

Writer's Choice
Grammar and Composition

Composition Enrichment

Grade 10



New York, New York Columbus, Ohio Woodland Hills, California Peoria, Illinois

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Name Class Date

1.1 Writing to Discover Your World

■ Looking at Yourself and Others

Use the letters of your first name to write related sentences that tell about your feelings, interests, or reactions to people or events. Then use the same format to tell about a friend or family member. Follow the format shown in the models.

Model 1

I am a person who likes to sing.
Recently I began singing in the choir.
Inside my heart I feel joyful when I belt out songs!
So, will you come and hear me sing sometime?

Model 2

Don't be put off by his sense of humor.
All of us have been the objects of his jokes.
Very few of us got angry.
Instead, we laugh because he is funny but not mean.
Did you hear about the joke he played on me?

On Your Own

Imagine you have the starring role in your favorite movie. Your agent calls a press conference to introduce you to the public. Write two concise paragraphs in which you describe yourself to the public in the most flattering yet honest way possible.

Name Class Date

1.2 Using a Learning Log

■ Your Personal Learning Log

You have seen how effective learning logs are for getting you actively involved in your school-work. You can also use learning logs to help you track and monitor personal issues. These might include everything from what's going on in a personal relationship to progress toward an academic goal or to what you're doing to meet a specific personal fitness objective. Use the space below to create your personal learning log.

Summarize the personal issue you want to track and monitor.

Identify the benefit to you. How will keeping a log help you?

Discuss the methods you will use to track your progress or meet a personal goal.

Wait two weeks, then evaluate any improvements. Did keeping a log help you? Why or why not?

On Your Own

Keep a log for one week of every single thing you eat each day. At the end of the week, make a chart with columns headed **Meat/Fish/Poultry, Dairy Products, Fruits/Fruit Juices, Vegetables, Bread/Cereals, Other**. Put each item of food or drink you have consumed into the correct category. What category is the biggest? In a paragraph in your log, describe how you would characterize your diet.

Name Class Date

1.3 Keeping a Commonplace Book

Your Uncommon Commonplace Book

Imagine that there are no constraints on the items you can collect for your commonplace book. Da Vinci’s sketches, an actor’s signature, a letter from someone you admire tremendously, a panel of drawings by your favorite cartoonist—these types of things are within your power to acquire. Think of two “must-haves” that would make your commonplace book incredibly uncommon. Write a paragraph for each item telling how you would acquire it. Remember to tell who, what, when, where, why, and how.

Lined writing area for the student's response.

On Your Own

The late British novelist Agatha Christie once said, “The best time for planning a book is while you’re doing the dishes.” Write two paragraphs telling when and where you get your most creative writing ideas.

Name Class Date

WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE

1.5 Responding to a Short Story

■ Setting as the Basis for Plot

Carefully read the excerpt below. The author was born in North Dakota in 1924. The midwestern state of Indiana is the location for the story. Use the setting described in the excerpt as the basis for a short three-paragraph story that features you as the main character. What are you doing in this small Indiana town? Do you live near the highway or along the back streets? How does the town's setting and appearance affect you?

Literature Model

So I have sailed the seas and come . . . to B . . . a small town fastened to a field in Indiana. Twice there have been twelve hundred people here to answer to the census. The town is outstandingly neat and shady, and always puts its best side to the highway. On one lawn there's even a wood or plastic iron deer.

You can reach us by crossing a creek. In the spring the lawns are green, the forsythia is singing, and even the railroad that guts the town has straight bright rails which hum when the train is coming, and the train itself has a welcome honing sound.

Down the back streets the asphalt crumbles into gravel. There's Westbrook's, with the geraniums, Horsefall's, Mott's. The sidewalk shatters. Gravel dust rises like breath behind the wagons.

William H. Gass, "In the Heart of the Heart of the Country"

On Your Own

Write a poem, rhymed or unrhymed, of at least eight lines, that describes the setting of a short story you have read. Select a setting that intrigued you. Did the setting make you want to be there, or did it make you want to stay away?

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Name Class Date

2.2 Prewriting: Finding a Writing Topic

■ Clustering

Freewriting and brainstorming are two valuable techniques for finding a writing topic. Clustering is a way to focus your freewriting and brainstorming ideas. A good way to see how clustering works is to start with the key word or phrase in a piece of freewriting. Then identify the ideas and put them into a cluster chart. To practice the technique of clustering, read the freewriting sample below and make a cluster chart taking off from a key word in the freewriting sample.

I must write for three minutes about the world of A.D. 2300. Will there still *be* a world 300 years from now? Or will all life have been destroyed in a nuclear war? Would *some* humans somewhere survive? What would they be like? What kind of life would they lead? What else can I think of? Suppose there wasn't a nuclear war? What would the world be like then? Would there be one worldwide nation? Different parts of the world form different nations. What would people be like? How long would they live? 200 years? 300 years? Would I want to live that long? My great-great-great-grandchildren would know their great-great-grandparents! Imagine what a family Thanksgiving dinner would be like!

On Your Own

Imagine that you have the power to solve as many world problems as you can think of within the next two minutes. Time yourself as you freewrite or brainstorm on the subject of world problems. Then organize your ideas into a cluster chart.

Name Class Date

2.3 Prewriting: Identifying Purpose and Audience

■ Getting Practical About What You Know

After freewriting and brainstorming ideas and finding a topic, you must now determine your purpose—the goal you want to achieve in your writing—and your audience—your intended readers. Do you want to *describe*, *inform*, *narrate*, *amuse*, *persuade*, or *explain*? Perhaps your purpose will involve a combination of two or more of these goals. Next, you need to determine your audience. Are you writing for a general audience or a special audience? How much will your readers already know about your subject? An audience of parents, for example, would not have the same knowledge about the school cafeteria as an audience made up of students in your school.

To help you improve your skill in identifying your purpose and audience when writing, review and complete the following chart, using a general topic that interests you. List one or more focused topics, purposes, and possible audiences. One topic has been provided as an example.

| General Topic | Focused Topic | Purpose | Audience |
|---------------|---------------|--|--|
| Clothing | • dress codes | • to explore benefits and disadvantages of school restrictions on students' clothing | • classmates • teachers and school officials • parents |
| | • style fads | • to explain how fads begin to entertain with unusual examples and anecdotes | • classmates • general audience • readers of local newspaper |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Now choose one of the focused topics in the chart and imagine that you are writing a one-page article on that topic as an assignment in English class. Determine the “big idea” that your writing will express. Write this idea in the form of a main idea statement.

On Your Own

Because you are a great dancer and have lots of different kinds of friends, your classmates have chosen you to select the music for a school dance. First identify at least two or three different audiences within the student body who are likely to attend. Then formulate a main idea statement that tells the types of music you have selected for the dance, followed by a supporting paragraph explaining why you have chosen them.

2.5 Prewriting: Interviewing

■ Getting a New Slant on Your Subject

Your background research on a person often can unearth an interesting hobby or a little-known side to his or her personality. The following interesting nugget of information about magician and entertainer David Copperfield is included in several pages of background information that his agent distributes to the press. Clearly, it puts the value of magic in a different light. After reading the excerpt, imagine that you are writing a follow-up article on Project Magic for your school newspaper. List five questions you would ask David Copperfield so that you could write an interesting, informative article.

While his TV specials and live performances continue to delight audiences around the world, Copperfield insists that his greatest contribution thus far is Project Magic, a rehabilitation program he developed nine years ago. The program uses simple sleight-of-hand magic to strengthen dexterity and motor skills in disabled patients. “It motivates a patient’s therapy and helps build self-esteem,” Copperfield comments. “There is nothing I do that is more important.”

On Your Own

Imagine that you have been selected to receive an impressive and important award at your school. An editor from the school newspaper has scheduled an interview with you to gather background information about you and your achievement for an upcoming article. As the person being interviewed, you are now in a different role. Write several sentences providing three examples of the kind of behavior with which a poorly prepared interviewer might annoy you. Tell why this behavior would bother you.

2.7 Drafting: Organizing a Paragraph

■ Making Smooth Transitions

Because it lacks transition words, the following paragraph does not flow smoothly. Supply transition words in the blanks to connect the ideas in each sentence.

I'll never forget what happened to me on my first day of work. [1. _____] a manager I had never met before neglected to explain what she wanted me to do. [2. _____] a co-worker told me lunch wasn't until 2:00 P.M. [3. _____] someone hid my identification badge. I was very upset! [4. _____] they explained the whole thing had been a joke. I was informed I had passed the "coolness" test because I didn't get mad or lose my cool. Little did they know!

Now, write a paragraph about a personal experience or event that frustrated or delighted you. Circle each transition word or term you use to add order to the details.

Handwriting lines for the student's response.

On Your Own
Many things you routinely do each day have probably become so automatic that you don't even think about what happens next in each activity. What if you had to explain such an activity to someone who had never before heard of it or seen it done? Think of something you do in a series of small steps each day—for example, tying your shoes, preparing for school, performing chores, or completing job tasks. Choose one of these activities or another that is similar and write a paragraph listing chronologically the individual steps involved. Remember to use good transition words to help your sentences flow!

Name Class Date

3.2 Observing and Taking Notes

■ A. Describing Sound

Write a paragraph describing the sounds you hear during one of the four seasons. Describe sounds, such as the scrape of a snow shovel in winter, that are associated with only that season.

■ B. Describing Smell, Touch, and Taste

Our eyes and ears are most often used to help us observe and describe, but we often rely on touch, taste, and smell as well. Imagine that your eyes have been covered and your ears plugged before you are led to a secret location. Write a paragraph describing how the location smells, feels, and perhaps even tastes. Without benefit of your eyes or ears, describe the location in such detail that the reader will know the kind of place you are talking about.

On Your Own
Which of your senses do you rely on most heavily? Write two or three paragraphs explaining your answer.

3.3 Using Energetic Verbs

■ Analyzing Energetic Verb Use

In the excerpt below, analyze the author’s use of energetic verbs to evoke a variety of images. How does the use of energetic verbs give a different character to each part of the sunrise? Which verbs are used to personify, or attribute a human quality to, what is being described, and which ones describe actions normally associated with nonhuman objects? Write a detailed paragraph explaining Woolf’s use of energetic verbs. Be specific.

Literature Model

As they neared the shore each [wave] rose, heaped itself, broke and swept a thin veil of white water across the sand. The wave paused, and then drew out again, sighing like a sleeper whose breath comes and goes unconsciously. Gradually the dark bar on the horizon became clear as if the sediment in an old wine-bottle had sunk and left the glass green. Behind it, too, the sky cleared as if the white sediment there had sunk, or as if the arm of a woman couched beneath the horizon had raised a lamp and flat bars of white, green and yellow, spread across the sky like the blades of a fan. Then she raised her lamp higher and the air seemed to become fibrous and to tear away from the green surface flickering and flaming in red and yellow fibres like the smoky fire that roars from a bonfire. Gradually the fibres of the burning bonfire were fused into one haze, one incandescence which lifted the weight of the woolen grey sky on top of it and turned it to a million atoms of soft blue. The surface of the sea slowly became transparent and lay rippling and sparkling until the dark stripes were almost rubbed out. Slowly the arm that held the lamp raised it higher and then higher until a broad flame became visible; an arc of fire burnt on the rim of the horizon, and all round it the sea blazed gold.

Virginia Woolf, *The Waves*

On Your Own

Take a few minutes to brainstorm a list of energetic verbs that could, depending on the context of the sentence, be used in place of the word *walk*. Use five of the words in some creative sentences.

Name Class Date

WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE

3.5 Responding to Imagery in Poetry

■ A. Writing Haiku

Haiku is a Japanese verse form of three unrhymed lines of five, seven, and five syllables, respectively. This form of poetry is usually rich with imagery about nature. Read the haiku below; then try writing one of your own.

Daisy

Centered yellow sun
Petals slender, bright, and white
Nature's perfection.

■ B. Writing About Imagery

Write a paragraph that analyzes the imagery in "Daisy." Consider the effectiveness of the comparison of a daisy to the sun. What other objects might be compared to the sun? To what might you have compared a daisy?

On Your Own

Find a descriptive piece of prose that you particularly enjoy, and rewrite it as a rhymed or unrhymed poem that is rich in imagery.

Name Class Date

WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE

3.6 Analyzing Setting in a Short Story

■ Setting's Effect on Character

As you read the excerpt below, think about how this setting—a small, crowded boat in open, threatening waters—might affect the characters involved. Why might they be aware of “the colors of the sea” but not know “the color of the sky”? Imagine you are with the people in the small boat. Write a paragraph that describes how you feel about where you are and what is happening. Be as precise as possible about specific aspects of the setting and their relationship to your thoughts and experiences. Use another sheet of paper if you need additional space.

Literature Model

None of them knew the color of the sky. Their eyes glanced level and were fastened upon the waves that swept toward them. These waves were of the hue of slate, save for the tops, which were of foaming white, and all of the men knew the colors of the sea. The horizon narrowed and widened, and dipped and rose, and at all times its edge was jagged with waves that seemed thrust up in points like rocks.

Many a man ought to have a bathtub larger than the boat which here rode upon the sea. These waves were most wrongfully and barbarously abrupt and tall, and each froth-top was a problem in small-boat navigation.

The cook squatted in the bottom, and looked with both eyes at the six inches of gunwale which separated him from the ocean. His sleeves were rolled over his fat forearms, and the two flaps of his unbuttoned vest dangled as he bent to bail out the boat. Often he said, “Gawd! that was a narrow clip.” As he remarked it he invariably gazed eastward over the broken sea.

The oiler, steering with one of the two oars in the boat, sometimes raised himself suddenly to keep clear of water that swirled in over the stern. It was a thin little oar, and it seemed often ready to snap.

The correspondent, pulling at the other oar, watched the waves and wondered why he was there.

Stephen Crane, “The Open Boat”

On Your Own

Write two paragraphs describing one instance in which the author of a book or story you read recently used setting to convey important information about a main character. Explain what information was conveyed and how setting helped to convey it. Was this method of informing you about the character more effective or less effective than if the author had told you the character's traits directly and with abstract language? Explain your answer.

Name Class Date

4.1 Narrating a Personal Experience

■ Writing About a Turning Point

Think of a turning point in your life. It may have involved moving, reaching a goal, joining a team, or learning some new activity. To discover material for a personal narrative, think about the questions *who?*, *what?*, *when?*, *where?*, *why?*, and *how?* and write your answers below.

Before the Turning Point

who _____
what _____
when _____
where _____
why _____
how _____

The Turning Point Itself

who _____
what _____
when _____
where _____
why _____
how _____

After the Turning Point

who _____
what _____
when _____
where _____
why _____
how _____

On Your Own

Imagine that your school newspaper or a magazine of student writing is sponsoring a contest and offering a prize for the best two-page essay about a turning point. Create a rough outline to help you organize the material above, and then write your essay.

4.2 Developing a Fictional Narrative

■ Finding a Story in Your Future

Think of a job you would like to hold in five or ten years. Using what you know about the job, on a separate sheet of paper do some brainstorming to discover conflicts that might occur. They may be conflicts with another worker, with your environment, or with yourself. Choose one conflict, and write a paragraph summarizing how the conflict develops. Then write a second paragraph that tells how the conflict is resolved.

Job: _____

Conflict: _____

Resolution: _____

On Your Own

Develop the two paragraphs above into a two- or three-page narrative. Add details about your future self, about how you got the job, and about the conflict and resolution. Save this narrative in your journal. You may find it interesting to look back on in five or ten years.

Name Class Date

4.3 Organizing a Fictional Narrative

■ Using Flashback

While some stories move in chronological order from the introduction of a main character to the resolution, others use flashbacks to reveal character or explain events. In the spaces below, write a chronological sequence of events that you have experienced sometime in the last week and that can be used as events in a fictional narrative. Feel free to make up events for increased interest if you wish. Then do some brainstorming on a separate sheet of paper to uncover a childhood experience that you could fit into your narrative sequence to shed light on character or to help explain a particular action. Place an *X* at the point where you would insert the flashback into your sequence of events. Then write a flashback paragraph about the childhood experience. Give your character a name and write in third person.

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
 6. _____
 7. _____
 8. _____
 9. _____
 10. _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
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- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

On Your Own

Use the sequence of events and flashback paragraph above to write a two- or three-page narrative. You might consider submitting your story to a magazine for student writing.

Name Class Date

WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE

4.6

The Plot Summary

■ Summarizing a Poem

Read the short narrative poem below. Then write a paragraph, no more than fifty words, that summarizes it.

| | |
|---|--|
| Literature Model | |
| <p>You did not walk with me Of late to the hilltop tree By the gated ways, As in earlier days; You were weak and lame, So you never came, And I went alone, and I did not mind, Not thinking of you as left behind.</p> | <p>Iwalked up there today Just in the former way; Surveyed around The familiar ground By myself again: What difference, then? Only that underlying sense Of the look of a room on returning thence.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Thomas Hardy, "The Walk"</p> |

On Your Own

Imagine you are the person addressed in Hardy's poem. Write a short narrative in prose or verse that answers the speaker in the poem. How do your feelings differ from the speaker's? How are they the same? Exchange papers with a classmate and write summaries of one another's narratives.

Composition Enrichment

Name Class Date

5.3 Writing About a Process

■ Explaining a Process

Most families enjoy celebrating some form of traditional activity or anniversary. This may be a simple social celebration, such as a birthday party, or a more complex celebration, such as a religious or cultural activity. Whenever a celebration is carried out as part of family tradition, family members often follow certain steps or procedures in preparing for the celebration. Think of a celebration that is important in your family or culture, and imagine that a friend with a different religious, cultural, or social background will be joining you for this celebration. List chronologically the procedures you normally follow to prepare for this event. Then write a paragraph explaining the process to your friend.

| | |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
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| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

On Your Own

Imagine you are a small child who has just mastered buttoning his or her own shirt, eating with a fork, or some other "grown-up" skill. Write a paragraph about your pride in the accomplishment and tell, from a small child's point of view, the steps involved in doing it.

Composition Enrichment

Name Class Date

5.5 Comparing and Contrasting

■ A. Organizing Comparison and Contrast

One way to compare and contrast two things is to talk exclusively about the first thing in the first paragraph, and then to talk about the second thing in the next paragraph. Choose from the subjects listed below, or select your own subjects to compare and contrast, and write a paragraph about each. Be sure to focus on the same features of the two things, and use a good transition to show that the paragraphs are related. For additional space, continue on a separate sheet of paper.

two high schools in your town
two kinds of bicycles

two types of dancing
two aunts or uncles

■ B. Another Way to Organize

Sometimes a comparison and contrast is set up together in the topic sentence. A writer can begin by showing similarities and then describing differences, or vice versa. Reconsider the paragraphs you just wrote. Rewrite the comparison in one or two paragraphs. First set up a relationship in a topic sentence. Then develop the relationship in supporting sentences.

On Your Own

Write two paragraphs comparing and contrasting the way you feel about celebrating another birthday this year with the way you felt about birthdays as a small child. Write for a friend who is several months younger than you and who will soon experience his or her own birthday. Use either of the methods of organization explained above.

Name Class Date

5.6 Writing Effective Definitions

■ Creating a Personal Word Map

What sets you apart from others? To help you think this question through, think of a word that identifies you, such as *baby-sitter*, *basketball player*, *computer whiz*, *excellent math student*, *dancer*, *guitarist*, or *writer*. Create a word map such as the one on page 241 of the Student Edition to write a formal definition of your identifying word. On the lines below your word map, write one or two paragraphs developing a personal definition that you can use to introduce yourself to a new pen pal.

On Your Own
Use a dictionary to look up the formal definition of a word of your choice. Rewrite the definition twice, applying it once to yourself and once to a relative or another student. Explain the difference.

Name Class Date

5.7 Using Graphs in Exposition

■ Getting Creative with Graphs

Many newspapers enliven statistical information by presenting it in graphs that illustrate the subject matter as well as the numbers. For example, the bars in a bar graph of city populations might be depicted as buildings of varying heights. Choose one of the following topics and create a graph that reflects the topic while accurately presenting the statistical information. Introduce the graph with a short paragraph.

A pie chart of ice cream lovers' favorite flavors

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 50% prefer vanilla | 20% prefer strawberry |
| 25% prefer chocolate | 5% prefer other flavors |

A bar graph of the heights of members of a basketball team

| | | | |
|---------|-------|---------|------|
| Wendell | 6'6" | Michael | 6'6" |
| Luis | 5'11" | Victor | 5'9" |
| Andre | 6'2" | | |

A line graph of Julia's homework time

| | | | |
|-----------|-------------|----------|----------|
| Monday | 1/2 hour | Friday | 1/2 hour |
| Tuesday | 2 1/2 hours | Saturday | 4 hours |
| Wednesday | 1 hour | Sunday | 1/2 hour |
| Thursday | 2 hours | | |

On Your Own

Leaf through old magazines or newspapers to find a graph that is dull and uninteresting. Use the statistical information it presents to create an eye-catching new graph that is more likely to appeal to the readers.

5 Writing Process in Action

■ **Targeting Your Audience**

Read the assortment of facts below about Rembrandt, a seventeenth-century Dutch painter. Choose the facts that would appeal to a general audience with little or no background in art. Incorporate that information into a two-paragraph essay about the famous artist. In your essay, point out the cause and effect between his wife’s death and the quality of his work. For additional space, use another sheet of paper.

Fast Facts on Rembrandt

- He was a master of the chiaroscuro technique.
- He did many portraits and self-portraits.
- He was born in 1606 in the Netherlands. He died in 1669 in Amsterdam.
- His paintings were of figures from mythology, history, and the Bible.
- He was prolific. Today he is regarded as one of the greatest painters who ever lived.
- His paintings were described as “exuberant emulations of the Baroque style.”
- He did many etchings and drawings.
- He married Saskia van Uylenburgh in 1634.
- His style was one of dynamic actions and subtle psychological reactions.
- He was deeply in love with his wife. His art made them wealthy.
- When Saskia died in 1642, he became deeply depressed.
- Three of his children died before his wife did.
- Critics say his work took on a tragic quality after Saskia’s death.
- His paintings became less popular. He declared bankruptcy in 1656.
- He was neither famous nor rich when he died in 1669.

On Your Own

Sometimes we forget that things happening in people’s lives may affect how they act or how they present themselves to others. The careers of many artists, musicians, and writers show evidence of “phases” when their work was less inspired than at other times. Choose an artist, musician, or writer you know of. Do a little research to find out if that person’s career went through any such phases. Were there things happening in the person’s life—or in the world—that might explain the changes in the person’s work? Write a few paragraphs that tell of your findings. Address your writing to an audience of new fans who enjoy this person’s work but know little about his or her career or personal life.

