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Because an essay is like an expanded paragraph, the methods for developing and organizing a paragraph that you learned in Unit 3—illustration, process, and so forth—can also be used to develop an entire essay. The rest of this chapter will show you how.

Part A

The Illustration Essay

The **illustration** essay is one of the most frequently used in college writing and in business. For papers and exams in history, psychology, health, English, and other subjects, you will often be asked to develop a main point with examples. In a letter of job application, you might wish to give examples of achievements that demonstrate your special skills.

Here is an illustration essay:

Libraries of the Future—Now

(1) When you think of the word *library*, do you picture an old-fashioned building, dusty books, and stern librarians? Think instead of an electronic theme park for readers, where people from tots to seniors can not only read books from the stacks around them, but explore cyberspace from one of many computer terminals. Imagine yourself calling up documents from libraries around the world or working with other students on multimedia projects. In fact, the future has arrived in a few pioneering libraries that are using technology to offer more resources to library users than ever before.

(2) For instance, the San Francisco Public Library is helping its diverse community enter the information age. At San Francisco's many branch libraries, visitors can now surf the Internet from public terminals, but the hub of the system is the \$140 million San Francisco Main Public Library building, which opened in 1996. The seven-story building features 300 computer terminals where users can access catalogues, databases, and the World Wide Web. Another 1,100 users can plug their own laptops into the library's outlets. The huge children's book room has many more computers on child-sized tables. The San Francisco Library appears to be achieving its goal. In its first year, library visits jumped from 1.1 million to 2.1 million, and the number of library-card holders tripled.

(3) A second example of today's high-tech libraries is the private Vatican Library in Rome. The Vatican, headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church, has one of the finest collections of manuscripts and books in the world. The entire catalogue of this collection is now available on the Internet. Yet until recently, only about 2,000 scholars a year could come to Rome and examine such costly treasures as an ancient text handwritten on antelope skin or a perfect Gutenberg Bible. Now, with help from IBM, the Vatican is making digital images of these documents. In an underground, atom bomb-proof vault where the originals are kept, two technicians are scanning one page at a time with a special camera. Soon anyone will be able to see 20,000 rare, perfectly colored images and to enlarge the tiniest details on his or her computer screen.

(4) An even more futuristic library is the University of Michigan's new Media Union. Besides holding the University's art and architecture libraries, the 225,000-square-foot Media Union contains 500 computer workstations, computer training areas, four interactive multimedia classrooms, video and sound production facilities, a theater, a virtual reality and animation lab, a gallery, and, last but not least, books. Students can experience virtual worlds in dance, engineering, art, architecture, and computer science. Imagine two engineering students playing with 3-D designs of a century-old bridge to come up with a dynamic new form or a dance student moving with a virtual dance performance in real time. This exciting library lets people in many fields work together on new creations.

(5) These three unique libraries are helping to adapt the printed past to a digital future. However, they are still the exception, not the rule. Transforming our libraries requires millions of private and public dollars. As citizens, we can urge our elected officials to support the efforts of libraries as they help move all our

citizens into the information age. When many of us were children, libraries opened the door to a world of dreams through books. The high-tech libraries of the future will open doors we cannot yet imagine.

- The **thesis statement** of an illustration essay states the writer's central point—a general statement that the rest of the essay will develop with examples.
- Which sentence in the introductory paragraph is the thesis statement?

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- How many **examples** does the writer use to develop the thesis statement? What are they?

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- Underline the topic sentence of each supporting paragraph.
 - The thesis statement and topic sentences setting forth the three examples create an **outline** for this essay. The writer no doubt made such a plan or an outline before she wrote the first draft.

Before writing an illustration essay, you may wish to reread Chapter 5, "Illustration." As you pick a topic and plan your illustration essay, make sure your thesis statement can be richly developed by examples. Then brainstorm or freewrite, jotting down as many possible examples as you can think of; choose the best two or three examples. If you devote one paragraph to each example, each topic sentence should introduce the example to be developed. As you revise, make sure you have fully discussed each example, including all necessary details and facts.

PRACTICE 1 Choose a topic from the following list or use a topic that you or your instructor has chosen. Write an illustration essay, referring to the essay checklist at the end of Chapter 14.

Suggested Topics: The Illustration Essay

1. Good deeds that backfired
2. Inventions that probably will shape the twenty-first century
3. Failure as the best teacher
4. TV talk show hosts who send a positive message (or who _____)
5. Small events that changed lives
6. Memorable neighbors (professors, friends, and so on)
7. Currently cool hairstyles or clothing styles
8. Unusual places to go on dates (or to study, de-stress, get married, and so on)
9. Successful (or unsuccessful) college students

10. Musicians or artists of a particular group (R&B, tropical Latin, surrealist, French impressionist, and so on)
11. Writer's choice: _____

Part B

The Narrative Essay

The narrative essay is used frequently in college writing. For instance, in a history course you might be assigned a paper on the major battles of World War I or be given an essay examination on the story of women's struggle to gain the right to vote. An English teacher may ask you to write a composition in which you retell a meaningful incident or personal experience. In all of these instances, your ability to organize facts and details in clear chronological, or time, order—to tell a story well—will be a crucial factor in the success of your paper.

Here is a narrative essay:

Maya Lin's Vietnam War Memorial

(1) The Vietnam War was the longest war in United States history, lasting from 1965 until 1975. Also our most controversial war, it left a deep wound in the nation's conscience. The creation of the Vietnam War Memorial helped heal this wound and put an unknown architecture student into the history books.

(2) In 1980, when the call went out for designs for a Vietnam War Memorial, no one could have predicted that as many as 14,000 entries would be submitted. The rules were clear. The memorial had to be contemplative, harmonize with its surroundings, list the names of those dead or missing, and—most important—make no political statement about the war. When the judges, all well-known architects and sculptors, met in April 1981, they unanimously chose entry number 1026. The winner was Maya Lin, a twenty-one-year-old Asian American architecture student who, ironically, was too young to have had any direct experience of the war.

(3) Lin envisioned shining black granite slabs embedded in a long V-shaped trench, with one end pointing toward the Lincoln Memorial and the other toward the Washington Monument. She defined the trench as a cut in the earth, "an initial violence that in time would heal." Names would be carved into the granite in the order of the dates on which the soldiers had died or disappeared. Lin felt that finding a name on the memorial with the help of a directory would be like finding a body on a battlefield.

(4) Although her design satisfied all the contest criteria and was the judges' clear favorite, it aroused much controversy. Some critics called it a "black gash of shame and sorrow," labeling it unpatriotic, unheroic, and morbid. They were upset that the memorial contained no flags, no statues of soldiers, and no inscription other than the names. Privately, some complained that Lin was too young to win the contest—and that she was female besides. She fought back. She claimed that a flag would make the green area around the memorial look like a golf course and that a traditional statue on her modern structure would be like a mustache drawn

on someone else's portrait. At last, a compromise was reached: A flag and a statue were added to the memorial, and the critics withdrew their complaints. On Veterans Day, November 11, 1982, the Vietnam War Memorial was finally dedicated.

(5) Since then, the memorial has become the most popular site in Washington, D.C. Some visit to see the monument and pay tribute to those who died in the war. Others come to locate and touch the names of loved ones. As they stand before the wall, they also learn the names of those who served and died with their relatives and friends. When the rain falls, all the names seem to disappear. Visitors often leave memorials of their own—flowers, notes to the departed, bits of old uniforms. A place of national mourning and of love, Maya Lin's monument has helped heal the wounds of the Vietnam War.

- The thesis statement of a narrative essay gives the point of the essay.
- What is the thesis statement of the essay?

- Paragraphs 2, 4, and 5 of this essay tell in chronological order the incidents of the narrative.
- What are the incidents?

- What is the main idea of paragraph 3?

- Paragraph 1 provides background information that helps the reader understand the narrative.
- What background material is given in this paragraph?

Before writing a narrative essay, you may wish to reread Chapter 6, "Narration." Make sure that your thesis statement clearly states the point of your narrative. Organize all the incidents and details in chronological, or time, order, in general beginning with the earliest event and ending with the latest. Be sure to supply any necessary background information. As you plan your essay, pay careful attention to paragraphing; if your narrative consists of just a few major incidents, you may wish to devote one paragraph to each one. Use transitional expressions that indicate time order to help your reader follow the narrative easily.

PRACTICE 2 Choose a topic from the following list or use a topic that you or your instructor has chosen. Write a narrative essay, referring to the essay checklist at the end of Chapter 14.

Suggested Topics: The Narrative Essay

1. A risk that paid off
2. How someone chose his or her career
3. The story behind a key scientific discovery or invention
4. An event that changed your view of yourself
5. An unforgettable incident you witnessed
6. An important historical event
7. A time someone acted with courage or cowardice
8. The plot line of a movie or TV show you would like to produce
9. Learning a new language (or other subject or skill)
10. Someone's battle with a serious illness
11. Writer's choice: _____

Part C

The Descriptive Essay

Although paragraphs of **description** are more common than whole essays, you will sometimes need to write a descriptive essay. In science labs, you may need to describe accurately cells under a microscope or a certain kind of rock. In business, you might have to describe a product, piece of equipment, or the behavior of consumers in a test group. Travel writers frequently use description, and personal letters often call on your descriptive powers.

Here is a descriptive essay:

The Day of the Dead

(1) The most important holiday in Mexico is the Day of the Dead, *El Día de Los Muertos*. Surprisingly, this holiday is anything but depressing. In the weeks before, Mexicans excitedly prepare to welcome the souls of the dead, who come back each year to visit the living. From October 31 through November 2 this year, I attended this fiesta with my roommate Manuel. By sharing Day of the Dead activities in his family's home, in the marketplace, and in a cemetery, I have observed that Mexicans, unlike other North Americans, accept and celebrate death as a part of life.

(2) For this holiday, the home altar, or *ofrenda*, lovingly celebrates the dead. In the Lopez home, a trail of marigold petals and the rich smell of incense led us from the front door to the altar. The bright orange marigold blooms, the flowers of the dead, also trimmed a card table overflowing with everything the dead would need to take up their lives again. For Manuel's Uncle Angel there was a fragrant bowl of *mole*,* a glass of tequila, cigars, playing cards, and two Miles Davis jazz CDs. For

**mole*: a spicy sauce made with unsweetened chocolate

Manuel's cousin Lucia, who died at eighteen months, there was a worn stuffed puppy, a coral blanket, and a bowl of the rice pudding she loved. Heavy black and yellow beeswax candles threw a soft glow on photos of Angel and Lucia. It was as if the dead had never left and would always have a place of honor.

(3) While death is given an honored place in the home, it is celebrated with humor and mockery in the marketplace. Here the skeleton, or *calavera*, rules. Shops sell sugar skulls, humorous bone figures, and even skeletons made of flowers. At the candy store, Manuel's niece picked out a white chocolate skull decorated with blue icing and magenta sequins in the eye sockets. In many bakeries, skull-and-crossbones designs decorated the delicious "bread of the dead." Most impressive were the stalls filled with *calacas*, handmade wooden skeletons, some no bigger than my thumb. The shelves showed a lively afterlife where skeleton musicians played in a band, skeleton writers tapped bony fingers on tiny typewriters, and teenage skeletons hoisted boom boxes on their matchstick-sized shoulder bones.

(4) On the evening of November first, reverence and fun combined in an all-night vigil at the cemetery. On a path outside the cemetery gate, rows of vendors sold soft drinks and cotton candy as if it were a sporting event. Men drank a strong fermented cactus beverage called *pulque* and played cards at picnic tables. The loud music of a mariachi band serenaded the dead, who would come back to eat the food laid out for them on the graves. Old grandmothers wearing hand-woven shawls mourned and wept while children chased each other around the pink- and blue-painted graves. Nobody scolded the children. Life and death did not seem so separate.

(5) While I have always felt fearful in cemeteries at home, there I felt excited and hopeful. When a soft breeze made the rows of candles flicker, I wondered if the souls of the children, the *angelitos*, had come back, laughing and giggling. Or was it the real children I heard laughing? I really didn't know. But I felt more alive than ever, waiting for the dead to arrive in a dusty cemetery in Mexico.

—Jason Eady (Student)

- The **thesis statement** of a descriptive essay says what will be described and sometimes gives an overall impression of it or tells how the writer will approach the subject. Which sentence in the introductory paragraph is the thesis statement?

- Each paragraph in the body of this essay describes one scene or aspect of the topic. How many scenes or aspects are described, and what are they?

- What kind of order does the writer follow in organizing paragraph 2?

- Paragraph 5 completes and concludes the essay. How effective is this student's conclusion?

- Note that the thesis statement and topic sentences make an outline for the whole essay.

Before writing an essay of description, you may wish to reread Chapter 7, "Description." Make sure that your thesis statement clearly sets forth the precise subject your essay will describe. Use your senses—sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch—as you jot down ideas for the body. As you plan, pay special attention to organizing details and observations; space order is often the best way to organize a description. As you revise, pay special attention to the richness and exactness of your language and details; these are what make good descriptions come alive.

PRACTICE 3 Choose a topic from the following list or use a topic that you or your instructor has chosen. Write an essay of description, referring to the essay checklist at the end of Chapter 14.

Suggested Topics: The Descriptive Essay

1. The decorations and rituals of a holiday you know
2. A person or animal you have closely observed
3. The scene of a historic event or battle as you imagine it
4. A school, landfill, church, prison, store, health club, or other public place
5. A tourist attraction or a place of natural beauty
6. College classrooms in the late twenty-first century
7. A computer, motorcycle, or piece of equipment from your job
8. A place you know from travel or reading
9. Your family portrait
10. A scene you will never forget
11. Writer's choice: _____

Part D

The Process Essay

The process essay is frequently used in college and business. In psychology, for example, you might describe the stages of personality development. In history, you might explain the process of electing a president or how a battle was won or

lost, while in business, you might set forth the steps of an advertising campaign. In science labs, you will often have to record the stages of an experiment.

Here is a process essay:

How to Prepare for a Final Exam

(1) At the end of my first semester at college, I postponed thinking about final examinations, desperately crammed the night before, drank enough coffee to keep the city of Cincinnati awake, and then got C's and D's. I have since realized that the students who got A's on their finals weren't just lucky; they knew how to *prepare*. There are many different ways to prepare for a final examination, and each individual must perfect his or her own style, but over the years, I have developed a method that works for me.

(2) First, when your professor announces the date, time, and place of the final—usually at least two weeks before—ask questions and take careful notes on the answers. What chapters will be covered? What kinds of questions will the test contain? What materials and topics are most important? The information you gather will help you study more effectively.

(3) Next, survey all the textbook chapters the test will cover, using a highlighter or colored pen to mark important ideas and sections to be studied later. Many textbooks emphasize key ideas with boldface titles or headlines; others are written so that key ideas appear in the topic sentences at the beginning of each paragraph. Pay attention to these guides as you read.

(4) Third, survey your class notes in the same fashion, marking important ideas. If your notes are messy or disorganized, you might want to rewrite them for easy reference later.

(5) Fourth, decide approximately how many hours you will need to study. Get a calendar and clearly mark off the hours each week that you will devote to in-depth studying. If possible, set aside specific times: Thursday from 1 to 2 P.M., Friday from 6 to 8 P.M., and so on. If you have trouble committing yourself, schedule study time with a friend; but pick someone as serious as you are about getting good grades.

(6) Fifth, begin studying systematically, choosing a quiet place free from distractions in which to work—the library, a dorm room, whatever helps you concentrate. One of my friends can study only in his attic; another, in her car. As you review the textbook and your notes, ask yourself questions based on your reading. From class discussions, try to spot the professor's priorities and to guess what questions might appear on the exam. Be creative; one friend of mine puts important study material on cassette tapes, which he plays walking to and from school.

(7) Finally, at least three days before the exam, start reviewing. At the least opportunity, refer to your notes, even if you are not prepared to digest all the material. Use the moments when you are drinking your orange juice or riding the bus; just looking at the material can promote learning. By the night before the exam, you should know everything you want to know—and allow for a good night's sleep!

(8) By following these simple procedures, you may find, as I do, that you are the most prepared person in the exam room, confident that you studied thoroughly enough to do well on the exam.

—Mark Reyes (Student)

- The thesis statement in a process essay tells the reader what process the rest of the essay will describe.
- What is the thesis statement in this essay?

- What process will be described?

- How many steps make up this process, and what are they?

- What kind of order does the writer use to organize his essay?

Before writing a process essay, you may wish to reread Chapter 8, "Process." The thesis statement should clearly set forth the process you intend to describe. As you plan your essay, jot down all the necessary steps or stages and put them in logical order. As you revise, make sure you have fully and clearly explained each step so that a reader who may not be familiar with the subject matter can follow easily. Clear language and logical organization are the keys to good process writing. Pay special attention to paragraphing; if the process consists of just three or four steps, you may wish to devote one paragraph to each step. If the steps are short or numerous, you will probably wish to combine two or three steps in each paragraph.

PRACTICE 4 Choose a topic from the list below or use a topic that you or your instructor has chosen. Write a process essay, referring to the essay checklist at the end of Chapter 14.

Suggested Topics: The Process Essay

1. How someone achieved success
2. How to build a web site
3. How to get in shape
4. How a cell phone can ruin a date (or other social occasion)
5. How to get action on a community problem
6. How to teach a child a skill or value
7. The yearly cycle of a crop (corn, wheat, oranges, cocoa, and so on)

8. How to impress the boss
9. A process you learned in another course (stages of human moral development, how a lake becomes a meadow, and so on)
10. How to get an A in _____
11. Writer's choice: _____

Part E

The Definition Essay

Although paragraphs of **definition** are more common in college writing than essays are, you may at some time have to write a definition essay. In a computer course, for example, you might be called on to define *Internet* and *intranet*. In psychology, you might need to define the *Oedipus complex*, or in biology, the terms *DNA* or *spontaneous remission*. Sometimes defining at length a term people think they know can be illuminating.

Here is a definition essay:

Winning

(1) The dictionary defines winning as "achieving victory over others in a competition, receiving a prize or reward for achievement." Yet some of the most meaningful wins of my life were victories over no other person, and I can remember winning when there was no prize for performance. To me, winning means overcoming obstacles.

(2) My first experience of winning occurred in elementary school gym. Nearly every day, after the preparatory pushups and squat-thrusts, we had to run relays. Although I had asthma as a child, I won many races. My chest would burn terribly for a few minutes, but it was worth it to feel so proud—not because I'd beaten others or won a prize, but because I'd overcome a handicap. (By the way, I "outgrew" my asthma by age eleven.)

(3) In high school, I had another experience of winning. Although I loved reading about biology, I could not bring myself to dissect a frog in lab. I hated the smell of the dead animals, and the idea of cutting them open disgusted me. Every time I tried, my hands would shake and my stomach would turn. Worst of all, my biology teacher reacted to my futile attempts with contempt. After an upsetting couple of weeks, I decided to get hold of myself. I realized that I was overreacting. "The animals are already dead," I told myself. With determination, I swept into my next lab period, walked up to the table, and with one swift stroke, slit open a frog. After that, I excelled in biology. I had won again.

(4) I consider the fact that I am now attending college winning. To get here, I had to surmount many obstacles, both outside and inside myself. College costs money, and I don't have much of it. College takes time, and I don't have much of that either with a little son to care for. But I overcame these obstacles and a bigger one still—lack of confidence in myself. I had to keep saying, "I won't give up." And here I am, winning!

(5) These examples should clarify what winning means to me. I don't trust anything that comes too easily. In fact, I expect the road to be rocky, and I appreciate a win more if I have to work, sacrifice, and overcome. This is a positive drive for me, the very spirit of winning.

—Audrey Holmes (Student)

- The **thesis statement** of a definition essay tells the reader what term will be defined and usually defines it as well.
- Which sentence in the introductory paragraph is the thesis statement?

- What is the writer's **definition** of *winning*?

- Underline the topic sentences of paragraphs 2, 3, and 4.
- How do paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 develop the thesis statement?

- What **order** does the writer follow in paragraphs 2, 3, and 4?

Before writing a definition essay, you may wish to reread Chapter 9, "Definition." Choose a word or term that truly interests you, one about which you have something to say. Decide what type of definition you will use and write the thesis statement, which should state and define your term. Then brainstorm ideas to explain your definition. Consider using two or three examples to develop the term—the way the writer does in the preceding essay—devoting one paragraph to each example. As you revise, make sure your writing is very clear, so the reader knows exactly what you mean.

PRACTICE 5 Choose a topic from the following list or one that you or your instructor has chosen. Write a definition essay, referring to the essay checklist at the end of Chapter 14.

Suggested Topics: The Definition Essay

1. A special term from sports, music, art, science, or technology
2. Tolerance
3. A friend

4. An environmental term (*endangered species, biodiversity, wind chill, global warming, and so on*)
5. A breed of dog or other animal
6. Sexual harassment
7. Maturity
8. A slang term in current use
9. A term from another language (*salsa, joie de vivre, machismo, zeitgeist, and so on*)
10. A disease or medical condition
11. Writer's choice: _____

Part F

The Comparison or Contrast Essay

Essays of **comparison** or **contrast** are frequently called for in college courses. In an English or a drama class, you might be asked to contrast two of Shakespeare's villains—perhaps Iago and Claudius. In psychology, you might have to contrast the training of the clinical psychologist and that of the psychiatrist, or in history, to compare ancient Greek and Roman religions.

Does the following essay compare or contrast?

E-Notes from an Online Learner

(1) This year I attended my first U.S. history class at midnight, clad in my dancing cow pajamas and fluffy slippers. No, I was not taking part in some bizarre campus ritual. I am enrolled in two courses in the University of Houston's Distance Education Program. Although I took classes on campus at the same college last year, my experiences in the traditional classroom and in the virtual classroom have been vastly different.

(2) Attending online courses has proved more convenient for me than traveling to regular classes each day. Because I live over an hour away from campus, I was often stalled in traffic when my 8:00 A.M. psychology lecture was beginning. Then I spent the last half hour of my afternoon English class praying that the discussion—however lively and interesting—would not go past 4:00 P.M. and make me late to pick up my son at day care. In contrast, my online classes are always convenient to attend because I set my own schedule. Lectures for my history survey course are posted to the class web site, so I can log on whenever I want to read new material or review. My writing seminar is "asynchronous." This means that students and instructors communicate at their convenience on an electronic bulletin board. I can email my questions, file homework, and respond to other students' work at night or on weekends without ever leaving my apartment.

(3) Though some students miss the human energy of a real classroom, the online format actually encourages me to participate more in discussions. As a shy

woman who is older than many of my peers, I used to hide in the back row to avoid having to speak. I only answered questions when called upon. On the other hand, writing online, I am more confident. I have time to think about what I want to say, and I know people are not judging me by anything except my ideas. Even though bulletin board discussions can be painfully slow and disjointed compared to the back-and-forth of a great classroom discussion, I like the equality in a virtual classroom. Surprisingly, there I feel freer to be the real me.

(4) The biggest difference in moving from a regular classroom to a virtual one, in my view, is learning to be self-motivated. Attending classes on campus, I was motivated by the personal involvement of my instructors. I also caught that group adrenaline rush, seeing other students hunched over their notebooks in a lecture hall or coffeehouse. While my online courses still require papers to be written each week and tests to be completed within a certain time, now no instructor is prodding me to get busy. Instead, only the soft bubbling noise of my computer's aquarium screen saver reminds me to tap the keyboard and dive into my coursework. Fortunately, I am self-motivated and focused. As a returning student with a job and a child, I have to be. Honestly, however, I have already seen some of my online classmates post homework assignments later and later until they drop off the screen entirely.

(5) Overall, my experience with online classes has been more positive than my experience on campus, but online learning is not for everyone. So far I find online classes convenient, welcoming for self-expression, and well-suited to my particular personality, which is organized, shy, and prone to bouts of midnight energy. In fact, it's 12:14 A.M. now as I input the final draft of this essay assignment. My son is asleep in the next room and my cat, Miss Fleason, is nuzzling my hot pink fluffy slippers.

—Brenda Wilson (Student)

- The thesis statement of a comparison or contrast essay tells what two persons or things will be compared or contrasted.

- What is the thesis statement of this essay?

- Will this essay **compare** or **contrast** the two kinds of classrooms? What word or words in the thesis indicate this?

- Does the writer discuss all points about A and then all points about B, or skip back and forth from A to B?

- Note that the thesis statement and topic sentences make an **outline** for this essay.

Before you plan or outline your essay, you may wish to reread Chapter 10, "Comparison and Contrast." Bear in mind, as you choose a subject, that the most interesting essays usually compare two things that are different or contrast two things that are similar. Otherwise, you run the risk of saying the obvious ("Cats and dogs are two different animals").

Here are a few tips to keep in mind as you write your thesis statement: Don't just say that A and B are similar or different; instead, say *in what way* A and B are similar or different, as the writer does on pages 210–211. You may wish to use this form for a contrast thesis: *Although A and B have this similarity, they are different in these ways.* And for a comparison: *Although A and B are unlike in this way, they are similar in these ways.*

As you plan the body of your essay, you may wish to make a chart of all your points of comparison or contrast. In any case, if you discuss the food, service, price, and atmosphere of Restaurant A, you must discuss the food, service, price, and atmosphere of Restaurant B as well.

In your essay, you can first discuss A (one paragraph), then discuss B (one paragraph), or you can skip back and forth between A and B (one paragraph on point one, A and B, one paragraph on point two, A and B, and one paragraph on point three, A and B). Refer to the charts in Chapter 10, page 118.

PRACTICE 6 Choose a topic from the list below or use a topic that you or your instructor has chosen. Write either a comparison or a contrast essay, referring to the essay checklist at the end of Chapter 14.

Suggested Topics: The Comparison or Contrast Essay

1. Shopping at a mall and shopping online
2. Your mother's or father's childhood and your own
3. Two cultural attitudes about one subject
4. A neighborhood store and a chain store (bookstore, restaurant, music store, and so on)
5. Two entertainers, athletes, philosophers, politicians, or other public figures
6. Two views on a controversial issue
7. Two houses or apartments that you know well
8. A traditional doctor and an alternative healer
9. A book and a movie made from that book
10. Two pets
11. Writer's choice: _____

Part G

The Classification Essay

The classification essay is useful in college and business. In music, for example, you might have to classify Mozart's compositions according to the musical periods of his life. A retail business might classify items in stock according to popularity—how frequently they must be reordered. All plants, animals, rocks, and stars are classified by scientists. A recent book even classified L.A. gangs and their tattoos.

Although the classification essay is usually serious, the pattern can make a good humorous essay, as this essay shows:

The Potato Scale

(1) For years, television has been the great American pastime. Nearly every household has at least one TV, which means that people are spending time watching it, unless, of course, they bought it to serve as a plant stand. Television viewers can be grouped in many ways—by the type of shows they watch (but there is no accounting for taste) or by hours per week of watching (but that seems unfair since a working, twelve-hour-a-week viewer could conceivably become a fifty-hour-a-week viewer if he or she were out of a job). So I have developed the Potato Scale. The four major categories of the Potato Scale rank TV viewers on a combination of leisure time spent watching, intensity of watching, and the desire to watch versus the desire to engage in other activities.

(2) First, we have the True Couch Potatoes. They are diehard viewers who, when home, will be found in front of their televisions. They no longer eat in the dining room, and if you visit them, the television stays on. *TV Guide* is their Bible. They will plan other activities and chores around their viewing time, always hoping to accomplish these tasks in front of the tube. If a presidential address is on every channel but one, and they dislike the president, they will tune in that one channel, be it Bugs Bunny reruns or Polynesian barge cooking. These potatoes would never consider turning off the box.

(3) The second group consists of the Pseudo Couch Potatoes. These are scheduled potatoes. They have outside interests and actually eat at the table, but for a certain period of time (let's say from seven to eleven in the evening), they will take on the characteristics of True Couch Potatoes. Another difference between True and Pseudo Potatoes deserves note. The True Potato must be forced by someone else to shut off the television and do something different; however, if the Pseudo Potato has flipped through all the channels and found only garbage, he or she still has the capacity to think of other things to do.

(4) Third, we have the Selective Potatoes. These more discriminating potatoes enjoy many activities, and TV is just one of them. They might have a few shows they enjoy watching regularly, but missing one episode is not a world-class crisis. After all, the show will be on next week. They don't live by *TV Guide*, but use it to check for interesting specials. If they find themselves staring at an awful movie or show, they will gladly, and without a second thought, turn it off.

(5) The fourth group consists of Last Resort Potatoes. These people actually prefer reading, going to the theater, playing pickup basketball, walking in the woods, and many other activities to watching television. Only after they have exhausted all other possibilities or are dog tired or shivering with the flu, will they click on the tube. These potatoes are either excessively choosy or almost indifferent to what's on, hoping it will bore them to sleep.

(6) These are the principal categories of the Potato Scale, from the truly vegetable to the usually human. What type of potato are you?

—Helen Petruzzelli (Student)

- The thesis statement in a classification essay tells the reader what group will be classified and on what basis.
- This entire essay classifies people on the basis of their television viewing habits. Which sentence is the thesis statement?

- Into how many categories are TV viewers divided?

- Each paragraph in the body of the essay discusses one of four categories, which the writer names. What are they?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

- The thesis statement and the topic sentences setting forth the four categories create an outline for the essay. The writer no doubt made the outline before she wrote the first draft.
- Can you see the logic in the writer's *order* of paragraphs? That is, why does she present True Couch Potatoes first, Pseudo Potatoes second, Selective Potatoes third, and Last Resort Potatoes last?

Before writing your classification essay, you may wish to reread Chapter 11, "Classification." Choose a topic that lends itself to classification and carefully determine your basis of classification. Your thesis statement should state clearly the group you will classify and your basis of classification. As you plan, make sure that all your categories (three or four is a good number) reflect that basis of classification. Discuss one category per paragraph, including enough examples, details, and facts to let the reader completely understand your ideas.

PRACTICE 7 Choose a topic from the following list or use a topic that you or your instructor has chosen. Write a classification essay, referring to the essay checklist at the end of Chapter 14.

Suggested Topics: The Classification Essay

1. Members of your family
2. People studying in the library
3. Stories on the front page of the newspaper
4. Drivers
5. Music videos
6. Teenagers whom you interview about their hopefulness or the lack of it (or their belief in education, thoughts about intolerance, and so on)
7. Restaurants, clothes stores, or shoe stores in your neighborhood
8. Shoplifters

9. Your coworkers
10. People in a movie theater or mall
11. Writer's choice: _____

Part H

The Cause and Effect Essay

Essays of cause and effect are among the most important kinds of essays to master because knowing how to analyze the causes and consequences of events will help you succeed in college, at work, and in your personal life. What *caused* a historic battle, an increase in urban homelessness, or two friends' breaking apart? How will a certain child be *affected* by owning a computer, spending time at Sunshine Day Care, or being teased because he loves to dance? In business, the success of every company and product relies on a grasp of cause and effect in the marketplace. Why does this brand of athletic shoe outsell all others? What causes employees to want to work hard? How will the Internet affect business in 2015?

Here is an essay of cause and effect. As you will see, this writer's eventual understanding of causes and effects might have saved her life.

Why I Stayed and Stayed

(1) It has been proven that about 1.8 million women are battered each year, making battery the single largest cause of injury to women in the United States. Domestic violence can be physical, emotional, verbal, financial, or sexual abuse from a partner you live with. I suffered from most of these abuses for almost ten years. I have had black eyes, busted lips, bruises, and scars on my face. He had affairs with other women, yet he claimed that he loved me. People ask, "Why did you wait so long to leave him?" I stayed for many reasons.

(2) First, I was born in a country that is male-dominated. Many of my people accept violence against women as a part of life. I grew up seeing hundreds of women staying in violent relationships for the sake of their children. They wanted their children to grow up with a father at home. Relatives convinced these women to try to make their marriages work. This was all I knew.

(3) Another reason I stayed was that I was afraid to make changes in my life. I had been with him so long that I thought I had nowhere to go. I depended on him to provide me and my child with food and shelter. How could I manage on my own? Of course, the longer I believed these things, the more my self-confidence withered.

(4) Finally, I stayed because I was isolated. I felt ashamed to talk about the problem, believing it was somehow my fault. Fear was isolating, too. Living in a violent home is very frightening. Like many women, I was afraid to say anything to anyone, thinking he would get upset. If I just kept quiet, maybe he wouldn't hurt me. But nothing I did made any difference.

(5) When I finally realized that the abuse was not going to stop, I decided to do something about it. I was finally ready to end my pain. I began to talk to people and learn about ways to get help.

(6) On April 24 of this year, I fought back. When he punched me in the eye, I called 911. Thank God for changes in the way domestic violence cases are now being handled. The police responded quickly. He was arrested and taken to jail, where he waited for two days to go to court. The next day, I went to the courthouse to press charges. I spoke to the district attorney in charge, asking for an order of protection. This order forbids him from having any verbal or physical contact with me.

(7) It is very hard to see someone you love being taken away in handcuffs, but I had to put my safety and my child's well-being first. Although he is now out of jail, I feel safe with my order of protection; however, I understand that court orders sometimes do not stop abusers. These are very difficult days for me, but I pray that time will heal my wounds. I cry often, which helps my pain. But an innocent life depends on me for guidance, and I cannot let her down.

(8) Every case is different, and you know your partner better than anyone, but help is out there if you reach for it. Most cities have a twenty-four-hour hotline. There is help at this college at the PASS Center and the Department of Student Development. You can go to a shelter, to a friend, to your family. These people will not fail you. You too can break the chain.

—Student, name withheld by request

- The thesis statement in a cause and effect essay identifies the subject and tells whether causes or effects will be emphasized. What is this writer's thesis statement? Will she emphasize causes or effects?

- How many causes does the writer discuss, and what are they?

- Although some essays discuss either causes or effects, this one does both. Paragraph 5 marks a turning point, her decision to take action. What positive effects of this new decision does she discuss? Are there any negative effects?

- Before she wrote this essay, the writer probably made a plan or outline like this:

Introduction and thesis statement

Reasons for staying with abusive partner

upbringing
fear of change
isolation

Decision to leave

Effects of leaving abusive partner

reached out for help
fought back (911, order of protection)
acted for daughter
sadness, guilt

Advice for women in the same situation

- What order does this essay follow?

- Do you think paragraph 8 makes an effective conclusion?

Before writing an essay of cause or effect, reread Chapter 12, “Cause and Effect,” especially the section called “Avoiding Problems in Cause and Effect Writing.” Choose a subject that lends itself to analysis of causes or effects; see the topic lists in Chapter 12 and this chapter for ideas. Think on paper or on computer, listing many possible causes or effects; then choose the best three or four. Don’t forget to consider short- and long-term effects, as well as positive and negative effects. Decide on a logical order—probably time order or order of importance.

PRACTICE 8 Choose a topic from the following list or one that your instructor has chosen. Write a cause and effect essay, referring to the checklist at the end of Chapter 14.

Suggested Topics: The Cause and Effect Essay

1. What are the reasons for the popularity of a product, musical group, or game?
2. What caused you to do something you are not proud of?
3. Analyze the main causes of a serious problem in society.
4. Analyze the effects of shyness on someone’s life (or anger, pride, curiosity or the lack of it, and so on).
5. What are the effects of a divorce, death, or other loss?
6. What are the effects of a new experience (a trip, military service, living in another country, dorm life)?
7. What causes a hurricane, tornado, or other natural disaster?
8. Choose an event in history that interests you and analyze its causes.
9. What effects did an early failure or success (in public speaking, sports, and so on) have on someone you know?
10. How does being unusual looking affect one’s daily life?
11. Writer’s choice: _____

Part I

The Persuasive Essay

Persuasive essays are the essay type most frequently called for in college, business, and daily life. That is, you will often be asked to take a stand on an issue—censorship on the Internet, capital punishment, whether a company should invest in on-site child care—and then try to persuade others to agree with you. Examination questions asking you to “agree or disagree” are really asking you to take a stand and make a persuasive case for that stand—for example, “The 9-11 terrorist attacks marked a new kind of war. Agree or disagree.” You are asked to muster factual evidence to support your stand.

Here is a persuasive essay:

Stopping Youth Violence: An Inside Job

(1) Every year, nearly one million twelve- to nineteen-year-olds are murdered, robbed, or assaulted—many by their peers—and teenagers are more than twice as likely as adults to become the victims of violence, according to the Children’s Defense Fund. Although the problem is far too complex for any one solution, teaching young people conflict-resolution skills—that is, nonviolent techniques for resolving disputes—seems to help. To reduce youth violence, conflict-resolution skills should be taught to all children before they reach junior high school.

(2) First and most important, young people need to learn nonviolent ways of dealing with conflict. In a dangerous society where guns are readily available, many youngsters feel they have no choice but to respond to an insult or an argument with violence. If they have grown up seeing family members and neighbors react to stress with verbal or physical violence, they may not know that other choices exist. Robert Steinback, a *Miami Herald* columnist who works with at-risk youth in Miami, writes that behavior like carrying a weapon or refusing to back down gives young people “the illusion of control,” but what they desperately need is to learn real control—for example, when provoked, to walk away from a fight.

(3) Next, conflict-resolution programs have been shown to reduce violent incidents and empower young people in a healthy way. Many programs and courses around the country are teaching teens and preteens to work through disagreements without violence. Tools include calmly telling one’s own side of the story and listening to the other person without interrupting or blaming—skills that many adults don’t have! Conflict Busters, a Los Angeles public school program, starts in the third grade; it trains students to be mediators, helping peers find their own solutions to conflicts ranging from “sandbox fights to interracial gang disputes,” according to *Youthwatch: Statistics on Violence*, May, 2003. Schools in Claremont, Connecticut, run a conflict-resolution course written by Dr. Luz Rivera, who said in a phone interview that fewer violent school incidents have been reported since the course began. Although conflict resolution is useful at any age, experts agree that students should first be exposed before they are hit by the double jolts of hormones and junior high school.

(4) Finally, although opponents claim that this is a “Band-Aid” solution that does not address the root causes of teen violence—poverty, troubled families, bad schools, and drugs, to name a few—in fact, conflict-resolution training saves lives now. The larger social issues must be addressed, but they will take years to solve, whereas teaching students new attitudes and “people skills” will empower them immediately and serve them for a lifetime. For instance, fourteen-year-old Verna, who once called herself Vee Sinister, says that Ms. Rivera’s course has changed her life: “I learned to stop and think before my big mouth gets me in trouble. I use the tools with my mother, and guess what? No more screaming at home.”

(5) The violence devastating Verna’s generation threatens everyone’s future. One proven way to help youngsters protect themselves from violence is conflict-resolution training that begins early. Although it is just one solution among many, this solution taps into great power: the hearts, minds, and characters of young people.

- 1) ■ The **thesis statement** in a persuasive essay clearly states the issue to be discussed and the writer's position on it. What is the thesis statement?

- 2) ■ This introduction includes *facts*. What is the source of these facts and why does the writer include them here?

- 3) ■ Sometimes a writer needs to define terms he or she is using. What term does the writer define?

- 4) ■ How many reasons does this writer give to back up the thesis statement?

- 5) ■ Notice that the writer presents one reason per paragraph.
 ■ Which reasons refer to an *authority*?

- 6) ■ Who are these authorities?

- 7) ■ How is the second reason supported?

- 8) ■ What is the source of information on Conflict Busters?

- 9) ■ Which reason is really an *answer to the opposition*?

- 10) ■ This reason also uses an *example*. What or who is the example?

- 11) ■ Note that the thesis statement and topic sentences make up a **plan** or an **outline** for the whole essay.

Before writing an essay of persuasion, reread Chapter 13, "Persuasion." Craft your thesis statement carefully. Devote one paragraph to each reason, developing each paragraph fully with facts and discussion. Use some of the methods of persuasion discussed in Chapter 13: *facts, referring to an authority, examples, predicting*

the consequence, and answering the opposition. Revise for clarity and support, and remember, ample factual support is the key to successful persuasion. An excellent way to find interesting factual support is to do some basic research—for example, to find books or magazine articles by or about experts on your subject or even to conduct your own interviews, as does the author of “Stopping Youth Violence: An Inside Job.”*

PRACTICE 9 In a group of four or five classmates, study this billboard. It is part of a campaign to persuade young people in Florida *not to smoke*.



Now have someone record your group's answers to these questions:

1. How effective—how persuasive—is the antismoking message of this billboard? Why?
2. Do you think the intended audience of teens and young people will get the message? Why or why not?
3. The tobacco industry spends billions for ads that make smoking seem glamorous and grown-up. Does this picture successfully *oppose the tobacco industry's claim* that smoking is glamorous?
4. If your group were designing a billboard to persuade young people *not to smoke*, what would your message be?

* For information on summarizing and quoting outside sources and on using research in an essay, see Chapter 17, “Special College Skills: Summary and Quotation” and Chapter 18, “Strengthening an Essay with Research.”