

Handouts

Teaching Revising and Editing Skills

Gateway Resource TRES0003

Writing Revision Guides

Literary Writing Revision Guide

1. Reread and think about your story.
2. What do you notice? Use the elements in the table below to guide your thinking and revising.
3. Make one or more of the following revisions to improve your story: Replace or substitute all or parts of it, add to it, delete (take things out) from it, or reorder (rearrange) it.

Elements of Literary Writing for Prose Fiction and Literary Nonfiction	
Literary texts express ideas and feelings about real or imagined people, events, and ideas. Basic forms include prose fiction, drama, poetry, and literary nonfiction.	
Narrow focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conveys a story that focuses on a specific (real or imagined) character, event, or idea, based on the topic or prompt • Includes the central conflict or problem (internal or external) that drives the plot • Is sustained throughout the story (does not change) • Is told from a clear and consistent point of view (first or third person)
Logical sequence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents the events in a logical sequence (usually in chronological order) • Includes a beginning, middle, and end • Uses meaningful transitions to connect ideas between paragraphs and sentences and to move the reader through the story
Strong beginning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grabs the reader's attention and makes the reader want to read the rest of the story • Uses sensory details to describe the setting and create the mood (the overall feeling that the story conveys) • Uses vivid language and interesting details to introduce the characters and the central conflict they face • Establishes the point of view (first or third person) • Usually includes the triggering event that starts the story in motion
Strong middle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Shows," rather than "tells," by using a balance of narration, description with sensory and specific details, dialogue, and action to advance the plot and develop the characters and setting • Presents only events directly related to the central conflict • Builds each event on the next, adding suspense until the action reaches a climax (high point)
Strong ending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brings the story to a close • Continues to clearly show, rather than tell, as it resolves the central conflict and/or presents a logical and believable outcome • Leaves the reader with a memorable impression • May reveal or imply the theme (the underlying main idea, message, or lesson about life)
Purposeful and precise word choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes the story clear and easy to understand • Creates the mood and tone (how the author expresses his or her attitude and feelings about the story) • Includes specific, powerful words • Is careful and thoughtful
Varied sentence structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay includes sentences of various types, length, and structure • Sentences are clearly written and make sense • Language and phrasing help the story flow (make it easy to read and follow)

Expository Writing Revision Guide

1. Reread and think about your essay.
2. What do you notice? Use the elements in the table below to guide your thinking and revising.
3. Make one or more of the following revisions to improve your essay: replace or substitute all or parts of it, add to it, delete (take things out) from it, or reorder (rearrange) it.

Elements of Expository Essays	
An expository essay is a type of informational text that clarifies or explains something.	
Clear, concise, and defined thesis (or controlling idea) statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly focuses on the topic or prompt • Tells why the topic is important • Has a narrow focus (is not too general or broad) • Is sustained throughout the essay (does not change)
Specific supporting details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logically connect to the thesis or controlling idea (connection is clear and makes sense) • Are interesting and thoughtfully chosen • Are well developed (add substance to the essay) • “Show,” rather than “tell,” by using examples, facts, reasons, incidents, comparisons, etc.
Clearly organized structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents the ideas in a logical way • Is easy to follow • Shows how all the ideas relate to the thesis or controlling idea • Uses meaningful transitions to connect ideas between paragraphs and sentences
Strong introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grabs the reader’s attention and makes the reader want to read the rest of the essay • Shows why the author’s ideas are important (worth reading) • Provides a brief overview of the topic and background information for the reader • Includes the thesis or controlling idea
Strong conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brings closure to the essay • Accurately synthesizes or resolves information already presented (does not introduce new ideas) • Readdresses the thesis or controlling idea, based on what has been presented (does not restate thesis verbatim) • Uses vivid images and interesting language that leave a memorable impression on the reader
Purposeful and precise word choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes the essay clear and easy to understand • Creates an appropriate tone for expository writing (the attitude an author takes toward the subject and its effect on the reader) • Includes specific, powerful words • Is careful and thoughtful
Varied sentence structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay includes sentences of various types, length, and structure • Sentences are clearly written and make sense • Language and phrasing help the essay flow (make it easy to read and follow)

Analytical Writing Revision Guide

1. Reread and think about your essay.
2. What do you notice? Use the elements in the table below to guide your thinking and revising.
3. Make one or more of the following revisions to improve your essay: Replace or substitute all or parts of it; add to it; delete (take things out) from it; or reorder (rearrange) it.

Elements of Analytical Essays	
An analytical essay analyzes and interprets a work of literature by using specific examples from the text to build a logical argument beyond a summary or description of the work.	
Clear and convincing thesis (or controlling idea)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly focuses on the topic or prompt Presents a defensible interpretation or claim (argument) about the topic Has a narrow focus (is not too general or broad) Is sustained throughout the essay (does not change)
Explicit supporting details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logically connect to the thesis or controlling idea (connection is clear and makes sense) Are interesting, thoughtfully chosen, and focused on the specific aspect of the text the writer is analyzing Present a credible and compelling analytical interpretation of the text (add substance to the essay) “Show,” rather than “tell,” by supporting the interpretation with relevant textual evidence (examples, facts, reasons, incidents, quotations)
Clearly organized structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Builds a logical argument that supports the author’s conclusions and is easy to follow Shows how all the ideas relate to the thesis or controlling idea Uses meaningful transitions to connect the ideas between paragraphs and sentences Smoothly integrates textual evidence into the essay
Strong introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grabs the reader’s attention and makes the reader want to read the rest of the essay Shows why the author’s ideas are worth reading and considering Provides context (background information) about the topic or text Includes the thesis or controlling idea Briefly describes how the author will make his or her argument and present evidence to support it
Strong conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brings closure to the essay Accurately synthesizes what has been proven and clarifies its meaning (does not introduce new ideas) Readdresses the thesis or controlling idea based on what has been presented (does not restate the thesis verbatim) Uses vivid images and interesting language that leave a memorable impression on the reader
Purposeful and precise word choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes the essay clear and easy to understand Creates an appropriate tone for analysis (the attitude an author takes toward the subject and its effect on the reader) Includes specific, powerful words Is careful and thoughtful
Varied sentence structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essay includes sentences of various types, length, and structure Sentences are clearly written and make sense Language and phrasing help the essay flow (make it easy to read and follow)

Personal Narrative Writing Revision Guide

1. Reread and think about your essay.
2. What do you notice? Use the elements in the table below to guide your thinking and revising.
3. Make one or more of the following revisions to improve your essay: Replace or substitute all or parts of it, add to it, delete (take things out) from it, or reorder (rearrange) it.

Elements of Personal Narratives	
A personal narrative is an expressive literary piece written in first person that centers on a particular event in the author's life and may contain vivid description as well as personal commentary and observations.	
Narrow, clearly defined focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on a central idea (theme or message) • Is based on a singular, significant event or experience • Communicates the gist of the experience and its significance to the author's life (meaning, insight, or lesson learned) • Is sustained throughout the essay (does not change)
Interesting details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the situation realistic and believable (clearly show why the experience was meaningful) • Are specific and thoughtfully chosen • Are well developed (add substance to the essay) • "Show," rather than "tell," by appealing to the senses • Include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Descriptions of the characters (their appearance, actions, and words) - Dialogue that moves the narrative along (should sound natural and not be overused) - A vivid description of the setting (where and when)
Logical sequence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents the events in a meaningful order (often chronologically) • Shows how all the events support the clearly defined focus or central idea • Is similar to the plot line of a story (story elements build to a climax that reveals the lessons learned) • Uses meaningful transitions to connect ideas between paragraphs and sentences, move the reader along through the story, and reinforce the link between the experience and its meaning
Strong introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grabs the reader's attention and makes the reader want to read the rest of the essay • Shows why the author's ideas are important (worth reading) • Includes the focus or central idea
Strong conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brings closure to the essay • Includes a strong action, feeling, or image that shows the author's personal growth and/or emphasizes the importance of the event • Leaves the reader with a memorable impression of the personal experience and the author's insight (a new or deeper understanding of the experience)
Purposeful and precise word choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes the essay clear and easy to understand • Creates the tone (how the author uses words to express his or her attitude and feelings about the experience) • Includes specific, powerful words • Is careful and thoughtful
Varied sentence structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay includes sentences of various types, length, and structure • Sentences are clearly written and make sense • Language and phrasing help the essay flow (make it easy to read and follow)

Persuasive Writing Revision Guide

1. Reread and think about your essay.
2. What do you notice? Use the elements in the table below to guide your thinking and revising.
3. Make one or more of the following revisions to improve your essay: Replace or substitute all or parts of it, add to it, delete (take things out) from it, or reorder (rearrange) it.

Elements of Persuasive Essays	
Clear, concise, and defined thesis statement	<p>A persuasive essay is written with the intent to persuade or convince the reader of something.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly presents the writer's position on the topic or prompt • States a supportable position that is open for debate • Has a narrow focus (is not too general or broad) • Is sustained throughout the essay (does not change)
Well developed argument with strong evidential support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logically connects to the thesis (connection is clear and makes sense) • Uses specific supporting evidence to support or defend the thesis (evidence includes examples, facts, expert opinions or quotes, incidents, emotional appeals, or a call to action) • Explains differing points of view (counterarguments) to convince the reader why the author's position is better
Clearly organized structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents the ideas in a logical way • Is easy to follow • Shows how all the ideas relate to the thesis • Uses meaningful transitions to connect ideas between paragraphs and sentences
Strong introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grabs the reader's attention and makes the reader want to read the rest of the essay • Shows why the topic or issue is important (worth reading and considering) • Provides background information for the reader • Includes the thesis
Strong conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brings closure to the essay • Accurately synthesizes or resolves already presented information (does not introduce new ideas) • Readdresses the thesis based on what has been presented (does not restate the thesis verbatim) • Uses vivid images and interesting language that leave a memorable impression on the reader or persuade the reader to take action
Purposeful and precise word choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes the essay clear and easy to understand • Creates the appropriate tone for persuasive writing (the attitude an author takes toward the subject and its effect on the reader) • Includes specific, powerful words (avoids words that show bias or emotion) • Is careful and thoughtful
Varied sentence structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay includes sentences of various types, length, and structure • Sentences are clearly written and make sense • Language and phrasing help the essay flow (make it easy to read and follow)

Expository Summary Writing Revision Guide

1. Reread and think about your essay.
2. What do you notice? Use the elements in the table below to guide your thinking and revising.
3. Make one or more of the following revisions to improve your essay: Replace or substitute all or parts of it, add to it, delete (take things out) from it, or reorder (rearrange) it.

Elements of an Expository Summary	
An expository summary is an accurate, concise restatement, in the writer's own words, of a text's main ideas and important details.	
Clear and concise topic sentence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explains the topic in the writer's own words • Is not copied word for word from the original text • Suggests the content of the summary • Reflects the overall meaning of the original text • Does not include a traditional introduction
All main ideas and important supporting details in body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is written in complete sentences that make sense • Uses own words—not copied word for word from the original text • Uses various types of sentences (i.e., simple, compound, complex) • Varies sentence beginnings • Includes transitional words and phrases
No trivial or unimportant information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on the identified main ideas and important supporting details • Contains only significant facts and details about the topic • Does not elaborate details
No repeated information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sticks to the point • Does not include redundant information • Does not reiterate key ideas • Does not include a conclusion
Purposeful and precise word choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is clear and easy to understand • Includes specific, powerful words • Suggests a category instead of listing all examples or details in the original text

Sample Student Essay: Literary

River Rafting is many things. A hobby, a sport, a memory. But, it is mostly an adventure! If you have ever river rafted with a group of people, you know it is difficult. But, it also makes relationships with those people.

When the Harper family went river rafting in the smokies, they were very inexperienced. They thought it would be a fun family activity that would make their relationship grow. But they never realized how hard it was until they actually got into the raft. They figured out they always needed to be on their guard, they always needed to communicate and most importantly, they always had a job to perform.

During their adventure, they hit many rocks, got stuck many times and had fallen off the raft many times. But they never thought it would be that fun to work together as a family.

Sample Student Essay: Expository

I don't think it is ever okay to break the rules. If rules were ever to be broken, we would live in a chaotic world. The laws, the order, the sports, and schools would be unfair. In cities, driving will not have a speed limit. And people will rob banks and steal supplies. The police will do nothing to stop this. Prisons will not exist with no laws. Technogly programs will be free. Money will be non use. Government with no power. And driving where ever you want. And another way rules shouldn't be broken in, is sports. In a football game, the game would not seem as fair without the rules. With no rules in this sport, there will be no consequences, no penalty's. If there were none, players would do what ever they want. And in schools children would do what ever they want also. Bullying will be fair, everyone will want ever they want and referals would not exist.