effective final drafts.



This movement fosters deep, durable learning – the kind students can access and apply in multiple contexts long after completing the course. Each series begins with lower-order thinking skills focused on laying a foundation, for instance, learning key composition terminology and labeling specific functions. Students then build on this foundation through increasingly complex activities that require higher-order thinking skills as they (individually and in collaboration) apply their learning to new contexts, connect discrete skills into new patterns, and produce increasingly refined writing.

The lesson plans, templates, and accompanying notes we provide are **rooted in active learning pedagogy** – the philosophy that students acquire skills more effectively when they engage directly in the learning process in a hands-on way. Even the reading assignments require students to do more than simply skim and consume. Immediately, they must **do something**: practice, experiment, and implement this newly acquired knowledge.

As each series progresses, we strive to get students moving. Sometimes that means moving in space – for example, moving students around the room or giving them tactile objects to move as they organize paragraphs. Other times the movement is intellectual, requiring students to shift between skills or positions – for instance, asking them to track the function of different grammatical elements or requiring them to argue different sides of a debate. Still other times the movement involves technology, moving students between high-tech and low-tech tools as they work with a piece of writing. These various movements engage students in the discrete skills and larger processes required for strategic writing and revision. Such engagement fosters agility and adaptability, which encodes the learning in more meaningful, durable ways.

ASSESSMENT

Within each series, we offer suggestions for assessing student learning and student work, ranging from simple classroom assessment techniques (CATs) and low-stakes evaluations to slightly-heftier point values and focused rubrics. We also offer a section at the end outlining evaluation tools – such as pre-tests and writing prompts – that instructors can use to assess the overall effectiveness of implementing these lesson plans in the course.

OUR REQUEST

We invite instructors to freely use and adapt these materials. We simply ask, in the spirit of collaboration, that you share your stories, innovations, and results with us, either formally or informally.

Series 1 – CLARITY & CONCISION CLINIC

Subject, Verb, Object



PURPOSE

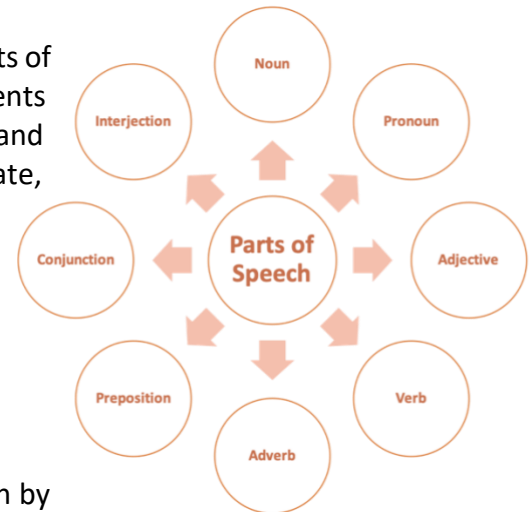
Students in writing-intensive courses often struggle to identify the parts of speech. Without a working knowledge of these building blocks, students lack an entry point for diagnosing the specific elements undermining the clarity and concision in their writing.

This series focuses on the three most fundamental elements of a sentence: Subject, Verb, & Object. The series moves students along Bloom’s taxonomy by asking them to identify and classify parts of a sentence and then to reorganize, evaluate, and generate new sentences.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the activity, students should be able to

- identify a sentence’s subject, object, and verbs (including action, linking, & helping)
- revise the sentence for greater clarity and concision by choosing more precise verbs and shifting the syntax to clarify the relationship between subject and object



DESCRIPTION & STEPS

PRE-CLASS ASSIGNMENT

STEP 1: Reading

First, we suggest assigning out-of-class reading(s) addressing the basic parts of speech and focusing attention on **nouns** and **verbs**. If your course has a required textbook that includes a chapter on grammar, assign that. Otherwise (or in addition), you might assign these:

- **Grammar Revolution** – [The Eight Parts of Speech Are Awesome](#)
“What is a Noun?” → Subjects, Direct Objects & Indirect Objects
“What is a Verb?”
- **Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)** – [Parts of Speech Overview](#)
- **TED Ed** – Helen Sword’s [Beware of Nominalizations \(AKA Zombie Nouns\)](#)

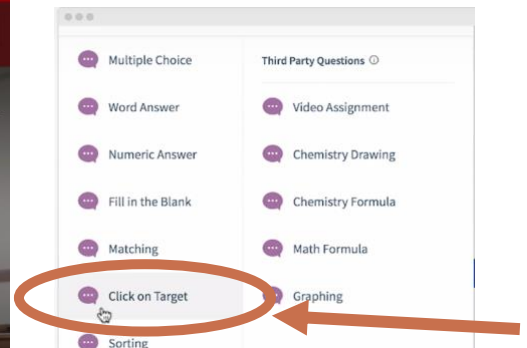
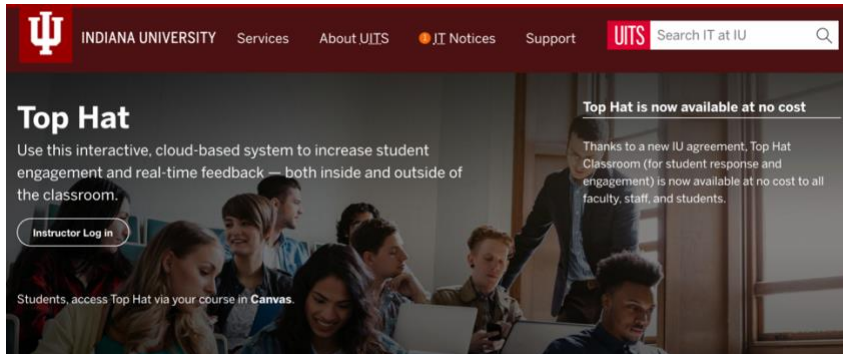


TEACHER’S NOTE

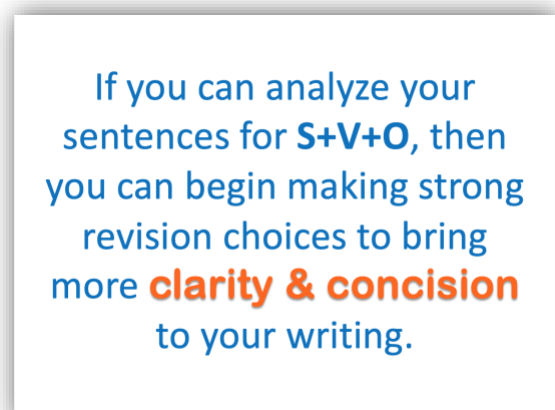
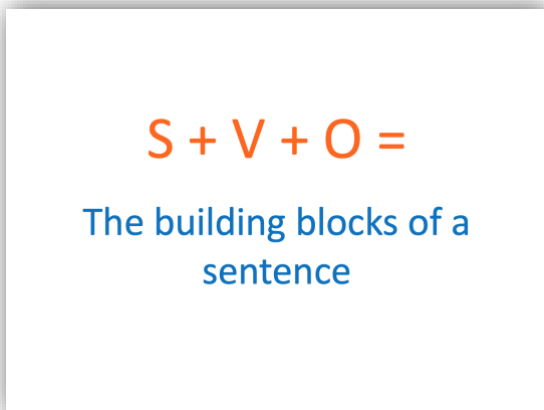
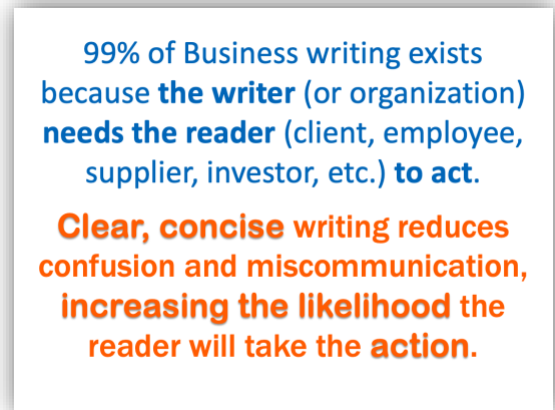
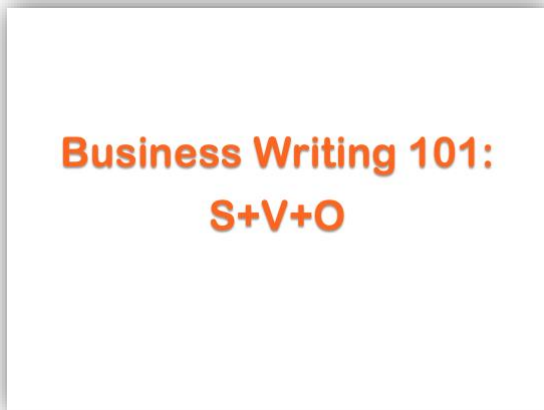
For hybrid classes, Steps #1-2 can be expanded as an online module. Using the resources above, instructors can also create their own discipline-specific parts-of-speech examples.

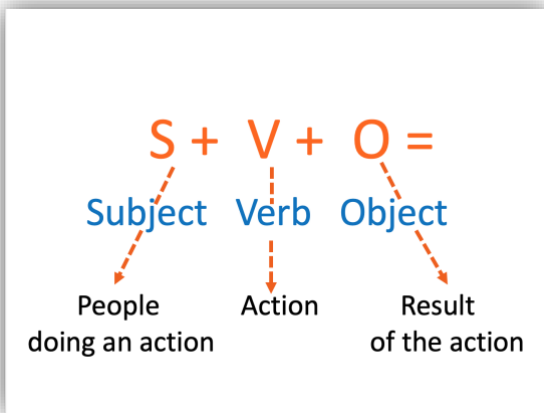
STEP 2: Online Activity

After the reading, students complete an activity in [Top Hat](#).



To create the activity, instructors load a set of Power Point slides into Top Hat. We suggest beginning with slides reviewing SVO and its importance to revision, followed by slides with sample sentences **inserted into them as JPG images**. (These cannot be typed sentences; they **must be images** in order for the click-on-target function to work). The slides might look like the following. You can find copies of these slides [here](#).





In early drafts, the **S+V+O** can be unnecessarily difficult for the reader to quickly locate, requiring revision.

In this sentence, taken from a proposal to a gluten-free food-manufacturing company, use your mouse to click on the **subject**

“Despite the fact that the gluten-free industry has been increased and expanded over recent years, people who have food allergies do not have enough food options to choose from because food allergy incidents are still on the rise substantially.”

Now use your mouse to click on the **object**

“Despite the fact that the gluten-free industry has been increased and expanded over recent years, people who have food allergies do not have enough food options to choose from because food allergy incidents are still on the rise substantially.”

Now use your mouse to click on **ALL** of the **verbs** (including action, linking, & helping)

“Despite the fact that the gluten-free industry has been increased and expanded over recent years, people who have food allergies do not have enough food options to choose from because food allergy incidents are still on the rise substantially.”

In our next class, we’ll analyze everyone’s choices. For now, complete this activity by posting a revision of this sentence to Canvas.

“Despite the fact that the gluten-free industry has been increased and expanded over recent years, people who have food allergies do not have enough food options to choose from because food allergy incidents are still on the rise substantially.”



ASSESSMENT

Consider treating this step as a low-stakes assessment. Award minimal points using a “3 buckets” rubric. (5pts – Strong, 4pts – Effective, 3pts – Needs Development)
This could be based on either participation or quality.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

STEP 1: Discussion [20 min]

Begin class debriefing the homework (or hybrid/asynchronous activity). You'll likely notice (and can guide students in noticing):

- some phrasing such as long dependent clauses can make locating the subject of a sentence difficult
- sometimes writers use extraneous verbs and nominalizations, making it difficult to quickly locate the central action of a sentence

As the examples of the click-on-target activity below demonstrate, students will not unanimously click on the appropriate subject and/or all the possible verbs. We suggest you lead a brief discussion using the results students generated in activity. For instance, ask students: "Which of the two options is the subject?" or "Did we miss any potential verbs?"

In this sentence, taken from a proposal to a gluten-free food-manufacturing company, use your mouse to click on the **subject**

"Despite the fact that the gluten-free industry has been increased and expanded over recent years, people who have food allergies do not have enough food options to choose from because food allergy incidents are still on the rise substantially."

Now use your mouse to click on ALL of the **verbs** (including action, linking, & helping)

"Despite the fact that the gluten-free industry has been increased and expanded over recent years, people who have food allergies do not have enough food options to choose from because food allergy incidents are still on the rise substantially."

After debriefing the homework, give students an example revision. This could be one of the revisions they submitted for homework or your own (such as the one below). If time allows, you can have students "click on target" this new revision in Top Hat. Either way, discuss the revision by guiding students to identify how the revision eliminated repetition and vague descriptions in favor of clear word choices and concise phrasing and arrangement.

Possible Revision

"Although the gluten-free industry has recently expanded, consumers with food allergies still have limited options."

STEP 2: Interactive Lecture [20 min]

Based on available course materials and priorities, we suggest leading a brief and **highly-interactive** lecture (perhaps using Top Hat's interactive questions) helping students review:

- the parts of speech, particularly emphasizing the subject position and verbs (including nominalizations, action verbs, linking verbs, and helping verbs)
- that placing the Subject & Verb close together (and often at the beginning of the sentence) aids clarity
- the way extraneous verbs, prepositions, and vague descriptions introduce confusion
- the way clauses and punctuation (such as commas and semi-colons) can help organize information in more complex sentences
- the importance of approaching these building blocks strategically so that writers support skimmability and make documents reader friendly (increasing the odds readers will understand and take action)

STEP 3: Revision Activity [25 min]

Put students into teams (we suggest teams of 3 to aid equal and active participation). Give teams access to a document (via Canvas or Google Docs) with a set of muddy sentences similar to the previous activity (see Appendix A or the [slide deck](#) for a larger version of the example below). In the document, give them **two copies** of this set. Ask them to analyze the first copy by highlighting for each sentence the Subject, Verb, and Object. For instance:

What's the subject? (Actor)

What's the action?

What's the result?

Next, ask teams to revise the sentences by the end of class. They can keep, change, and/or rearrange as much of the text as they want to more clearly and concisely deliver the content.

Your Turn! As a Team, Revise.

The current partnership between your company, Enjoy Life Foods, and Disney has been very successful, but we believe this partnership is not currently being fully optimized as much as it can. The good news is that optimizing this partnership will require only minimal costs and negotiation to bring it to its fullest potential. In order to properly and successfully expand upon the current partnership with Disney, a three-phase plan will be implemented. This three-phase plan includes: product expansion in the current American parks, bring products to the Euro Disney park, and adding product promotion at the annual Disney Marathon.



ASSESSMENT

Consider treating this step as a medium-stakes assessment. Award enough points to motivate quality work and hold students accountable. See Appendix B for an example.

POSSIBLE CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES (CATs)

In addition to assessing the quality of the revision work, instructors can also implement CATs to assess student learning, including the following suggestions:

- Before students leave, give them 5 minutes to write/type an “exit slip” reflecting on one **specific strategy** they learned that day, which they didn’t have before, for tackling sentence-level revision.
- For homework, students must individually insert their team’s revision into a Word document or Google doc and **annotate 5 changes** by inserting comments explaining what changed and why they consider the change effective.

POSSIBLE SEMESTER SCAFFOLDING

The first time that instructors implement this activity, we suggest using **content the current students have not authored** (i.e., giving them already-written material to dissect and revise). Using content similar to that which they will eventually generate for the course but that **is not actually their own** allows students to work with something familiar and on-subject but with an **objective distance** that lowers anxiety and increases their ability to be critical.




This activity can be implemented multiple times over the semester and used, in later iterations, to revise student-authored work. For instance, students can partner, swap a set of their own sentences, and then mark up the partner’s draft with highlights and revision suggestions. As another example, the instructor could pull sentences from team-written drafts and drop them as images in Top Hat for the class to mark up and offer revision suggestions. There are a variety of ways to apply this kind of activity to guide students in focusing on a piece of writing, identifying its parts, and then reworking and rearranging for greater clarity.

 APPENDIX A

SAMPLE PARAGRAPH FOR REVISION:

The current partnership between your company, Enjoy Life Foods, and Disney has been very successful, but we believe this partnership is not currently being fully optimized as much as it can. The good news is that optimizing this partnership will require only minimal costs and negotiation to bring it to its fullest potential. In order to properly and successfully expand upon the current partnership with Disney, a three-phase plan will be implemented. This three-phase plan includes: product expansion in the current American parks, bring products to the Euro Disney park, and adding product promotion at the annual Disney Marathon.

 APPENDIX B

Sample Specifications Grading Rubric			
Trait	Very Good 5pts	Satisfactory 4pts	Needs Development 3pts
Clarity meaning is clear and direct; sentences are not likely to confuse or miscommunicate			
Concision revision cuts all vagueness and repetition in favor of dense, meaningful constructions			
Verbs revision cuts extraneous, weak verbs in favor of active, precise verbs that do a lot of work			
TOTAL SCORE: ____/15pts			

Series 2 – COHERENCE CLINIC

Organizing Arguments and Evidence



PURPOSE

Undergraduate students typically understand the need for research and evidence to back their arguments. However, many students do not understand the need to select and organize that evidence to fit the needs of their specific purpose, audience, and context.

This series of active-learning exercises focuses on selecting and organizing evidence to create a coherent argument. In addition, the series develops and refines critical thinking as students design a persuasive argument for both sides of a controversy. The series moves students along Bloom’s taxonomy from selecting and classifying evidence to constructing and defending a new argument.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this series, students should be able to

- marshal evidence in support of their own argument
- articulate the thinking behind an opponent’s argument and counter-evidence
- generate a convincing argument that also addresses the opponent’s concerns

DESCRIPTION & STEPS

PRE-CLASS ASSIGNMENT

Ask students to download and read at least three of these [Vaping Articles](#). To provide accountability and increase preparation for the next class, require students to highlight the most persuasive evidence in each article and then upload the three highlighted articles to Canvas. Ask students to come to the next meeting prepared to explain their opinion on the following question based on specific evidence: **Should IU keep its current policy prohibiting the using of e-cigarettes (vaping) on campus?**

“Since January 1, 2008, all IU campuses have had an individually tailored policy that provides for a smoke- or tobacco-free campus” (Indiana University). Currently, the ban on smoke and tobacco includes e-cigarettes.



TEACHER’S NOTE

Before students attempt this assignment, explain that they will be asked to read about a controversial issue, take a position, and outline arguments for both sides. The culmination of this series will be a paragraph graded on its strategic use of evidence supporting a claim. Depending on desired learning outcomes and any time constraints, teachers may skip requiring students to read the linked articles and instead provide them with the Vaping Evidence Sheet in Appendix A.

DAY-ONE CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

STEP 1: Quick Write and Lineup Activity [15-20 min]

Before a traditional class, designate five stations in the classroom, preferably in a line such as along a white board or wall. Use (or adapt) the Likert scale below:

1	2	3	4	5
Yes!	Probably Yes	Can't Decide	Probably No	No!

Position Quick Write [5-8 min]

Begin class with students seated and ready to write. Should IU keep its current policy that prohibits the use of e-cigarettes (vaping) on campus? Ask the students to write briefly their answer to the question and provide supporting reasons. Tell students that this writing will be used for an upcoming class activity and will not be collected. Students should focus on capturing their thoughts and not worry about grammar or neatness. [Do not discuss the readings before the Quick Write. It should capture students' initial and individual views.]

Lineup Activity/Take a Stand [10 min]

Ask students to stand up and move to the classroom location of the Likert scale number that reflects their position on this topic. Ask a handful of students to explain the number they chose. Then pair each student with a partner at least 2 positions away (5 with a 3, 2, or 1, etc.). Ideally, form partnerships of people with **divergent opinions** on this topic. If students cluster together around similar positions, consider assigning students to adopt (temporarily) a position they do not actually hold.



TEACHER'S NOTE

For hybrid classes, introduce the controversy through a module or via video. Instead of a physical lineup, consider an online polling tool such as Canvas Survey, Canvas Poll, or Top Hat. Have students complete Quick Writes outside of class.

STEP 2: Partner Outline Activity [30-35 min]

Have students re-seat themselves in partnerships. Explain that to marshal evidence is to organize it strategically and to craft a persuasive argument for a particular purpose, audience, and context. For this assignment, tell students to assume the following:

Purpose: either support or challenge the current IU e-cigarette/vaping policy

Audience: IU Board of Trustees (including two members with ties to Altria, the parent company of Philip Morris and one of the world's largest producers of tobacco products)

Context: The Alliance to Promote Healthier Choices (a student organization that favors alternatives to traditional smoking) has proposed changing the current IU policy to allow vaping on campus, and the Board of Trustees has invited input from students

Your Role: as an IU student, provide brief written input to the Board of Trustees

Using the format below, have the students work together in their pairs to **outline two separate arguments**: one to keep and one to not keep the current IU vaping policy. Although students may have strong opinions one way or the other, in order to understand and address their opponents' concerns, they should prepare to defend either position. Explain that this pre-writing process will help them plan more persuasive paragraphs and draft them more quickly.

DUAL OUTLINE			
Topic Sentence: IU should keep the current policy that prohibits vaping on campus.		Topic Sentence: IU should <u>not</u> keep the current policy but instead should allow vaping on campus.	
	Evidence:		Evidence:
	Reasoning:		Reasoning:
	Evidence:		Evidence:
	Reasoning:		Reasoning:
	Evidence:		Evidence:
	Reasoning:		Reasoning:
	Evidence:		Evidence:
	Reasoning:		Reasoning:

Using their highlighted evidence or the Vaping Evidence Sheet, lead a discussion:

- Which pieces of evidence are most persuasive?
- Which pieces seem weak, irrelevant, or outside the scope of the argument?

Provide time for students to select the most relevant and persuasive evidence from their reading or the Vaping Evidence Sheet. Then continue the discussion:

- What is the most strategic order for the evidence on one side? The other side? How are they similar or different?

To sequence the evidence for each of the two separate arguments, students should put numbers in the Dual Outline's narrow columns (1 for first, 2 for second, etc.).

STEP 3: Paragraph Drafting [20-30 min]

In remaining class time, each student should draft a paragraph based on one of the options in the Dual Outline. Students are not bound to the position they took at the beginning of class. Encourage students to draft quickly, focusing on the flow of ideas rather than correctness.

The paragraph must include the topic sentence, evidence, and reasoning. Additionally, the paragraph must address one or more **core concerns of opponents**, inviting them to nod—however grudgingly—in agreement. To help students engage with counter-evidence, suggest sentence-starters such as *although*, *despite*, *even so*, *in contrast*, *however*, *in spite of*, *yet*, etc.

PRE-CLASS ASSIGNMENT

Students complete the paragraph they began in class and submit to Canvas prior to the next class.



ASSESSMENT

Consider treating this step as a low-stakes assessment. Award minimal points using a “3 buckets” rubric. (5pts – Strong, 4pts – Effective, 3pts – Needs Development)
This could be based on either participation or quality.

DAY-TWO CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

STEP 1: Trio Revisions [15-25 min]

At the beginning of the next class, create new groups consisting of three students who took the **same position** in their paragraphs. Within these trios, students should read their paragraphs aloud and then, together, create a **single, co-written paragraph** using the most persuasive elements of each original. The co-written paragraph will be graded on its persuasiveness for the Board of Trustees, and all authors will earn the same grade.

STEP 2: Marshal Evidence Table [20-25 min]

When most trios are finishing their draft of the co-written paragraph, introduce the Marshal Evidence Table (below). Explain that this table must be submitted with the co-written paragraph. Encourage students to complete the table [10 min] **before** revising their co-written paragraph. The table will help them articulate their strategy and even re-structure their paragraphs in a more persuasive way. Trios should revise, edit, and submit to Canvas [15 min].

MARSHAL EVIDENCE TABLE		
CONTENT: What does this evidence say ?	PURPOSE: In this paragraph, what job does this evidence do ?	LOCATION: Why is this evidence in this place or sequence in the paragraph?
<i>Example:</i> In the US, cigarette smoking is the #1 cause of preventable death	<i>Example:</i> It highlights the relative danger of smoking— <i>the most likely</i> way to shorten a person’s life unnecessarily	<i>Example:</i> It is 2 nd because it’s less important than the 1 st evidence and necessary background to understand the 3 rd evidence due to...

STEP 3: Discussion, Debrief, and Assessment [15-20 min]

If time permits, invite one trio from each side of the controversy to share their paragraph with the class. Highlight the effectiveness of its use of evidence (content, purpose, and location). Reiterate the importance of marshaling evidence strategically in academic, civic, and professional settings. Invite students to suggest situations where this skill could be useful to them (persuading parents, guiding club decisions, proposing idea to supervisor, etc.).



TEACHER'S NOTE

Consider making the co-written paragraph a medium-stakes assignment worth enough points (perhaps 20-30) to get students' attention but not so many points that their grades will suffer significantly if a team is weak or confused. The paragraph could be assessed quickly using specifications grading. See Appendix B for one sample rubric.

Vaping Evidence Sheet

1. Cigarette smoking is the number one cause of preventable death in the US (Tolentino).
2. According to Professor John Britton, chair of the Royal College of Physicians' Tobacco Advisory Group, "With sensible regulation, electronic cigarettes have the potential to make a major contribution towards preventing the premature death, disease and social inequalities in health that smoking currently causes" (Rosselat).
3. Over the past year, the American e-cigarette (vaping) market has grown more than 25% (Tolentino).
4. In 2018, the majority of Juul's sales came from sweet and fruity flavors (Nassauer).
5. E-cigarette aerosol can contain nicotine and other cancer-causing chemicals (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).
6. Almost 80% of youth access to e-cigarettes comes through "social sourcing" from friends (Juul Labs, Inc.).
7. Juul products offer "harm reduction" as "an additional strategy to protect...smokers from disability and early death" (Rosselat).
8. According to a 2017 study by the Centers for Disease Control, about 50 percent more high school and middle school students vape (use e-cigarettes) than smoke (Tolentino).
9. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) cited Walmart, Family Dollar, and Kroger for illegal sales of vaping products to minors (Nassauer).
10. So far, Juul and other e-cigarette products have not "attracted significant use among adult never-smokers, or demonstrated evidence of significant gateway progression into smoking among young people" (Rosselat).
11. Juul stopped selling sweet and fruity flavors in physical stores in 2018. These flavors are still available online (Nassauer).
12. Juul supports Tobacco 21, an effort to increase the legal age for using tobacco products to 21 (Al-Muslim).
13. The FDA may regulate vaping more strictly in the future (Maloney).

14. Americans for Tax Reform, Consumer Advocates for Smoke-Free Alternatives Association, and the American Vaping Association have joined forces to raise awareness of the health benefits of switching from smoking to vaping (Caruana).
15. The number of youth who use e-cigarettes increased by 78% from 2017 to 2018. Approximately 20% of high school students use these products (Nassauer).
16. The popularity of Juul spreads less through traditional, regulated advertising than through Snapchat and Instagram (Tolentino).
17. “10 years from now the majority of the tobacco products that are sold could very well be by noncombustive products,” according to Altria CEO Howard Willard (Maloney).
18. E-cigarettes were originally developed to disrupt Big Tobacco and to help the 70% of smokers who want to quit (Tolentino).
19. Juul statement: “Our company’s mission is to eliminate cigarettes and help the more than one billion smokers worldwide switch to a better alternative....At the same time, we are committed to deterring young people, as well as adults who do not currently smoke, from using our products” (Castle).
20. “In the interest of public health it is important to promote the use of e-cigarettes...and other non-tobacco nicotine products as widely as possible as a substitute for smoking” (Rosselat).
21. Minors with prepaid debit cards can find Juuls through bulk sales on eBay and Alibaba (Tolentino).
22. Possible side effects of e-cigarette use include seizures or convulsions (U. S. Food and Drug Administration).



TEACHER'S NOTE

PDF versions of all references are available [here](#).

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 **APPENDIX B**

Sample Specifications Grading Rubric			
Trait	Very Good 5pts	Satisfactory 4pts	Needs Development 3pts
Persuasive to Audience		✓	
Clear Topic Sentence	✓		
Marshaled Evidence & Logical Reasoning	✓		
Address Counter-Evidence			✓
Marshal Evidence Table	✓		
TOTAL SCORE: ____/25pts			

Series 3 – COHERENCE CLINIC

Strategic Phrasing & Placement



PURPOSE

As instructors, we know the writing process is recursive – in other words, it is precisely by “looping” repeatedly through planning, organizing, and revision that we ultimately craft meaningful content. Drafts do not simply get “cleaner” and more grammatically correct. Rather the **content transforms – tightening and cohering – as the revision process sharpens both the argument’s focus and the internal connections that link ideas.**

While the previous two series guided students in the foundational revision skills necessary to generate clear, concise, organized content, this series pushes them to another level of critical thinking and sophistication in their revision process. By seeing the effect that strategic phrasing and placement can have on the reader, students learn to revise at a higher level of **arrangement and connection** to generate impact.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the activity, students should be able to

- identify the key new content in every sentence
- place words and phrases strategically within the sentence for emphasis
- position sentences within the paragraph to create logical sequence
- meaningfully connect sentences to build a more persuasive argument

DESCRIPTION & STEPS

PRE-CLASS ASSIGNMENT

Assign students to analyze a “Before Revision” and “After Revision” draft of a sample paragraph (an example is provided below). While the “Before” should offer a fairly clear claim with logical support, it doesn’t seamlessly “connect the dots.” It forces the reader to dig out the claim, determine its significance, and connect the evidence and explanations. By contrast, the “After” does all the work and has greater impact. It employs precise syntax, emphasizes key ideas and connections, and builds a persuasive progression.

Comparing the paragraphs allows students to concretely **see and feel the difference** generated by more sophisticated, cohesive (i.e., seamlessly arranged & connected) writing. While one version looks and feels taxing, the other looks and feels more engaging. At some point in the series of activities, encourage students to realize that there is nothing wrong with drafting rough “before” paragraphs; indeed, **it is only through the recursive process** that writers can transform drafted material into denser, more sophisticated sentences and paragraphs.

After carefully analyzing the two paragraphs, students must identify the specific changes they see that the writer made between “Before” and “After.” They record each in a grid and briefly articulate what effect the change had on them as readers (did it make the idea clearer? shift their focus? add emphasis? create urgency? Etc.). Students submit their grid before class.



ASSESSMENT

Consider treating this step as a low-stakes assessment. Award minimal points using a “3 buckets” rubric. (5pts – Strong, 4pts – Effective, 3pts – Needs Development) This could be based on either participation or quality.

EXAMPLE: “BEFORE” PARAGRAPH

The meal-kit market has started to attract competitors and is catching the eye of the big companies. The most notable one is Amazon. Amazon is about to enter the market and change everything. They purchased Whole Foods for \$13.7 billion. They filed to trademark the slogan, “We do the prep, you be the chef,” for a future meal-kit service (Bomkamp). Quick and easy delivering will cut costs for Amazon, allowing them to lower prices. According to a leading industry research firm, there are over 150 meal-kit companies competing in this growing sector, but the primary criticism of meal kits is that “they are ... too expensive for most people, with an average cost of \$10 to \$15 per person per meal” (“Packaged facts”). Current meal-kit delivery services have yet to be able to cut costs. Amazon’s combination of Whole Foods and a connected delivering network help them easily cut costs. Amazon’s prices will be lower than anyone else in the market. [161 words]

EXAMPLE: “AFTER” PARAGRAPH¹

Amazon’s entrance into the grocery industry will disrupt the meal-kit market. Currently, more than 150 companies – led by Blue Apron and HelloFresh – compete for marketspace (“Packaged Facts”). Analysts report the “average cost of \$10 to \$15 per person per meal” price tag discourages many potential consumers. Amazon’s \$13.7 billion acquisition of Whole Foods coupled with their preemptive move to trademark a slogan (“We do the prep, you be the chef”) for a future meal kit service clearly signals their intention to compete in this crowded space (Bomkamp). With the advantage of their established low-cost, two-day shipping infrastructure, Amazon can now leverage Whole Food’s supply chain to deliver high-quality meal kits that undercut competitors’ prices. Given their ability to provide speed, scope, and scale currently unavailable in this industry, Amazon will transform the market once it enters. [136 words]

WORKS CITED

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¹ See Appendix A (below) for an annotated copy of the revisions. Annotations are intended for instructor purposes only, not for students.

HOMEWORK GRID

CHANGE: Describe a specific change between “Before” and “After” – i.e., how was something originally conveyed and then how did it change?	EFFECT: Describe the effect of the change on you as the reader – i.e., did it clarify something? did it shift your focus in a different place? Etc.

DAY-ONE CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

STEP 1: TEAM ACTIVITY [10 min]

Begin class by immediately placing students in pairs or teams (we suggest no more than 3 to aid equal and active participation). Partners/teams compare their individual homework grids and complete the following, which they should expect to informally report out to the class:

1. Choose just one change between the two drafts that you consider a **sophisticated transformation**. Together, “zoom in” on it and be prepared to explain what changed and why the change is both sophisticated and effective.
2. Pick 3 words and/or phrases you think **generate impact**. Be prepared to explain why.



TEACHER'S NOTE

For hybrid classes, students can work in pairs or teams (either in person or via Zoom) to complete Part 1 & 2, with points awarded for quality.

STEP 2: CLASS DISCUSSION [20 min]

Ask students to frame their answers in response to the question: “How does X [the change you identified] allow the revision to do **more** and **better work** in fewer words?” For this discussion, project both paragraphs on a slide so students can navigate easily between them.

How does #2 do more & better work in fewer words?

The meal-kit market has started to attract competitors and is catching the eye of the big companies. The most notable one is Amazon. Amazon is about to enter the market and change everything. They purchased Whole Foods for \$13.7 billion. They filed to trademark the slogan, “We do the prep, you be the chef,” for a future meal-kit service (Bomkamp). Quick and easy delivering will cut costs for Amazon, allowing them to lower prices. According to a leading industry research firm, there are over 150 meal-kit companies competing in this growing sector, but the primary criticism of meal kits is that “they are ... too expensive for most people, with an average cost of \$10 to \$15 per person per meal” (“Packaged facts”). Current meal-kit delivery services have yet to be able to cut costs. Amazon’s combination of Whole Foods and a connected delivering network help them easily cut costs. Amazon’s prices will be lower than anyone else in the market.

#1

Amazon’s entrance into the grocery industry will disrupt the meal-kit market. Currently, more than 150 companies – led by Blue Apron and HelloFresh – compete for marketspace (“Packaged Facts”). Analysts report the “average cost of \$10 to \$15 per person per meal” price tag discourages many potential consumers. Amazon’s \$13.7 billion acquisition of Whole Foods coupled with their preemptive move to trademark a slogan (“We do the prep, you be the chef”) for a future meal kit service clearly signals their intention to compete in this crowded space (Bomkamp). With the advantage of their established low-cost, two-day shipping infrastructure, Amazon can now leverage Whole Food’s supply chain to deliver high-quality meal kits that undercut competitors’ prices. Given their ability to provide speed, scope, and scale currently unavailable in this industry, Amazon will transform the market once it enters.

#2

During the discussion, highlight a handful sentences in the “Before” and “After,” asking students for each: “Where is the key new information located? Which version places the information more strategically? How does the placement create more clarity, more impact?”

Throughout the discussion, guide students to notice:

- **stronger nouns and verbs** do more work with greater precision
- **key phrases connect** ideas by linking backward to earlier content, showing relationships, and emphasizing significance
- not just words but **syntax** (the purposeful arrangement of words) creates those connections and significance (especially by using the end of sentences for impact)
- **strategic phrasing** in the opening and closing of the paragraph emphasizes purpose



TEACHER’S NOTE

You might find it useful to prepare slides in advance highlighting specific examples you want to analyze. You can access slides like the one below [here](#).

How does #2 do more & better work in fewer words?

The meal-kit market has started to attract competitors and is catching the eye of the big companies. The most notable one is Amazon. Amazon is about to enter the market and change everything. They purchased Whole Foods for \$13.7 billion. They filed to trademark the slogan, “We do the prep, you be the chef,” for a future meal-kit service (Bomkamp). Quick and easy delivering will cut costs for Amazon, allowing them to lower prices. According to a leading industry research firm, there are over 150 meal-kit companies competing in this growing sector, but the primary criticism of meal kits is that “they are ... too expensive for most people, with an average cost of \$10 to \$15 per person per meal” (“Packaged facts”). Current meal-kit delivery services have yet to be able to cut costs. Amazon’s combination of Whole Foods and a connected delivering network help them easily cut costs. Amazon’s prices will be lower than anyone else in the market.

#1

Amazon’s entrance into the grocery industry will disrupt the meal-kit market. Currently, more than 150 companies – led by Blue Apron and HelloFresh – compete for marketspace (“Packaged Facts”). Analysts report the “average cost of \$10 to \$15 per person per meal” price tag discourages many potential consumers. Amazon’s \$13.7 billion acquisition of Whole Foods coupled with their preemptive move to trademark a slogan (“We do the prep, you be the chef”) for a future meal kit service clearly signals their intention to compete in this crowded space (Bomkamp). With the advantage of their established low-cost, two-day shipping infrastructure, Amazon can now leverage Whole Food’s supply chain to deliver high-quality meal kits that undercut competitors’ prices. Given their ability to provide speed, scope, and scale currently unavailable in this industry, Amazon will transform the market once it enters.

#2

These 2 facts aren’t connected. Syntax places emphasis on price of acquisition and uses passive verb “file.”

2 facts now persuasively connected by “coupled” and “preemptive.” Syntax puts emphasis on Amazon’s intention and threat to the market rather than price.

STEP 3: Interactive Lecture [20 min]

By working through the earlier parts of this series, students should now have a concrete grasp on the way strategic placement and phrasing can clarify meaning and generate impact. But now students need to learn a few specific techniques they can employ to do this sophisticated work in their own revision process. Based on your available course materials and priorities, we suggest leading a brief and **highly-interactive** lecture (perhaps using Top Hat’s interactive features) addressing the following. Appendix B offers resources to help you build your lecture.

- logical progression
- transitions
- finish strong

The key here is to work through the slides together as a class so that, instead of a boring composition lecture, this is an **all-hands-on-deck discussion** of what the technique is and how it creates meaningful cohesion.

For each technique, we suggest a slide explaining it followed by a slide showing it in action **with examples from the homework paragraph** (and perhaps supplemented by other illustrative examples). Again, these example texts can be loaded into Top Hot as interactive questions/content.

STEP 4: Team-Writing Activity [20 min]

After the interactive set of slides, return students to their earlier pairs or teams. Give each pair or team an envelope with the five sentences below printed on cardstock and individually cut (so sentences can be moved around like puzzle pieces as students brainstorm).

Instruct students that they can:

- place the five sentences in any order (there are multiple effective combinations)
- revise the construction of the individual sentences (adding transitions, changing verbs, exchanging nouns for pronouns, etc.)
- add sentences of their own

Ultimately, they will be evaluated on their ability to incorporate these five sentences into one **meaningful, sophisticated paragraph**.

Remind students to be sure to focus on the elements covered in the earlier exercise (Step 2 above), including logical progression (with strategic phrasing and backward glances), transitions, and finishing strong.

SENTENCES:

1. Target wants to look less like Wal-Mart.
2. Target will offer fewer packaged foods from companies like Campbell Soup, General Mills, and Kraft.
3. Target plans to market more Greek yogurt, bagged coffee, and craft beers.
4. The top priority for Target's CEO Brian is to improve grocery sales.
5. Target wants to attract urban dwellers, younger families, and Hispanics.



ASSESSMENT

Consider treating this step as a medium-stakes assessment. Award enough points to motivate quality work and hold students accountable. See Appendix C for an example.

DAY-TWO CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

CLASS DISCUSSION [10-15 min]

Reserve the first 10 – 15 minutes at the top of the next class to compare and debrief the teams' paragraphs. The discussion should:

- allow students to see that multiple configurations of the sentences could produce equally effective paragraphs (depending entirely on the writers' use of strategic phrasing, transitions, and strong finish to create the progression)
- zoom in on specific techniques the students employed and analyze why those choices were/weren't effective in creating clarity, coherence, meaning, and impact

For an example paragraph, see Appendix D.

POSSIBLE CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES (CATs)

In addition to assessing the quality of the revision work, instructors can also implement CATs to assess student learning, including the following suggestion:

For homework, ask students to individually write and submit a “process analysis.” Encourage students to focus on capturing their thoughts and not worry about grammar or neatness. Rather, students should briefly summarize all the major steps they remember taking during class to construct and revise the paragraph (including any snags, challenges, or debates their team ran into along the way). This log should be observational – simply capturing data. At the end of the log, ask students to move into analysis by commenting (either as a paragraph or bullets) on what they **personally learned** from going through this process with their team, including:

- identifying steps they want to incorporate in their own future writing/revision process
- identifying steps they would improve if used again
- articulating why parts of the process were or weren't helpful in revising a rough draft of choppy sentences into a final draft delivering a cohesive, sophisticated paragraph

 **APPENDIX A**

Annotated explanations of the revisions made to the “After” paragraph assigned for comparison in the homework.

Amazon’s entrance into the grocery industry will disrupt the meal-kit market. Currently, more than 150 companies – led by Blue Apron and HelloFresh – compete for marketspace (“Packaged Facts”). Analysts report the “average cost of \$10 to \$15 per person per meal” price tag discourages many potential consumers. Amazon’s \$13.7 billion acquisition of Whole Foods coupled with their preemptive move to trademark a slogan (“We do the prep, you be the chef”) for a future meal kit service clearly signals their intention to compete in this crowded space (Bomkamp). With the advantage of their established low-cost, two-day shipping infrastructure, Amazon can now leverage Whole Food’s supply chain to deliver high-quality meal kits that undercut competitors’ prices. Given their ability to provide speed, scope, and scale currently unavailable in this industry, Amazon will transform the market once it enters.

Rodak, Miranda Yaggi

Rather than slowly winding up, this topic sentence frontloads a claim about Amazon (which is where the original paragraph was headed), and it collapses 3 wordy sentences into one lean, dense sentence.

Rodak, Miranda Yaggi

5 weak verbs now become 2 stronger, more specific verbs demonstrating significance.

Rodak, Miranda Yaggi

Reorganizes information for more logical progression of ideas. Paragraph needs to establish state of the marketplace before info about Amazon’s acquisition matters. Makes the incorporation of evidence more concise while also adding a concrete example that readers will likely know.

Rodak, Miranda Yaggi

Sentence lands on the most significant point – an industry with too many competitors vying for customers.

Rodak, Miranda Yaggi

Uses evidence concisely to establish the key challenge constraining the competition that Amazon can overcome.

Rodak, Miranda Yaggi

Evidence that was previously spread apart and had little impact now combined to show the two critical components Amazon can leverage.

Rodak, Miranda Yaggi

Paragraph routinely chooses vivid, dense verbs and nouns that do more work by packing meaning into fewer words.

Rodak, Miranda Yaggi

Traded weak, flabby verbs like “file” for “signals”; again, stronger verbs and phrasing connect the dots, telling the reader what these facts tell us.

Rodak, Miranda Yaggi

Collapses the last three sentences into one strong sentence which says all of the original and more in fewer words.

Rodak, Miranda Yaggi

Pulls together all the main ideas of the paragraph in three vivid nouns.

Rodak, Miranda Yaggi

Paragraph “sticks the landing” by ending with a clear sense of the stakes and gesturing toward the urgency.

 **APPENDIX B**

To help students grasp specific techniques they can use to generate more sophisticated writing in their revision process, we suggest framing these techniques as three categories:

Logical Progression

We can all agree that readers expect a logical progression of ideas. That progression, however, requires work on the writer's part so that it remains clear – even intuitive – to the reader.

Your textbook likely has a section addressing how to create progression (i.e., organization), often using variations on the [Toulmin Method](#), which emphasizes closely connecting an argument's claim, grounds, and warrants.

In addition to your textbook, you might also incorporate ideas from Dr. George Gopen's book *Expectations: Teaching Writing from the Reader's Perspective* (2004). Gopen, a professor of Rhetoric and a writing consultant across fields such as law and science, offers terrific language for thinking about audience expectations. He suggests thinking in terms of connecting "old information" to "new information" by using "backward links." For more, you might consult his publicly available article ["The Progress of Thought: To Move Forward, Link Backward."](#)

Transitions

Transitional words and phrases connect ideas and generate a paragraph's or document's logical progression. While students know about transitions, they're often rusty at remembering the various types beyond the basic "also" and "therefore." These resources offer a refresher:

Daily Writing Tips – [10 Types of Transitions](#)
Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) – [Transitions](#)

Finish Strong

As Dr. George Gopen argues, readers look for the most important content in the "stress position," and there's no greater stress position than the end of a paragraph (Gopen 102). We suggest teaching students to strategically craft their final sentence by using the gymnastics or extreme-sports metaphor of "stick the landing" – in other words end definitively with control and confidence rather than allowing the paragraph to trail off, stumble, or end abruptly. This [blog](#) offers a nice description of the analogy. You might also consider showing a few YouTube clips of gymnasts sticking and not sticking their landings.

<https://youtu.be/32YGj-asMv0>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3zUvBXZuD0>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3zUvBXZuD0>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3zUvBXZuD0>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3zUvBXZuD0>

 APPENDIX C

SAMPLE RUBRIC			
Trait	Very Good 10pts	Satisfactory 8pts	Needs Development 7pts
<p>Strategic Placement – Sentences</p> <p>Within individual sentences, the writing thoughtfully places information in key spots using strong verbs and strategic phrasing that creates emphasis and connection.</p>		✓	
<p>Strategic Placement – Paragraph</p> <p>As a whole, the paragraph offers a logical, persuasive progression because it places ideas in a strategic sequence and connects ideas with meaningful phrases and transitions. Sticks the landing.</p>	✓		
<p>TOTAL SCORE: ____/20pts</p>			

 APPENDIX D

EXAMPLE VERSION OF THE “TARGET” PARAGRAPH:

Target CEO Brian Cornell recently identified improved grocery sales as one of his top priorities. He wants to attract new and atypical guests, specifically urban dwellers, younger families, and Hispanics. To broaden Target’s appeal to these guests, Cornell plans to market more Greek yogurt, bagged coffee, and craft beers. At the same time, Target will reduce its traditional packaged food offerings from Campbell Soup, General Mills, and Kraft. This transformation will help Target differentiate itself from Wal-Mart.

ASSESSMENT



PRE-LEARNING ASSESSMENTS

ASSESSMENT #1: PARAGRAPH-REVISION ASSESSMENT (Qualitative)

To determine students' baseline ability to identify weak, underperforming writing and revise it for clarity, concision, and coherence, we suggest giving students the paragraph and instructions below on the first day of class (or as homework) before any learning has occurred. Use the rubric below to gather data.

Instructions (to students): The paragraph below is taken from a draft of a business proposal written to Home Chef (a company like Blue Apron that provides customers with weekly recipes and accompanying pre-portioned ingredients to make meals). The proposal tries to persuade Home Chef that they can grow their business by adding a snack menu and partnering with Hershey's to promote it. The idea is good, but the paragraph is weak.

After reading it carefully, write a revision of the paragraph. You have full editorial power to make any changes you think will improve it, including reorganizing the order of sentences, deleting words/sentences, adding words/sentences, and changing words/sentences. In other words, rewrite the paragraph to make it an effective piece of professional communication. (You do not need to revise the Works Cited – it's provided as reference).

This assignment will not be included in your course grade. This assignment simply establishes a baseline against which to assess your future learning.

Paragraph's Audience: Home Chef executives

Paragraph's Purpose: Persuade Home Chef to add a snack menu in partnership with Hershey's.

Paragraph:

Hershey's is a well-known brand in the United States. They are the number one most trustworthy brand (Rooney). You may wonder why it benefits Home Chef to partner with Hershey's in launching a new snack option to Home Chef's product offering? "Brand recognition is necessary for consumers to have their interest sparked" (Rath). Individuals are more likely to want to try new items if they feel they have a certain connection with the brand. For example, individuals are more likely to buy Cheerios instead of a generic product from a grocery store because General Mills is recognized as a trustworthy brand. The Partnership with Hershey's is going to entice Home Chef's customers to try the snack menu.

Works Cited

Rath, S. "Brand recognition and advertising effectiveness: Study of responses for print advertisements." *Journal of Contemporary Management Research*, 7(2), 82-88. 2013.

Rooney, Jennifer. "Top Brands: Most Trustworthy." *Forbes Magazine*, 6 Oct. 2011. Web.

Instructions (to teachers):

This assignment allows you to establish a baseline assessment of your students’ current skills. **Do not spend time assigning grades or making comments.** Instead, skim each paragraph with three criteria in mind (clarity, concision, and coherence). As you skim, you can use the [Excel spreadsheet below](#) to quickly track your tally. The spreadsheet will convert your tally into meaningful data, which you can include in teaching dossiers, conference presentations, etc.

Before you begin the assessment, download your student roster from Canvas. Copy the column of your students’ last names and paste it into your spreadsheet. Depending on how many students and sections you teach, you may need to insert more rows into the spreadsheet provided. Finally, change the number in the formula on line 29 from “/24” to “/your total number of students” (we suggest including all of your students in a single spreadsheet if you teach multiple sections of the same course).

With your spreadsheet ready, now skim each of your students’ baseline paragraphs. For each paragraph, assign a “1” to **either** “Excellent,” “Satisfactory,” “Needs Development,” or “Needs Significant Development” **in each of the three areas** (see rubric descriptions below). The spreadsheet will automatically tally how many of your students can execute the skill at each of these levels, and it will also convert that calculation into a percentage.

For instance, in the example class of 24 students below, only 3 students enter the course able to execute clarity with excellence. This translates to 12.5% of the class. The majority of students, 45.8%, execute this skill at a level that “needs development.” Even fewer students enter the course able to achieve concision with excellence, only 4.1%. The majority of students, 45.8%, execute this skill at a level that “needs development.”

Tracking the data this way allows you to make meaningful comparisons at the midpoint or end of the semester when you similarly assess another paragraph.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
1		CLARITY			CONCISION				COHERENCE				
2	Student's Last Name	Excellent	Satisfactory	Development	Significant Development	Excellent	Satisfactory	Development	Significant Development	Excellent	Satisfactory	Development	Significant Development
3	student #1		1					1					1
4	student #2			1					1				1
5	student #3			1				1					1
6	student #4	1					1	1					
7	etc.	1					1					1	
8	etc.			1					1				
9	etc.		1							1			
10	etc.												
11	etc.		1				1					1	
12	etc.	1								1			
13	etc.				1		1				1		
14	etc.			1				1					1
15	etc.			1				1					1
16	etc.			1				1					1
17	etc.			1				1					1
18	etc.				1				1				
19	etc.			1				1					1
20	etc.		1				1					1	
21	etc.		1				1					1	
22	etc.		1					1					1
23	etc.			1				1					1
24	etc.		1						1				1
25	etc.			1				1					1
26	etc.			1				1					1
27													
28	TOTAL # of Students	3	7	11	2	1	5	11	5	1	5	13	4
29	% of Students	12.50%	29.17%	45.83%	8.33%	4.17%	20.83%	45.83%	20.83%	4.17%	20.83%	54.17%	16.67%

Assessment Rubric				
Criteria	Excellent 4	Satisfactory 3	Needs Development 2	Needs Significant Development 1
Clarity: Meaning is clear and direct; sentences are not likely to confuse or miscommunicate.				
Concision: Paragraph is free of vagueness and repetition; it employs dense, meaningful constructions that do a lot of work in minimal word count.				
Coherence Paragraph frontloads a claim with a topic sentence and strategically supports it with organized content offering a logical progression of ideas, including clear connections and transitions.				

ASSESSMENT #2: Pre-Test of Composition Terminology and Identification (Quantitative)

To determine students' progress in understanding the building blocks of composition, we suggest giving students the pre-test below via Canvas on the first day of class (or as homework) before any learning has occurred. Use Canvas "Quiz Statistics" to gather data. The answer key is provided; correct answers are marked in orange.



TEACHER'S NOTE

To prevent students from accessing online resources, consider using Canvas' "Lockdown Browser" feature. We strongly suggest using this feature so students cannot screenshot and share questions, particularly if multiple faculty adopt these assessments.

Instructions (to students):

This is a Pre-Test, which means it does **not** count toward your grade. It establishes a baseline to establish what terminology/concepts you already know before beginning this course. Once you begin this pre-test, you will have **20 minutes to complete it**. The test will close after 20 minutes, and you cannot reopen or retake it. Please do not consult any books, online materials, people, or resources.

Pre-Test Questions:

1. What is the subject of the following sentence?
“The departure of its lead engineer comes at a critical time for Tesla, which has promised its electric vehicles will be capable of operating as “robotaxis” by the end of next year and not require human intervention.”
 - a. Departure
 - b. Engineer
 - c. Tesla
 - d. Electric Vehicles

2. The following sentence contains how many verbs (including possible verbs)?
Facebook has secured the backing of over a dozen companies for its upcoming Libra cryptocurrency set to be announced next week.” __ verbs
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4 or more [have, secure, be, announce]

3. What is the order of the following sentence? “Honda is betting that a conventional—if sleekly upscaled—five-seat sedan is what the market wants.”
 - a. SVO
 - b. SOV
 - c. VOS
 - d. VSO
 - e. OSV
 - f. OVS

4. Which of the following sentences use SVO format? Choose all that apply.
 - a. Online pet supplies retailer Chewy is set to make its debut on the New York Stock Exchange.
 - b. The company will raise \$1 billion from the stock sale and will trade under the ticker symbol CHWY.
 - c. Despite competitive threats from Amazon as well as food giant General Mills, which recently acquired pet food seller Blue Buffalo, Chewy is growing rapidly.
 - d. The company may also have to deal with unfavorable comparisons to Pets.com, one of the highest profile disasters of the dot com bubble era in the late 1990s and early 2000.

5. Which of the following statements is/are relevant evidence to support the topic sentence? Choose all that apply.
Topic Sentence: “With fewer Americans living in traditional families of four, consumer-products companies are catering to singles with more appropriately-sized products.”
 - a. Jimmy Dean offers Simple Scrambles, a microwavable egg in a cup.
 - b. Because the average life expectancy is increasing, the Baby Boomer Generation is a dominant consumer demographic.

- c. Instead of boxed brownie mixes, many singles prefer individuals slices of cake form the deli
 - d. Currently, one-third of US households have children.
6. Which of the following statements could used to counter the statement that “Consumer product companies are catering to the lucrative market for single-person households by downsizing their products.” Choose all that apply.
- a. Singles are too busy to cook.
 - b. With the average age of marriage rising and the average number of children falling, singles are a growing demographic.
 - c. Singles with disposable incomes prefer to drive trucks and SUVs.
 - d. Singles like smaller dishwashers, washing machines, and dryers.
 - e. Singles are willing to pay more for environmentally-friendly products.
 - f. Because singles do not have to justify their expenses to a partner, they splurge more often.
7. Based on syntax, identify the key new content in this sentence: (select all that apply) “To protect its wholesome image, by the year 2030, Lego, the world’s largest toy manufacturer, wants to make a “zero-impact product” out of sustainable materials.
- a. zero-impact product
 - b. largest toy manufacturer
 - c. wholesome image
 - d. sustainable materials
8. Based on syntax, which version of this sentence emphasizes *greenhouse gas emissions*? Check all that apply.
- a. a. Lego wants to lower greenhouse gas emissions by manufacturing toys from plant-based raw materials like corn and sugar cane instead of oil.
 - b. Manufacturing toys from corn or sugar cane instead of oil will help Lego lower greenhouse gases.
 - c. Greenhouse gases could be lowered by Lego if it manufactured fewer toys from oil-based products and more from corn or sugar cane.
 - d. Lego has a vision to reduce greenhouse gas emissions: manufacture more toys from corn and sugar cane than oil.
9. Logically, which of the following sentences could immediately precede (come before) this sentence: “However, Lego needs large quantities of raw materials that meet its sourcing and quality standards.” Check all that apply.
- a. Recycled plastic, if it were readily available, might have worked.
 - b. Lego could acquire necessary raw materials in small batches.
 - c. Lego has already tested over 200 combinations of materials.
 - d. Lego cannot used materials that biodegrade.



POST-LEARNING ASSESSMENTS

ASSESSMENT #1: PARAGRAPH-REVISION ASSESSMENT (Qualitative)

To determine students' progress in identifying weak, underperforming writing and revising it for clarity, concision, and coherence, we suggest giving students the paragraph and instructions below as an **in-class Midterm or Final Exam**. Regardless of how you decide to grade this exam question, be sure – for your own data-collection purposes – to use the same system you used previously to evaluate the pre-learning assessment.

Instructions (to students): This is an in-class exam. You will have until the end of class to revise the paragraph below plus answer multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank questions. You may not consult any books, online materials, people, or resources.

The paragraph below is taken from a draft of a proposal written to Home Chef (a company like Blue Apron that provides customers with weekly recipes and accompanying pre-portioned ingredients to make meals). The proposal tries to persuade Home Chef that they can grow their business by improving their mobile app. The idea is good, but the paragraph is weak.

After reading it carefully, write a revision of the paragraph. You have full editorial power to make any changes you think will improve it, including reorganizing the order of sentences, deleting words/sentences, adding words/sentences, and changing words/sentences. (You do not need to revise the Works Cited – it's provided as reference).

Audience: Home Chef executives

Purpose: Persuade Home Chef to improve their mobile app.

Paragraph:

Not only does Home Chef's service provide convenience, which is why so many consumers choose their service in the first place, but their app also creates this convenience aspect. By revitalizing the app, Home Chef could cater more to the convenience factor. According to *Forbes*, Millennials "turn to their handheld devices to meet all their needs" (McGee). Companies are constantly improving customer experience with technology-based features, including self-checkout kiosks, online payment options, and rewards-tracking programs. Industry analysts warn that "retailers must be able to provide streamlined, user-friendly systems and processes in order to retain the millennial" because "convenience of the mobile device is paramount to this group." Over half of Home Chef's target demographic values the convenience of technology highly, which can be given to them through the app. A newly improved app will allow consumers to do more at their fingertips than ever before. Placing emphasis on the convenience the app offers gives a competitive edge to Home Chef for catering to their consumers' wants. The app will allow for things such as ordering and pausing meals, checking when your kit will be delivered, live chatting with customer service, tracking rewards points, and more options that lay just within the consumer's pocket. Millennials live busy lives, which is why it would be beneficial for Home Chef to focus on improving the services they provide to customers through their app.

Works Cited

McGee, Tom. "How Millenials Are Changing Retail Patterns." *Forbes*. 23 Jan 2017.

ASSESSMENT #2: Test of Composition Terminology and Identification (Quantitative)

To determine students' progress in understanding the building blocks of composition, we suggest giving students the test below via Canvas on an **in-class Midterm or Final Exam**. Use Canvas "Quiz Statistics" to gather data.

Instructions (to students):

The following exam contains multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank questions. This is an in-class exam, and you will have until the end of class to complete these questions plus respond to a writing prompt. You may not consult any books, online materials, people, or resources.

Test Questions:

1. What is the subject of the following sentence?
"The price of bitcoin tumbled more than 12% from its day's high following South Korea's announcement of a forthcoming bill banning cryptocurrencies."
 - a. Bitcoin
 - b. Price**
 - c. Cryptocurrencies
 - d. China
 - e. Bill
2. The following sentence contains how many verbs?
"Overwhelming demand inspired Musk to announce in a May 2018 letter to shareholders that he was advancing Tesla's production plans by two years." __ verbs
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4
 - e. 5 [demand, inspired, announce, was, advancing]**
3. What is the order of the following sentence?
"The involvement of major financial firms like Visa and Mastercard in Facebook's cryptocurrency is interesting, because cryptocurrencies are typically seen as providing a cheaper alternative to these payment networks."
 - a. SVO**
 - b. SOV
 - c. VOS
 - d. VSO
 - e. OSV
 - f. OVS
4. Which of the following sentences use SVO format? Choose all that apply.
 - a. At Tesla's Shareholder Meeting, Elon Musk said the company's pickup truck will look "cyberpunk" like it's come from a "sci-fi movie."

- b. La Croix’s parent company National Beverages is facing a new lawsuit after allegations that the company’s president considered falsely claiming its drink containers were free of the toxic chemical BPA.
 - c. For Facebook, establishing an independent body is thought to provide cover with users and regulators, who have grown increasingly wary of both the amount of power Facebook wields, and its cavalier attitude towards the responsibilities this brings.
 - d. By one measure—comparing pretax U.S. profit and the company’s “current provision” for U.S. income taxes—Amazon earned \$11 billion and had a tax bill of negative \$129 million in 2018, essentially getting a net benefit from the tax system.
 - e. Target announced today that US customers — with some geographic exceptions — can now select same-day delivery for orders placed directly through its website that total more than \$35 for a flat fee of \$9.99, or for free if they’re already a member of shopping app Shipt.
5. Which of the following statements is/are relevant evidence to support the topic sentence? Choose all that apply.
- Topic Sentence: Kroger, America’s biggest grocery chain, was slow to invest online.
- a. Kroger is known for its conservative culture.
 - b. Amazon surpassed Kroger as the top seller of Procter & Gamble diapers.
 - c. Kroger did not have the capacity to ship goods directly to customers.
 - d. Kroger now sells organic products on Alibaba’s Tmall site in China.
 - e. Online sales account for just 5% of the US food and consumer-product market.
 - f. Kroger CEO Rodney McMullen has a plan to restore growth.
6. Which of the following options expresses a likely objection from an opponent? Choose all that apply.
- Topic Sentence: Kroger should focus on online sales exclusively.
- a. Kroger has 2,764 brick-and-mortar stores across the US.
 - b. Kroger needs to overhaul its operations to compete with online competitors.
 - c. Kroger needs to retain customers who like to select their own produce.
 - d. Kroger has invested \$4 billion in warehouses managed by robots.
 - e. Kroger managers are paid and promoted based on the performance of their brick-and-mortar stores.
 - f. Kroger tried unsuccessfully to partner with three different startups: Shipt delivery service, Plated meal-kit company, and online retailer Boxed.com.
7. Based on syntax, identify the key new content in this sentence: “Nestlé, now the world’s largest food and beverage company, offers a new bedtime chocolate snack called Goodnight which is available on Amazon and is designed to help consumer fall asleep.”
- a. New bedtime snack
 - b. Consumers fall asleep
 - c. Now world’s largest food and beverage company
 - d. Goodnight

8. Which version of this sentence emphasizes *sleep-friendly*? Check all that apply.
- a. Nightfood, a sleep-friendly ice cream brand, includes ingredients like magnesium and glycine that some research suggests will help people become drowsy.
 - b. Some research suggests that Nightfood ice cream, with ingredients like magnesium and glycine, is sleep-friendly.
 - c. With sleep-friendly ingredients like magnesium and glycine, Nightfood ice cream may help people become drowsy, according to some research.
 - d. According to its advertising, Nightfood ice cream is sleep-friendly: it helps people become drowsy.
9. Logically, which of the following sentences could follow (come after) this one: Although roughly one-third of adults get less than the recommended seven hours of sleep at night, only 18% of these “troubled sleepers” report that an over-the-counter pill is their preferred solution to this problem. Check all that apply
- a. For this reason, a chocolate or ice cream snack offers an appealing alternative.
 - b. These products tap into two consumer trends: more snacking and more frustration with poor sleep.
 - c. Some research suggests that melatonin is not effective for many people.
 - d. Instead, they like the idea of a more gentle and natural solution, especially one that tastes good.