

EXPLANATORY SENTENCES

Any number of explanations may be used to support a reason, detail or fact.

It is not necessary to provide an explanation for every reason, detail or fact.

For Example...

“One carrier of these carcinogens is tar, a thick, sticky, dark fluid produced when tobacco burns.”

“A lot of my family lives far away, so we don’t get to see each other very often.”

CONCLUSIONS

Don’t: *Introduce a new topic*

Use phrases such as

As I have said

As I proved

As you can see

Do: *Use words and phrases like*

In fact Obviously Definitely

Certainly To sum up All in all

Truly Clearly Surely

For Example...

“Clearly, the decision of whether or not to smoke should never be taken lightly, as it truly is a matter of life or death.”

“Surely this vacation will be one that I will remember fondly for a long, long time.”

OCCASION/POSITION STATEMENTS

A complex statement that begins like this...

<i>If</i>	<i>In order that</i>	<i>As</i>
<i>After</i>	<i>Even though</i>	<i>Until</i>
<i>Since</i>	<i>Although</i>	<i>Where</i>
<i>Before</i>	<i>While</i>	<i>Though</i>
<i>So that</i>	<i>When</i>	<i>Even if</i>
<i>Whenever</i>	<i>Even</i>	<i>Wherever</i>
<i>As long as</i>	<i>As if</i>	<i>As soon as</i>

For Example...

“Before you make the decision to light up a cigarette, consider the problems caused by smoking.”

“Although my family and I have taken many wonderful vacations, none was more fun and exciting than our camping trip to the Grand Canyon.”

TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSIONS

Introduce new reasons, details or facts using transition sets like these...

<i>First- second- third</i>	<i>First-in-addition-finally</i>
<i>One-the other</i>	<i>First-also-besides</i>
<i>First of all- also</i>	<i>One example- another example</i>
<i>The first-a second</i>	<i>First of all-next-the final</i>
<i>To begin- then-consequently</i>	<i>To begin-at the same time -finally</i>
<i>To start-furthermore- additionally- last</i>	
<i>In the first place-after that- later on- at last</i>	

For Example...

“First, a cigarette has been scientifically shown to contain hundreds of carcinogens.”

“First of all, all of my aunts and uncles and cousins joined us for the trip.”

OCCASION/POSITION STATEMENTS

Occasion = first part of topic sentence

Introduces your reason for writing

Position = states what you plan to prove or explain in paragraph

TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSIONS

You need a transition each time you introduce a new reason, detail or fact.

EXPLANATORY SENTENCES

Use explanatory sentences or statements to provide examples and explanations beyond the reason, detail or fact.

These explanatory sentences should give more information or an example of a reason, detail or fact.

CONCLUSIONS

Restate your position.

Use key words from your topic sentence.

Summarize; convince readers of your position, challenge them to think about the issue, or encourage them to take action.

The Writing Process

Some common misconceptions about writing are that writing is an innate talent, and that good writers put pen to paper and presto-out flows perfect, well developed, well reasoned, and well organized prose-and on the first try, no less! Learning that writing is a process of discovering and revising ideas, and that good writers learn strategies for composing and communicating effectively, will help you to overcome any fear you might feel about not having the talent to write well.

The writing units in this AVID guide divide the steps of the writing process into the following categories:

Individual and Collaborative Prewriting
Individual and Collaborative Drafting
Individual and Response Group Revision
Individual and Collaborative Editing
Self-Evaluation

With time and practice, you should be able to internalize the steps of the writing process and apply them to writing done within and outside AVID. The following definitions of terms should familiarize or reacquaint you with the components included in these lessons.



RUBRICS A rubric is a scoring guide, an outline of scores and the characteristics of their writing equivalents. Rubrics lead readers toward evaluating writing as a whole, acknowledging the features of a piece that weave together to produce its effect.

Almost all of the **AVID** writing units contain a rubric specific to the assignment. You may find it helpful to consult the rubric several times during the course of working through an assignment.

MODELS Examples of the kind of writing in which you are engaged can be powerful and provide you with ideas about how to approach, structure and develop a piece of writing. Published works, past student papers and teacher writing are fine sources for models.

Individual and Collaborative Prewriting

QUICKWRITING Given a prompt, write nonstop for a given amount of time, usually two to five minutes. Your pen should not leave the paper. If you cannot think of anything to write, rewrite the last word or phrase you've written until a new idea weaves its way into the writing.

CLUSTERING Clustering helps writers discover the ideas and patterns of organization that characterize strong writing.

To practice clustering, choose a broad idea like "Childhood," "Tune," "Fear" or "Happiness" to serve as the nucleus of your cluster.

Then, do the following:

1. Write the nucleus word in the center of a page. Draw a circle around it.
2. Write down all of the words and phrases that you associate with the nucleus word and with other words that you add.

Circle each word/phrase and connect it to the nucleus or to the part of the cluster that prompted it. Don't censor yourself. Write down everything that comes to mind.

3. Generate as many associations as you can.

The following is an example of a cluster and a polished quick write that was generated by the clustering process. The nucleus word was "green."

Individual and Collaborative Drafting

Whether solitary or collaborative, the drafting stage of the writing process focuses on content, logic of presentation, audience, purpose and form, and allows for experimentation. If you are accustomed to thinking of writing as a one-draft experience, may take you some practice to let go of concerns about mechanics and evaluation while drafting. Remember, drafting is about preliminary blueprints, rather than finished skyscrapers.

Individual and Response Group Revision

Revision means, literally, to “re-see,” to see something again. Revision is not simply rewriting the same work in neater handwriting or running a fresh copy out of the word processor. During revision, writers take what has *already* been committed to paper, think about it, consider its effect upon readers, and change it as needed to take into account the purpose of the writing, the audience, the standards by which it might be evaluated and writer’s vision. The focus of revision is the content of a piece and sometimes the way in which it is organized; mechanics are addressed later. Getting response to writing before reaches its final form is essential to the process of revision.

Sharing writing, no matter how terrifying, completes its purpose: writing must communicate with others. While sharing your own writing with others before it is in its polished form may be frightening, it can provide you with meaningful suggestions for revision and reminders that your audience is broader than your teacher alone. And, as respond to the writing of other students, analyzing strengths and weaknesses, contribute to the effectiveness of their final pieces, you will develop critical abilities that will be transferred to your own work. Initially, you may be reluctant to be critical of someone else’s writing, fearful that you will hurt feelings, appear arrogant or have nothing help to contribute. But, the best critics are often the best friends. Honest, desirous of seeing others do their best, constructive in their criticism. Sharing and responding to writing practice and courage; appreciation and effective writing are almost always the tangible results of your investment in the process.

Response formats, more than any other facet of the writing process practiced in AVID, have been praised *by* AVID alumni. Many college writing courses rely on response group to form the core of their programs, and few college freshmen are as prepared as AVID students to participate in and benefit from them.

ORAL RESPONSE GROUPS are structured as follows:

1. Assemble a group of three to five students.
2. One student reads her/his paper aloud while group members listen.
3. The same student reads her/his paper aloud again. During this second read response group members jot down comments.

Comments should be coded as follows:

- + for words, phrases or ideas that strike the listener favorably
- for words, phrases or ideas that seem less effective
- ? for words, phrases or ideas that are unclear

Comments can be listed and coded in the order in which they are heard, or noted in columns marked with the +, -,? symbols.

As group members take notes, they need only record the key words that can remind them of a passage for commentary.

4. After the second reading, group members share their comments with the writer while the writer takes notes, coding them as the group members coded theirs.

While comments are being shared, **THE WRITER IS SILENT**: no defense, no apologies, no explanations.

Each group member should begin with a comment such as, “I really liked and phrase additional commentary in ways such as this: “I wasn’t sure what you meant by,” “It doesn’t seem effective when,” “You might want to rethink....” Comments should be as specific as possible.

Group members may also ask the writer to reread particular passages to help them phrase their commentary.

Writers should note everything, even repeat comments, indicating repetitions with check marks. The circle of comments may be repeated; sometimes the commentary of others reminds responders of additional ideas.

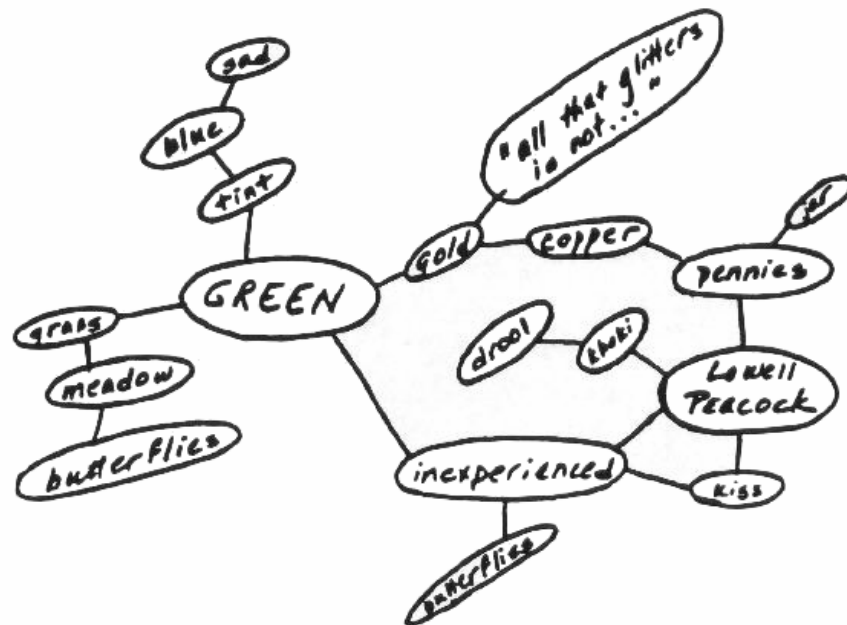
5. At the end of the commentary, the writer may ask for clarification of any of the group members’ comments and/or suggestions for how to work with specific parts of the writing, but again, there should be no defense or explanation from the writer.

6. The response group then continues with the reading of another writer’s work, following the same format.

The oral response group process can be repeated several times while writing is being revised to gauge the effectiveness of changes being made to a piece.

The following is an example of the draft of an opening paragraph of a college essay, the critique of one response group member, the writer’s coded comments of group response and a revision of the paragraph after several readings to the response group.

Model: Cluster and Polished Quickwrite



It was not unusual for Lowell Peacock to come over in the afternoons during the summer. He had a slowly—f hung jar of old pennies that he carted everywhere with him on his two-wheeler. His entire wardrobe looked to be khaki or drab faded blue. He was never without an army helmet that he claimed his uncle had been wearing when he was shot down by “the other side” during World War II. Regardless of its morbid background, the helmet served the cosmetic purpose of covering Lowell’s untamable cowlick and huge, protruding ears.

Thinking back, it seems to me that Lowell was always drooling. There came a day when Lowell attempted to impress upon me the importance of being kissed by him. He talked about his proposed kiss ceaselessly — drooling, as I recall — as we patiently paced from backyard to front. Pausing in the garage to collect my butterfly net. Lowell unexpectedly and nearly unsuccessfully threw his lips at me.

Thankfully, it was a brief kiss. Lowell Peacock was without a doubt green, inexperienced in the ways of winning seven year old women. I stepped forcefully on his hightop sneakers, flipped a long blond braid dramatically across his face fully intending to draw blood, and strode into the house, slamming the door behind me. Later that evening I emerged to find a jar of copper-green pennies weighting down the trunk of our Ford. It was no use: my first kiss would be a priceless experience.