

**MAIN IDEA**

**1** Of all the ways to travel, taking the train is my favorite. Traveling by train is more efficient, comfortable, and interesting than going by airplane, car, or bus. Overall, trains are **2** the best way to go when taking a long trip.

- 1** The writer clearly responds to the prompt by stating a favorite method of travel.
- 2** The main idea is focused and well-supported in the first paragraph of the essay.

## SUPPORTING DETAILS

Passenger trains are a quick and efficient method of travel. Although a train ride is usually not as fast as flying, for long distances it is much faster than taking a bus. For example, the bus from my city stops in five towns before it reaches Charlotte. The train only stops twice. Also, buses can get slowed down by highway traffic, but trains hardly ever face traffic on the railroad tracks.

1

Train travel is also more efficient because passengers on trains never need to stop for gas or food. In fact, passengers can actually eat and sleep on trains. There is a special car that has the train's restaurant, and there are special cars for sleeping, too. The sleeper cars have little compartments with bunks. It's like a moving hotel.

2

- 1 The details included in the essay are related to the main idea.
- 2 The details make the composition interesting.

## ORGANIZATION

**1** Train travel is also much more comfortable than riding in a car, plane, or bus. On a plane or a bus, people can move around, but there really isn't anywhere to go. On a train, passengers can get up and walk around more, and they can even go from one train car to another. Trains give people much more room to stretch out than cars, planes, or buses do.

**2** The seats go back so people can sleep, even if they don't have a bunk. Plus, on a train, passengers don't have to wear seatbelts because the ride is very smooth.

- 1** The writer organizes the essay around the three main reasons given in the first paragraph: efficiency, comfort, and interest. This paragraph discusses the comfort of train travel.
- 2** In the composition, the writer elaborates on each specific reason one by one.

## COHERENCE

**1** Another good point about train travel is that it's not boring. There is a lot to do and see on a train. Since passengers can move around, they can sit at tables and play games, eat, read, or talk. They can also sit quietly by themselves if they like. It's always fun to look out the windows. When riding on a train, you can see big cities, small towns, and the countryside. Trains are a great way to see the country. **2**

- 1** The writer uses transitions to move smoothly from one paragraph and idea to the next.
- 2** Varied sentence structure and purposeful elaboration add to the sense of coherence.

## MAIN IDEA

**1** It should be allowed because different people get hungry at different times in the day and are eating different amounts of food depending on metabolism. Some people just can't eat right after they get up, so they get hungry late in the morning. Also, some people get to feeling sick if they don't have a snack at the right time. Why should they have to leave class to eat, or worse, feel sick in class?

**2**

- 1** The topic of the essay is confusing. The pronoun does not have an antecedent.
- 2** The writer's point of view is difficult to understand throughout the first paragraph.

## SUPPORTING DETAILS

Being hungry in class when you're trying to concentrate on a test is the worst **1** situation. Are you punishing kids who are trying to do their best? Other people don't like to eat large meals. Doctors say eat smaller meals throughout the day. This makes sense. We can eat at our lockers if we don't get caught but it's not healthy to try to eat food too fast between classes. My Mom can eat at her desk at work. Kids should be treated like **2** adults. Starving us is not the answer to this problem.

- 1** The writer's use of negative language seems accusatory and is unlikely to persuade readers.
- 2** The writer strays from the specific topic—eating in class—and makes an unnecessary statement that may seem abrasive to some readers.

## ORGANIZATION

Being hungry in class when you're trying to concentrate on a test is the worst situation. Are you punishing kids who are trying to do their best? Other people don't like to eat large meals. Doctors say eat smaller meals throughout the day. This makes sense. We can eat at our lockers if we don't get caught but it's not healthy to try to eat food too fast between classes. My Mom can eat at her desk at work. Kids should be treated like adults. Starving us is not the answer to this problem.

1

- 1 The paragraph lacks a meaningful topic sentence and does not develop a specific point. There is no sense of progression in the paragraph or the essay.

## COHERENCE

**1** It should be allowed because different people get hungry at different times in the day and are eating different amounts of food depending on metabolism. Some people just can't eat right after they get up, so they get hungry late in the morning. Also, some **2** people get to feeling sick if they don't have a snack at the right time. Why should they have to leave class to eat, or worse, feel sick in class?

- 1** These ideas are introduced, but they are not developed elsewhere in the essay. As a result, the essay lacks a sense of coherence.
- 2** The transitional word *Also* is used carelessly. Ideas are not meaningfully connected.

**MAIN IDEA**

**1** I think that when students get hungry, they should be allowed to eat. That includes  
in class. There are many reasons to allow students to eat during class. Special occasions  
in class are a time when students should be allowed to eat. If special occasions are okay, **2**  
then why not other times.

- 1** The writer expresses a clear point of view, making a statement of position.
- 2** The writer briefly introduces specific support for the position.

## SUPPORTING DETAILS

Also, there's celebrations. If a class wins recognition or wins a competition of some kind, students should be able to celebrate during school. If you work hard, you should get recognized. With everybody's busy schedule it's difficult to arrange to have a cake after school. Some students practice sports because they're on teams, and some clubs meet after school. If you ride the bus, it leaves right after school. If the students have done something great, food should be allowed as part of the celebration.

- 1 The writer provides examples to support his or her position.
- 2 The relationship between the details and the main idea is not always clear. The details should focus more clearly on the main idea.

## ORGANIZATION

I think that when students get hungry, they should be allowed to eat. That includes in class. There are many reasons to allow students to eat during class. Special occasions **1** in class are a time when students should be allowed to eat. If special occasions are okay, **2** then why not other times.

- 1** The first paragraph introduces one of the reasons that the writer will develop in the essay.
- 2** The writer does not introduce the other reasons which are developed in the essay, so the organizational pattern of the essay is unclear to the reader.

## COHERENCE

For example, as students study world cultures, they may have a special day when items from different countries are brought to class. These classes often include foods from different cultures. In Spanish class we learned that a tortilla in Spain is not the same food as what we call a tortilla in America. Many people learn better by experiencing things instead of reading about them. Would you learn better by reading about two kinds of tortillas or by seeing them and eating them? When food can improve test scores, it should not be kept out of the classroom.

1

2

- 1 These ideas are loosely connected, but their connection to the main idea should be clearer.
- 2 The connection between studying cultures and improving test scores is unclear.

### MAIN IDEA

**1** I think that when students get hungry, they should be allowed to eat, even if they are in class. There are several reasons to allow students to eat during class. First, some students have diabetes or other health conditions that make it necessary to eat at times besides lunch period. Special occasions in class are another time when students should be allowed to eat. Finally, not everyone gets hungry at the same time, so people should be allowed to eat when it's right for them.

**2**

- 1** The writer introduces the topic and clearly expresses his or her opinion. There is no confusion about the writer's position.
- 2** The writer provides ample support for the main idea and establishes an overall structure for the essay.

## SUPPORTING DETAILS

Many students have medical conditions that require them to eat at times other than regular meal times. For example, students with diabetes or hyperglycemia need to eat when their blood sugar levels get out of balance. If this happens during class time, the student should be allowed to have a snack so that he or she doesn't miss the lesson. A student can easily take care of his or her medical problem while remaining in class. To deny them food or to send them out of the room is a kind of discrimination.

1

2

- 1 The writer makes a general statement and follows it with a specific supporting example.
- 2 The writer explains the importance of the supporting details.

## ORGANIZATION

**1** There are also special times during class that might include food. For example, as students study world cultures, they may have a special day when items from different countries are brought to class. These cultural activities often include foods from different cultures. In these cases, students should be allowed to eat during class because it is a part of the learning process.

**2**

- 1** The writer restates each of the reasons introduced in the first paragraph.
- 2** The writer develops only one supporting reason in each of the body paragraphs.

## COHERENCE

**1** A final reason to allow students to eat in class is that not everyone gets hungry at the same time. Some people just can't eat right after they get up, so they get hungry late in the morning. These students have a very difficult time concentrating because their bodies need fuel. (I think it is better to allow these students to eat during class than to have them miss out on learning because they're too hungry to think well.) Other people don't like to eat large meals, so they feel better when they eat smaller meals throughout the day. It's important for those students to be able to eat in class. They often can't wait until they get home to eat again. It's not fair to force everybody to eat at the same time.

**2**

- 1** The writer uses transitions that signal the connection between this paragraph and the essay as a whole.
- 2** The writer clearly links the supporting details to the main idea of the essay.

**MAIN IDEA**

I don't usually get scared easily, but last summer one event terrified me more than anything ever has before.

1

- 1 The opening sentence engages the reader's interest and introduces the narrative's main theme: coping with fear. This sentence effectively sets up the story.

## SUPPORTING DETAILS

Amanda Brownly is my next-door neighbor and my best friend. We've known each other since kindergarten. We got through our first day of school together, we celebrate our birthdays together, and hardly a day goes by that we don't see each other. Even our parents are good friends! One Friday afternoon, Amanda and her parents went to visit Amanda's grandparents in Raleigh. I was sitting at the kitchen table, staring at the ceiling, trying to think of something to do that weekend.

Then the phone rang. My mom picked it up and I heard her gasp. I looked up and saw that she had turned very pale. She hung up the phone and said in a low, strange voice, "Honey, go get your dad. We need to get to the hospital right away." I didn't know what had happened, but I ran upstairs to get my dad.

- 1 The narrative contains background description and details that enhance and support the story.
- 2 The writer's use of dialogue makes the story realistic and interesting.

## ORGANIZATION

A few minutes later, some nurses came into the room. They were going to take Amanda to another floor of the hospital. As they were getting her ready to go, she opened her eyes!

**2** When Amanda squeezed my hand and tried to smile at me, I knew she was going to be all right. I wasn't afraid any more.

**1**

- 1** The writer presents the story events in chronological order. The story progresses at an appropriate pace.
- 2** Phrases such as this signal the order of events to the reader.

## COHERENCE

Amanda was in the hospital for a few days, but she and her parents are completely recovered now. Luckily, no one was seriously hurt in the accident. I'll never forget how frightened I was that day. There's nothing scarier than finding out that someone you care about has been hurt.

**1**

- 1** The writer gives the narrative coherence by explaining the importance of events. The final sentence connects all of the events of the narrative to a single main idea.