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Advancing Reading

(Пособие по развитию навыков реферирования и аннотирования)

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Настоящее пособие предназначено для студентов старших курсов. Его цель – выработать навыки анализа первичного текстового материала из аутентичных информационных носителей и синтезировать вторичный текст, тождественный по информационной насыщенности исходному.

Составитель отказался от распространенного для подобных учебников принципа формирования пособия исключительно за счет текстов и статей журнального формата. Отличительная особенность данного пособия – минитексты, обилие и разнообразие которых позволяет добиться устойчивых навыков аналитического восприятия информации, а также создает значительный методический ресурс для преподавателя в сочетании фронтальной работы с индивидуальными заданиями. Тематика представленных статей и минитекстов охватывает самые разные социально значимые аспекты современности.

Сутью реферирования и аннотирования является понимание целого текста, выделение смысловых опорных пунктов, формулирование и фиксация главного содержания. Тем не менее, пособия по обучению реферированию и аннотированию практически не содержат комплексов упражнений, нацеленных на текстоцентрический подход к материалу. В них, как правило, содержатся лишь элементарные упражнения, направленные на анализ внешней структуры текста и концентрирующиеся вокруг абзаца. В них отсутствует методический аппарат, целью которого было бы создание умений сокращать или адаптировать текст, составлять реферат или аннотацию. Автор данного пособия не ограничивается единственным упражнением, традиционным для подобных пособий: Give the gist of the article или Summarize the article, - которое, будучи не подготовленным какой-либо специальной серией упражнений по обучению текстовым трансформациям, выполняется студентом с опорой на интуицию и «здравый смысл». Аппарат контроля за деятельностью студента в этом случае сводится к регистрации ошибок на уровне предложения, так как правила построения вторичного текста остаются вне сферы внимания как преподавателя, так и студента.

Совершенно очевидно, что значимость подобного упражнения с точки зрения обучения весьма незначительна, а профессионально-практическая и вовсе сомнительна. Представленный в пособии методический аппарат и принятая организация материала нацелены на создание умений анализировать и сокращать первичный текст, а также синтезировать вторичный, при этом особое внимание уделяется поэтапности обучения реферированию и аннотированию.

Задания к статьям в первых главах, когда навыки анализа еще не устойчивы, сформулированы так, чтобы снять излишние сложности; тем не менее, при ретроспективном анализе студенты понимают, что им был предложен план реферата-резюме (precis, abstract, summary).

Последняя глава пособия призвана помочь студентам распознать позицию автора и проанализировать использованные им методы и стратегии. Данное умение представляется особенно важным для общественно-политических дискуссий, успешное ведение которых нередко затрудняется из-за неадекватного восприятия всего спектра лингво-стилистических и прагматических оттенков, которыми насыщены современные тексты.

Preface

Reading can be fun! Reading should engage us: teach us something new, make us think, stir our feelings.

What is reading? Reading is the process of obtaining or constructing meaning from a word or clusters of words, not necessarily in complete sentences. In some contexts fragments, including just a word or two, express meaning. Furthermore reading involves getting meaning from the words. Reading does not refer to the ability to say the sounds that the words represent. It does not mean knowing the definitions of the words on the page. It means understanding what ideas and information or feelings the words convey when put together in the particular pattern chosen by the writer. This definition tells us that if we are not getting a message, then we are not reading. You read with your brain.

Here we need to consider the two verbs **obtain** and **construct**. Both verbs have been used because reading experts do not agree on which verb should be used. Some would say that the meaning is in the words as they are put together in particular patterns. The task of the reader is to obtain the meaning that the writer seeks to convey. Others argue that meaning is really constructed by the reader and that it depends on the reader's ability to connect the material to what the reader already knows in order to make the meaning out of the passage. Both ideas are useful in helping you understand reading. On the one hand, readers strive to understand or obtain the writer's meaning. On the other hand, readers must use their knowledge of vocabulary and grammatical structures to process the passage, to construct meaning from the words on the page.

Experienced readers do not need to look at every word in a passage to construct meaning. Your brain has a record of many sentence patterns as well as knowledge about various subjects. The information you already have allows you to comprehend a passage without reading every word. Because you seek meaning, you will even make sense of incomplete statements.

Readers can also predict what will come next – in a sentence, a paragraph, or a longer work. In fact, active reading involves making predictions. Drawing on your knowledge of the patterns or

structure of writing, you start to anticipate the rest of the sentence. For example, suppose you were to read the following: *Instead of using a pen or a typewriter, today's students usually do their papers* ----------. What would you predict the rest of the sentence to say? The answer is only too clear: *on a computer*.

You can also predict what you will read in a longer passage. If a paragraph begins with the sentence *"There are three good reasons to participate in political process"*, you should anticipate that the rest of the paragraph will develop those three reasons. You would be a frustrated reader if you found that only two reasons were discussed in the paragraph.

It has already been stated that the reader is an active participant in the reading process. The writer and the written work are significant but incomplete without the reader. Readers bring knowledge and experience, as well as values, beliefs, and biases, to the reading experience. Knowledge about the topic and experience relevant to the topic aid the reading process. What a reader knows about the writer and the particular written work can make a difference in how a work is read or understood.

To prepare successfully for reading you will probably need to go through each of the following steps:

- identify the author and the work;
- make predictions about the work;
- establish your purpose in reading;
- preread the material;
- activate your previous knowledge about the topic;
- raise questions about the material.

Although the list seems long, you will find that you can move through most of the steps fairly quickly.

Prereading an article will depend in part on the type of the article:

- read the title and subtitle, if there is one;
- read the abstract, a summary paragraph that follows the title, if there is one;
- read the entire opening paragraph;
- skim the article for headings, subheadings, and words in italics or bold type;

- read the first sentence of each paragraph from the second paragraph to the end.

Even though prereading is designed to be a quick and incomplete look at the material, you may be surprised to discover just how much you learn about the subject from this step in your preparation.

As you preread the material, ask yourself what you will be learning by turning titles and headings into questions. This prepares you to expect to learn specific information and alerts you to possible patterns of organization. Strategies that help readers push through the material, actively searching for answers to questions, will improve comprehension.

Studies have shown that writing is an essential aid to reading comprehension. The more senses you engage during reading, the more likely you are to maintain concentration and be an active reader. Also writing forces you to make distinctions, to note what is important. It encourages you to read with your brain.

One useful writing strategy is to annotate, that is, to mark up the text, underlining and making notes in the margin. Whether highlighting or underlining, you need to find the right balance between too little marking and too much. There is little point in holding a pen in your hand if you hardly use it. However here another question arises. How to avoid the tendency to underline or highlight too much of the text? If you mark as you read each sentence, you will probably mark too much. You may be wiser to read the entire paragraph first and then mark what is essential.

To comprehend written material means to understand its meaning. To understand this meaning, the reader must retrace the writer's path. Luckily, trained writers present their ideas in a structured way. Being aware of this structure helps you unlock the work's meaning. You can then more easily grasp the literal content: who, what, when, where, how, and, why. You will also be able to discover the topic, the main idea about the topic, the support for the main idea, and how the support is arranged or organized. With a little more effort, you can uncover the inferences – unstated meanings that lie just under the surface of literal content.

This book is aimed at facilitating all these skills and making you a more proficient reader.

Unit One

The Topic

Have you ever tried to tell a joke only to have your listener not laugh? The listener just “didn’t get it”. This is frustrating experience for you as well as for your listener. A joke makes a point. We laugh when “we get it”. If there is no laughter, the meaning of the joke has not been understood. And what is more distressing than trying to explain a joke to someone? Repeating the details will not do much good if the listener doesn’t understand what they mean.

Many jokes and cartoons are topical; they refer to someone or some event recently in the news. Such jokes will fail to amuse those who are unfamiliar with the news story. The same holds good for the whole reading matter. Knowledgeable readers readily identify main ideas, see how the parts fit together, and predict what is coming.

Readers with little knowledge of the topic need to use all the strategies of active reading to aid their understanding. Activating existing knowledge and prereading the selection help readers create a context similar to those more familiar with the topic.

When you plunge into relatively unfamiliar or difficult material, comprehending rests on your ability to identify the topic, recognize main ideas, and see how supporting details develop the main ideas. You need both to find the general point in the details and see how the details explain the general point.

One useful way to understand the main idea in a passage is to start by identifying the topic, the subject under discussion. You should treat the matter as if you were to place the passage correctly in the catalogue. Identifying **the topic** requires a generalization about the material. It answers the question: **What is the passage about?**

When identifying the topic of a passage, try to make it general enough to cover the material in the passage but not so general that the label could apply to many passages. Remember: the topic is what unifies the specific details in the passage.

Read the following paragraph from a history of Western civilization.

Beginning in the late tenth century, many new cities or towns were founded, particularly in Northern Europe. Usually a group of merchants established a settlement near some fortified stronghold, such as a castle or a monastery. Castles were particularly favoured since they were usually located along major routes of transportation or at the intersection of two such trade routes; the lords of the castle also offered protection. If the settlement prospered and expanded, new walls were built to protect it.

Jackson J. Spielvogel. Western civilization

What is this paragraph about? The opening sentence tells us that it is about "cities or towns" in the "tenth century" in "Europe". But, is it about all towns in tenth-century Europe? No, as the opening sentence announces, it is about the founding of new towns. The rest of the paragraph contains specific details about how (by merchants) and where (near castles and trade or transportation routes) the new towns were established. The paragraph topic: the founding of towns in tenth-century Europe.

Other names for the topic are *subject, subject matter, or subject area*.

As you try to discover the writer's topic, **avoid** expressing it so specifically that you include the **writer's comment on the topic**. If you do this, you have really discovered what we call the main idea of the passage. In almost all cases, the topic does not include the writer's comment or point of view on the topic.

Practice

Ex.1. **For each of the paragraphs state the topic.**

Paragraph 1

Learning to play a musical instrument — keyboard, piano, flute, guitar — is a long-term project. You should get a good teacher, one whom you respect and like. You should plan to practice every day for at least a year before you see any real progress, and several years before you play well. You should be patient; like everything else that's worthwhile, success will not come easy. If you do all this and you still sound terrible, well, maybe you just weren't born with a musical gene!

Topic (word or phrase): _____

Paragraph 2

The radio program, "Music of the World's Peoples," opens a window for the listener onto the enormous variety of musical expression created by humans today. The commentator presents recordings of all kinds: singing groups, instrumentals, combinations, soloists. And these are drawn from every continent, nation, and ethnic group imaginable, demonstrating every possible instrument and vocal style. For the average American, used to mostly European musical styles with some African and Latin influences, the program sometimes sounds puzzling or harsh. But it is never dull.

Topic (word or phrase): _____

Paragraph 3

Everybody likes music. Jazz, classical, film and stage music, bluegrass, country western, ethnic, pop, opera, R & B, rock — we all enjoy listening to our radios, tapes, and CDs; we all go to concerts from time to time. But many of us never experience what is

even more satisfying: making music as opposed to hearing others make it. People who play instruments or sing are doing something active and creative even if they never sound great. Also, by making their own music, they learn to appreciate the enormous skill that professional musicians have. Anyone who only listens passively to others is missing out on some of the greatest pleasures music can give.

Topic (word or phrase): _____

Paragraph 4

University students held a rally last week to protest what they see as the administration's indifference to the crime problem on campus. Handmade signs and dozens of speakers voiced their specific grievances and their demands for solutions. They accused the administration of covering up recent instances of robbery, rape, and theft, as well as not budgeting enough money for adequate security measures. To solve the crisis, students made several demands. They insisted that (1) crime statistics be kept and publicized, (2) a task force be set up that would include students, and (3) funds be earmarked for increased security patrols and better lighting.

Topic (word or phrase): _____

Paragraph 5

Americans have certainly changed our attitudes toward recycling in the last thirty years. In the 1960s and 1970s, few people besides Boy Scouts on their annual newspaper drive recycled anything at all. Cans, bottles, and paper were for discarding — the good guys tossed them into the trash can, the bad guys tossed them all over the landscape. It seemed that resources were endless, landfill space was infinite, and burning waste or dumping it in the ocean got rid of it for good. At the beginning of the new century, the situation is not perfect, but it certainly is different. The word *recyclables* has become a common noun. Machines cough up

money for our cans and bottles. In many cities, trash collectors will pick up recyclables at the curb. Nearly everywhere today, a person seen tossing an aluminum can gets disapproving stares – and deserves them.

Topic (word or phrase): _____

Paragraph 6

The mass media are expensive to set up and operate. The equipment and facilities require major investment. Meeting the payroll requires a bankroll. Print media must buy paper by the ten. Broadcasters have gigantic electricity bills to pump their messages through the ether.

Topic: _____

Paragraph 7

The soil and climate of New England encouraged a diversified agriculture and industry. Staple products like tobacco did not flourish, as in the South. Black slavery, although tried, could not exist profitably on small farms, especially where the surest crop was stones. No broad, fertile hinterland, comparable to that of the South, beckoned men inland. The mountains ran fairly close to the shore, and the rivers were generally short and rapid.

Topic: _____

Paragraph 8

With e-mail, it's too easy to hit the reply key, with results you may regret. One acquaintance, thinking she was just responding to a note from a close friend, accidentally sent a highly personal message to the friend's entire mailing list. I recently had a painful quarrel, triggered by e-mail messages. A dear friend and I were both having a busy week and imposing on each other's time. Without

quite intending to, we ended up firing salvos of e-mail back and forth of escalating testiness, until we had quite insulted each other. We apologized, in person.

Topic: _____

Paragraph 9

We live in an age of statistics. Day in and day out we are bombarded with a staggering array of numbers: Billy Joel has sold over 50 million albums; 12 percent of American children under the age of eighteen suffer from some form of psychological illness; France produces almost 2 billion gallons of wine every year; the literacy rate of Iraq is 71 percent; Americans consume more than 700 million pounds of peanut butter annually.

Topic: _____

Paragraph 10

It may be difficult for some of us — particularly those who may have heard or seen him only in his later years — to realize what a great instrumentalist and important American musician Louis Armstrong was. His influence is everywhere. Anyone, anywhere in the world, in any musical idiom, who writes for trumpet is inevitably influenced by what Louis Armstrong and his progeny have shown can be done with the instrument — not only in terms of extending its range, but also in the variety of mutes, half-valve effects, and the like, that have expanded its timbral potential. All of our jazz, real and popularized, is different because of him, and our popular singers of all kinds are deeply in his debt.

Topic: _____

Ex.2. **Complete the assignments coming before and after the article.**

1. Look at the title of the article, its source, the name of the author. What kind of article can you expect: highly professional and analytical or light and entertaining? What sort of publications is typical of this newspaper?
2. Read the entire opening paragraph. What might the article be about?
3. Read the first sentence of each paragraph. Do you think the article will live up to your expectations?

It's Official: Shopping Can Be Good for You

Roger Tredre

London - Whoever said that money can't buy happiness didn't know where to shop – a sentiment close to the heart of every fashion professional.

Shopping is fun. Sometimes (and here is an heretical thought), it's more fun than watching the collections on the Paris runways. See the fashion editor slumbering behind her dark glasses in the front row? Watch her come alive in 20 minutes time when she high-heels it down the Rue Etienne Marcel, credit cards held aloft, in the headlong rush to spend, spend, spend.

When we shop we look at the clothes we want to look at. And runways? Well, let's be frank: there is no escape once the lights go up.

That shopping is a pleasurable activity bringing comfort to women world over sounds like common sense. But it's only relatively recently that academics have begun to take this at face value and explore the individual experiences of shoppers.

Researchers on both sides of the Atlantic are approaching the study of shopping with a new sympathy. Out goes cold analysis with its emphasis on number-crunching and marketing jargon. In

comes new “people-friendly” tack, with academics trying to understand consumers as individuals.

Helen Woodruffe, lecturer in consumer behavior at Britain’s Lancaster University, spends her time interviewing “real” women about their shopping habits. Her long-term goal is a national study of comfort shopping – the phenomenon when women go out to buy a new outfit after a bad day at work or a dispute with their husbands or just when they are feeling down.

“Shopping can be a very positive force in women’s lives, and it’s important we recognize that,” she says. “Whenever I lecture on the subject and ask if anyone has shopped to make themselves feel better, virtually every woman in the audience puts her hand up.”

Woodruffe should know. She began her research in 1993 after years of indulging herself in both comfort shopping and comfort eating. “I still do comfort shop. Let’s face it, life wouldn’t be worth living without it.”

Her biggest ambition? To write a case study on the Duchess of York, who once memorably described herself as “the impulse buyer incarnate.” “Fergie would be fascinating,” Woodruffe says, “She’s a textbook case.”

Woodruffe claims a key element of comfort shopping is spending more than you ought to. “It’s a bigger thrill when you can‘t really afford to buy something – the thrill of forbidden fruit.”

The British designers Suzanne Clements and Inacio Ribeiro, who are selling their collection this week in Paris from a suite at the Hotel Costes, agree. “It has to be expensive,” Ribeiro says. “It’s like rewarding yourself for all the hard work, all those missed weekends.”

The couple, who are married, pop out for a spot of comfort shopping along the Rue Saint-Honore whenever they can squeeze a moment between buyer appointments. “I bought another pair of shoes yesterday,” Clements admits. “I don’t need them. I’ve got 30 already.”

For Clements the thrill is in the purchase. “Buying can be more fun than owing. A pair of shoes is never more perfect than when it’s in the shop.”

Shopping is also social. The giant turn-of-the-century department stores opened in Paris, London and New York were places where women could meet without suggestion of impropriety. The spate of modern retailers opening coffee bars or restaurants within the stores is a reaffirmation of a century-old phenomenon.

Academics make a distinction between the majority of women, who recognize comfort shopping as a regular or occasional emotional need in their lives, and a minority who are seriously addicted. “It’s like the difference between enjoying the occasional chocolate bar and binge eating,” Woodruffe notes.

Shopaholics need help and counseling, although even academics are revising their opinions. Self-help groups established on both sides of the Atlantic in the ‘80-s tended to see the lure of the designer fashion store as an evil, urging members to cut up their credit cards.

The modern view is that shopping addiction is symptomatic of deeper problems. The buzz of buying may provide temporary relief from depression, although it is followed by feelings of guilt and regret.

There is also a physical thrill to shopping. As many as 45 percent of shopping addicts interviewed by researchers at Oxford University’s School of Management Studies admitted that they were unhappy with the sex side of their personal lives, compared with 14 percent of “normal” shoppers.

This research confirms what popular novelists such as Judith Krantz have been writing since the ‘80s – that shopping and sex are inextricably linked, with the former serving as a substitute for the latter.

The problem today is this: with runway shows running from 9 in the morning through to 11 at night, no one in the fashion biz has much time for either shopping or sex when in Paris. Now that’s what we call a real fashion crisis.

Roger Tredre is a fashion-features writer on The Observer.

International Herald Tribune

4. Study each paragraph, underline key sentences or key words (Remember: underlining is designed to highlight by contrast. Underlining just about every sentence misses the point).

5. Distinguish between the paragraphs, presenting the author's stance, and the ones, giving examples. Mark the latter "ex" in the margin. For the former identify what they are about, condensing the information to the best of your ability.

If necessary draw arrows connecting examples to ideas.

6. What is the topic of the article? What is the article about? (Begin with: This article is about…)

7. What ideas does the writer try to bring home to the reader? (1-3 sentences. Start with: According to the writer…)

8. What groups of shoppers does the writer identify?

9. Does the writer analyze only the present state of affairs? How have the attitudes of the experts changed? (1 sentence)

10. Allude to the examples provided. Mention them in brief without going into details. (1-3 sentences)

11. What conclusion does the writer arrive at?

12. Write the answers to questions 6-11. Note that brief answers calling for condensed information necessitate the usage of special vocabulary. Avoid using opinion adjectives.

Unit Two

Main idea

Identifying the topic of a passage is a good first step to understanding the idea or point of the passage, but it isn't quite the same thing. The topic answers the question: What is the passage about? **The main idea** answers the question: **What does the writer have to say about the topic?** Topics are like titles to books or articles; they announce the work's subject. The main idea is the central point of the work. Main ideas are what the writers assert about their subjects.

Do not be confused by the various terms used to discuss a work's main idea. Other terms include: *controlling idea, key point, and thesis*. Some instructors prefer the term thesis to refer to a writer's main idea in a complete work, usually an essay. Others insist on the term main idea because it is more universal; that is, it can refer to the key point in a paragraph, a section of a textbook, an essay, or a longer work. Without letting terminology confuse you, try to keep focused on your task: to state, clearly, the main idea in any passage you read.

Writers often give help to readers by using headings and subheadings and by following patterns of writing that are so widely used we call them *conventions of writing.* In most textbooks and many articles, you will find major headings and subheadings. Announcing each section's topic, the headings let you concentrate on identifying the section's main idea. Additionally, the main idea of a paragraph is frequently stated in one sentence known as *a topic sentence*. (Even though it is called a "topic sentence", it actually states the paragraph's main idea.) Look for these devices as aids to reading, but keep in mind that not all writers are so helpful.

Remember!

The topic is what the passage is about. The main idea is the writer's assertion about the topic. It is the general point to be understood from the passage; it is the "glue" that unifies the

passage. Supporting details are the specifics that develop and explain the main idea. They may include examples, definitions, explanations, and reasons.

Here are specific steps you can take to identify main ideas.

Use headings. Headings announce the section's topic. Often they are in **bold** type. Identifying the topic is the first step to recognizing the main idea.

Ask questions. If there are no headings, ask yourself: "What is this passage about?" Then ask: "What does the writer assert – or want me to understand - about the topic?"

List details. If you are having trouble generalizing to recognize the topic, make a list of details. Then ask: "What do these details have in common?"

Look for general statements. The main idea is a more general statement than the details that support it. Underline the most general statements and then ask: "Which statement best represents the main point of the passage?"

State the main idea as a complete sentence. To assure that you move from topic to main idea, state the main idea in a complete sentence. A word or phrase can state a topic, but only a complete sentence can make a point about the main idea.

If the writer has clearly stated his or her main idea, all you have to do is find it. You can do this easily in a passage only one or two paragraphs long. The main idea statement is harder to recognize in a longer work – editorial, speech and so on. But if you analyze how you did it in one paragraph, you can apply the same methods to longer works.

Try to recognize an "umbrella" idea and discriminate it from specific ideas. An "umbrella" idea includes the lesser ideas that fit under it. Finding "umbrellas" may be difficult at first but it can be easier if you know *where* writers are likely to state the main idea. Direct your eyes to such places. *The main idea usually appears in the first sentence or two.* In longer works writers of expository prose usually state the main idea *in the title, the subtitle, the lead* (a short

separate introduction), and *the first paragraph*. Sometimes the writer withholds it until *the last sentence or the conclusion*. However, the main point will hardly ever be buried in the middle. Thus, the best places for you to look are (1) the beginning and (2) the ending. Notice any repetition of the umbrella ideas. You will see this in longer works, where the writer repeats the theme or thesis for emphasis. Notice any repetition of the general idea, in the same or similar words.

Some paragraphs contain details but no topic sentence. The details are not random. They are on the same topic, but the main idea that they support is implied rather than stated. We, the readers, must infer from the details the point to be understood. Inferring is not the same as guessing. Inferring means drawing a conclusion from evidence. The author expects us to be able to understand what the details add up to so that we can state the paragraph's main idea. Paragraphs with an unstated topic sentence are often — but not exclusively — found in narrative and descriptive writing. Let's look at the following paragraph with an unstated main idea.

When a colonial housewife went to the village well to draw water for her family, she saw friends, gathered gossip, shared the laughs and laments of her neighbors. When her great-great-granddaughter was blessed with running water, and no longer had to go to the well, this made life easier, but also less interesting. Electricity, mail delivery and the telephone removed more reasons for leaving the house. And now the climax of it all is Television.

Daniel J. Boorstin, "Television: More Deeply Than We Suspect, It Has Changed All of Us"

The first question to ask is: "What is the paragraph about?" That is, what is the paragraph's topic? Here are three possibilities. Let's think about which best states the paragraph's topic.

1. The development of modern conveniences.
2. The great achievement of television.
3. The isolating nature of technological advances, especially television.

If you focus on the paragraph's listing of new conveniences developed over time, you might select topic 1. If you focus on the word *climax* in the last sentence, you might select topic 2. But if you think carefully about the details and note such words as *shared* and *less interesting*, you recognize that the writer thinks something has been lost with the "advantages" of modern conveniences. When information comes to our homes, we do not have to leave them. We become isolated from our community. We conclude (infer from our study) that the best statement of topic is the third one.

What, then, is the paragraph's main idea? What does the writer want us to understand about the topic? Although there is more than one way to state the main idea, we might say this: *Although technological advances provide convenience, they unfortunately also separate us from others, from a sense of community.* The writer sees these conveniences as a mixed blessing at best. Since the paragraph ends with television, we can anticipate that the next paragraph will develop the idea; that television is the most separating of all, even though it seems to bring the world into our living rooms.

Comprehending a work is certainly much harder when main ideas are not stated directly, but only hinted at. In this case you cannot point at general, umbrella statements. You can only read all the evidence, try to follow the writer’s train of thought and infer his idea.

Though not common in informational prose, this style often appears in writing of a more literary nature. For example, you will have to infer the main ideas in fiction, advertising, arguments, and persuasive pieces. Such works do have the main ideas, but the writers may choose to convey the messages indirectly. Or perhaps their goal is to create suspense, a mood, a character, or a historical period. When you read such works you must search for their deeper meaning. You may have to discuss, debate, or even disagree about the main ideas.

Practice

Ex.1. **In each of the following five paragraphs, one sentence best expresses the paragraph's main idea. Read each paragraph, then reread it to locate the main-idea sentence.**

Paragraph 1

Success in the engineering field depends partly on certain personality traits. (This may explain why some people can spot an engineer a block away!) First, the student should like mathematics. Electrical engineering probably requires the most math, but all specialties demand some background in it. Secondly, the student should enjoy working with mechanical and physical objects. The primary goal of all engineering is to "build a better mousetrap" — to make a new object or system that is more efficient and more economical. Another important trait is that of being methodical and precise. Professional engineers spend much of their career running tests and collecting data. While this may sound dull, engineering majors can expect an exciting career, because they will always be looking to design something new and better.

Main-idea sentence: _____

Paragraph 2

Engineering is a broad term for a major that encompasses many subtypes.

Civil engineering is probably the best known to the public: These men and women work to improve buildings, roads, bridges. Mechanical engineering involves any kind of working object or engine. Metallurgical and chemical engineering involve just what their names imply and require the least mathematics of any type. Electrical engineering majors decide whether to enter the power field or – a big specialty today – the electronics field. Not all engineers work in design: Some specialize in the legal and business aspects of engineering. One can even combine an interest in

technology (not necessarily a degree) with writing ability and work as a technical writer.

Main-idea sentence:_____

Paragraph 3

For better or worse, money is a major element in our modern lives. How can adults teach their children good habits regarding the use and saving of money? Child psychologists say the best way is to be good role models. If we show how we ourselves work for money, shop carefully, and build savings, children will remember this example better than any lectures. It is easier, but also important, to guide our children as they handle their own money. We should start them on the habit of saving part of their earnings, say 10 percent, perhaps sweetening the pill by pointing out that they get to spend 90 percent. Children are surprised by how this modest plan can build a savings account, a lesson they will need as adults. Lastly, in many families children can earn money for chores and good grades. However, experts say we must take care not to overpay and not to imply that every civilized action in life leads to money.

Main-idea sentence: _____

Paragraph 4

How can we define "good writing"? Does it have to be "literary"? "Imaginative"? "Arousing"? Actually, all good writing shares more or less the same characteristics. Whether short story, essay, project report, legal brief, novel, or business letter, the reader expects the writer to deliver the "message" according to accepted criteria. One is conciseness: When you compose, you should use only as many words as needed for your intended message or effect. Another criterion is unity: Focus on your theme, making sure your reader will get the main point. No one enjoys being terminally confused, whether the writer intended it or was simply inept. Still another is the matter of style. Style, or form, should be adapted to

your reading audience; you should choose the vocabulary, sentence/ paragraph length, and amount of detail that will most effectively convey your thoughts.

Main-idea sentence: _____

Paragraph 5

Global warming of Earth through trapped human-made gases is so far only a hypothesis. But if the process has begun, then certain small countries will be the first to feel its effects. These are the 34 nations comprising the Alliance of Small Island States (ASIS). Scientists agree that any global increase in heat will cause the polar ice caps to melt. This would in turn cause ocean levels to rise and flood low-lying lands around the world. Many populated islands are fairly low; for example, 45,000 people live in the Marshall Islands, where the average elevation is only 25 feet above sea level. As a result, alarmed representatives from ASIS are pressuring the developed countries, who mainly cause the problem, to move faster in studying and combating the climate change.

Main-idea sentence: _____

Ex.2. **In each of the following excerpts the author does not directly state the main idea. Underneath each paragraph, write a complete sentence accurately stating the implied main idea of each.**

Paragraph 1

Students who start or return to college after age twenty-five often take a reading/study course to brush up on their efficiency. These reentry students have had experience in the world of work and family, they bring this knowledge to their course work, and they know exactly what they want from college. They use their time well because their busy lives force them to; family, exercise, study, jobs must be carefully balanced if they are to succeed. Students who are middle-aged and older often study harder and get better grades, for

personal satisfaction but also, perhaps, because of a sense of competition with their younger classmates.

Implied main idea (complete sentence): _____

Paragraph 2

The armed policeman forcefully opened the downtown hotel room door. He noticed that the window facing the highway was open, and cigarette smoke was trailing out the window. Looking more carefully, the young officer found a cigarette butt burned almost to the filter resting in an ashtray on the bedstand. The light through the bathroom slipped through a tightly shut door, and the officer could hear the trickling of water droplets as they fell slowly into the washbasin drain.

Implied main idea (complete sentence): _____

Paragraph 3

Some individuals become homeless because, for various reasons, they have no network of friends and relatives. If they also have no financial cushion, they "drop through the cracks" and end up on the streets. Some have mental illnesses severe enough to prevent them from keeping a job; in the past, they might well have been institutionalized. Others are mentally capable but have physical conditions that prevent them from working. Without medical coverage, their health continues to worsen. Some homeless individuals abuse alcohol or drugs and would require long-term treatment to overcome their addictions. Some, especially women, have been abused and lack the self-esteem necessary to reverse their situation. Finally, a growing proportion — one-third of all the homeless individuals — are families with small children. Parents have lost jobs and housing and find themselves on the streets for the first time in their lives.

Implied main idea (complete sentence): _____

Paragraph 4

Overnight visits by family members to men in prison are still permitted in this state. Some legislators want to pass a bill outlawing the practice. They cite the number of crimes committed by prisoners during these visits, point out that these relations are not constitutionally guaranteed, and quote victims of crime who feel prisoners do not deserve this amenity, especially in cases of sex crimes. Opponents of the bill state that the goal of imprisonment is not only to punish but to rehabilitate. They cite statistics showing that violence increases among inmates who are denied conjugal visits, thus creating greater danger for the guards. There is also some evidence that such visits help maintain the stability of their families, a plus for society during the prison term and later when inmates are released.

Implied main idea (complete sentence): _____

Ex. 3. **Read the title of the article and the name of the magazine. What sort of article can you expect? Complete the assignments that follow it?_**

1. Read the first paragraph. What kind of information do you expect to get? Will it be a highly professional, scientific, semiscientific or entertaining piece?
2. Skim the first sentence of each paragraph. Does the article live up to your expectations?
3. Read through the article and annotate it, highlighting key words and ideas. Discriminate between the paragraphs containing the writers' stance and the ones giving examples. If necessary map the article, connecting the writers' messages with supporting examples, with lines and arrows. Graphical scheme can ease the comprehension.

A Good Night Sleep – Impossible Dream?

Tonight do yourself a favor. Shut down the TV, log off the Internet and unplug the phone. Relax, take a bath, maybe sip some herbal tea. Then move into the bedroom. Set your alarm clock for a time no less than eight hours in the future, fluff up your pillows and lay down your head for a peaceful night of restorative shut-eye.

An impossible dream? Maybe so. As we have entered the new millennium, experts are sounding an alarm over America's *other* deficit: our sleep deficit. We are a somnambulant nation, they say, stumbling groggily through our waking hours for lack of sufficient sleep. We're working longer days — and, increasingly, nights — and we're playing longer, too, as cable TV and the Internet expand the range of round-the-clock entertainment options. By some estimates, we're sleeping as much as an hour and a half less per night than we did at the turn of the century — and the problem is likely to get worse. "The 24-hour society is here, and it's growing," says James Walsh, executive 'director of the sleep medicine and research center at St. Luke's Hospital in Chesterfield, Mo. "Physiologically, we just cannot adapt that well."

The health repercussions of sleep deprivation aren't well understood, but sleep researchers point to ills ranging from heart problems to depression. In a famous experiment conducted at the University of Chicago in 1983, rats kept from sleeping died after two and a half weeks. You're not likely to drop dead in the same way, but sleep deprivation may cost you your life indirectly, when an exhausted doctor prescribes the wrong dosage or a sleepy driver weaves into your lane. Driving while tired "is very similar to driving drunk," says Michael Bonnet, director of the sleep laboratory at the Dayton V.A. Medical Center.

What irritates sleep experts most is the fact that much sleep deprivation is voluntary. "People have regarded sleep as a commodity that they could shortchange," says Terry Young, director of the Wisconsin Sleep Cohort Study and a professor of preventive medicine at the University of Wisconsin — Madison. "It's been considered a mark of very hard work and upward mobility to get very little sleep. It's a macho attitude." Slumber scientists hope that attitude will change. "We've learned to modify our behavior in terms of lowering our cholesterol and increasing

exercise," says Walsh. "Now I think people need to be educated that allowing enough time for sleep and taking strategic naps are the most reliable ways to promote alertness behind the wheel and on the job."

Well, naps would be nice, but at the moment, employers tend to frown on them. And what about the increasing numbers of Americans who work at night? Not only must they work while their bodies' light-activated circadian rhythms tell them to sleep, they also find it tough to get to sleep after work. "Night workers have a hard time not paying attention to the 9-to-5 day, because of noises or family obligations or that's the only time they can go to the dentist," says biologist Kenneth Groh, who studies the circadian clock at Argonne National Laboratory in Lemont, 111. "There aren't too many dentists open at midnight."

As you might imagine, companies are springing up to take advantage of our sleeplessness. Shiftwork Systems of Cambridge, Mass., makes specially designed lighting systems intended to keep workers alert around the clock. Shiftwork's theory is that bright light, delivered in a controlled fashion, can help adjust people's biological clocks. "We're using light like a medicine," says company president Theodore Baker. So far, such special lighting has been the province of NASA astronauts and nuclear power plant workers, but in the future, says Baker, such systems may pop up in places like hospitals and 24-hour credit-card processing centers. Other researchers are experimenting with everything from welder's goggles (which night workers wear during the day) to human growth hormones to a sort of supercharged melatonin. And, of course, there's always what Walsh refers to as "therapeutic caffeine use," but we're guessing you're already familiar with that.

Kendall Hamilton & Karen Springen
Newsweek

4. What are the “umbrella sentences”? How do you know?
5. What is the topic of the article? What is it about? (Start with: The article “A Good Night’s Sleep – Impossible Dream?”, by Kendall Hamilton and Karen Springen, published in Newsweek, September 27, 1998 highlights the problem of….)

6. What is the main idea? Where do the writers stand on the problem raised? Is the thesis stated or implied? (1-3 sentences)
7. What are the possible repercussions of our voluntary sleep deprivation?
8. What supporting details do the writers bring to prove their thesis? (1-3 sentences)
9. How do businesses try to take advantage of our sleeplessness? How does it shape our life? (1 sentence)

10. Do the writers give only the present state of affairs or picture the problem in retrospect and outline possible future trends? (3 sentences)

11. Write down the answers to questions 5-10. Avoid citing the writers, as you are limited by the number of sentences you need to condense a whole paragraph into 2-3 words.

Unit Three

Supporting Details

So far, you have learned that writers may either state their main ideas clearly or only imply them. If main ideas are stated, you know where they are likely to be located: at the beginnings and sometimes at the endings of paragraphs and longer works.

Of course, no writer can inform or convince a reader merely by stating and restating a main idea or thesis. Starting with Aristotle, writers of traditional expository prose have written with (1) a beginning, (2) a middle, and (3) an end. (Or, as many composition instructors call them, an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.) Professional writing — most of what university students read for class — follows this structure. Given that the first and last parts usually contain the general, umbrella ideas, you can guess that the middle (body) of a work contains the development of the thesis — that is, the supporting details.

You can also guess that the two general parts of a work tend to be fairly short. The middle, where the writer tries to convince the reader by piling on explanations and details, will tend to be the longest part.

Students commonly mistake an interesting detail for a main idea. Here are some tests for supporting details: (1) A detail differs from a main idea. It does not simply restate it. (2) A detail falls *within* the main idea, or *under* the umbrella idea. (3) Compared with the main-idea statement, a supporting-detail statement is more specific and less general, more concrete and less abstract, and often more factual. (4) A detail may be an example, a descriptive fact, a cause, an effect, an explanation, or an illustration — supporting or filling in the writer's main point about her or his topic.

To help readers follow their arguments or descriptions more easily, writers often verbally point at separate sections or details. That is, they announce the development of their argument with useful words and phrases called ***signals*** or ***transitions.***

You should always notice signals words such as *first, second*, *finally*, and *therefore.* Do the same with signal phrases such

as *in the first place, the next step, to sum up,* and *as a result.* The longer and more complex a work, the longer its transitions. A shift in content may require a complete sentence or even an entire paragraph. Here is an example of a complete sentence transition that might link sections of a long report or news feature:

However, the administration did not accept all the students' demands, but countered with proposals of their own.

Note how the signals *however* and *but* introduce a new direction to this discussion of administrators and students.

Study the following paragraph to see how supporting details are used and effectively introduced by transitions.

In our multicultural city, the different ethnic groups have tended to settle in certain areas. For example, a large Latino population has settled in the city's south side, many of them new arrivals from Central America. Just east of this area is "Little Seoul," a Korean enclave that is rapidly sprouting new bank and shopping plazas. North of Little Seoul lies the original business core of the city. Here we see the Anglo names on the older businesses, interspersed with Asian and European newcomers. Finally, the western edge of the city toward the river has been a melting pot of Mediterranean immigrants for decades.

Note how transitions like *for example* and *finally* introduce some of the many details about the Latino and Mediterranean populations. Other details include information about Korean, other Asian, Central American, and European residents. Each of these details supports the main idea — that this city is multicultural.

In certain academic fields, such as mathematics, engineering, law, medicine, and most sciences most details are important to the main idea, in fact they support it. There are very few "interesting but unimportant details" in any kind of technical material. Readers who skip over details in an installment contract, directions for a chemistry experiment, or an eviction notice do so at their peril. However, prose styles in the social sciences and humanities are

usually less concise. (Exceptions include poetry and short fiction, where every word counts.) Writing styles in the popular reading we do outside of class — bestsellers, magazines, much of the newspaper beyond straight news — will often be even more discursive. Commercial writers will often "discourse" or converse, rather than present only facts and important ideas. The abundance of details may be interesting or fun, but they do not equally contribute to a grasp of the main argument.

Say you are reading quantities of print for background, for review, or for only the main ideas. Your time is limited. You want to follow the thread of the presentation, concentrating on key sections. This means you must skim lightly over less important details or even skip them entirely.

Consider the following statement from a television review and the four details that follow. Which are the most relevant to the review?

Statement: The new TV series about a police detective is worth watching.

Details: (1) realistic situations
(2) reruns of *NYPD Blue*
(3) up-to-date problems
(4) solid acting, not just famous faces.

Do you see how (1), (3), and (4) describe the key criteria that make this show effective — problems that are realistic and current as well as strong acting performances. The discussion of *NYPD Blue* is not central to the review of this particular program, though it may be discussed incidentally.

From this example you can see that not all the details are equally important. In many passages supporting details can be divided into major and minor ones. Think of the major details as providing the primary explanation and support for the main idea, and think of the minor details as providing support for, and examples of, the major details.

As a reader you may delight in the minor details, especially if you learn best from specifics. These details are interesting or amusing or startling – and fun to remember. But usually it is the major details – the reasons, explanations, definitions – that you need to understand and remember, along with the main idea, to really be in command of the material. It is important, then, to be able to distinguish between major and minor details.

Although we rarely read just one paragraph at a time, we need to be comfortable with the paragraph unit, because paragraphs are the building blocks of articles and books.

You have seen that paragraphs are composed of sentences of varying significance. One sentence may state the main idea; several more develop major details; and one or more may provide interesting, but sometimes less significant, examples. If you are anticipating that longer selections will follow a similar pattern, you are on target — with some qualifications.

Most essays, articles, or editorials establish one main idea or thesis that is either stated or implied. The thesis is then developed and supported with levels of details. The only difference with the longer article is that a paragraph's main idea becomes a major detail in support of an essay's thesis. The result is a pattern of four, rather than three, levels of significance. Depending on reading purpose, you may be content to concentrate only on the work's thesis and major details (the main idea of each paragraph). You still have to read each paragraph, though, because you do not know if the main idea will be stated or implied. If it is stated, you have to read to find it. If it is implied, you have to read to see what point the details make. The minor details are important because they teach us what the writer wants us to understand. They just may not need to be remembered — or learned — once they have served their purpose in the article.

Sections of textbook chapters may be viewed as short articles. As you have learned, the section heading announces the section's topic. Each section is usually unified around a controlling idea that is most likely presented in either the first or last paragraph (or in both places). If the similarity to articles holds up, you can then anticipate that the topic sentences of the other paragraphs present

major details and that the remaining sentences present minor details. All the details work together to support the section's main idea.

Sometimes textbook sections are not exactly like articles. A section may have two or three interrelated main ideas and have few, if any, minor details. That's because the primary purpose of textbooks is to present information — a lot of information — about a subject. Articles, on the other hand, may combine information with persuasion. The essayist may have a thesis and only two or three major details — reasons or explanations — to make that thesis convincing to readers. The textbook writer, on the other hand, has organized an enormous amount of information around a number of topics. You may find that most of the details within a section are important and need to be learned. Still, you want to read first for the main ideas and major details and see how these elements give structure to the material.

Practice

Ex. 1. **Read each paragraph carefully for supporting details and transitions. List the transitional phrases and the supporting details.**

Paragraph 1

Advanced technology helped break some records at the Winter Olympics. For example, practicing in an aerospace-type wind tunnel showed ski jumpers exactly what angle their skis should be held in. The luge athletes trained on special tracks with built-in sensors. Bobsleds were made to specifications derived from auto design. The boots of some speed skaters were developed through new plastics procedures.

Supporting details: _____
Transitions: _____

Paragraph 2

The Hidden Life of Dogs by Elizabeth Marshall Thomas (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993) is a short but intriguing nonfiction book about our household pets. The author is a professional anthropologist who used typical "field methods" to try to understand the minds of dogs, especially her own eleven dogs. First, she observed and recorded their behaviors day by day for many years. Then she wrote of her experiences and conclusions in a vivid and accessible style. We ultimately learn a great deal about Bingo, Maria, Misha, Koki, and the others, and therefore about all dogs and the author herself.

Supporting details: _____
Transitions: _____

Paragraph 3

In her book *The Hidden Life of Dogs,* author Elizabeth Marshall Thomas reaches some surprising conclusions. For one, she decides that what matters most to a dog is — not food, not humans — but other dogs. (So much for our common assumption that we owners are the most important things in a dog's life!) A dog spends its entire life trying to establish a secure, clear social relationship with the other dogs in its environment. Secondly, a dog's happiest moments come when everything is quiet, peaceful, and stable. What we primates see as emptiness and boredom, a dog sees as the perfect achievement. Finally, Thomas says, dogs when left to themselves will revert to the behaviors of their ancestors, the wolves.

Supporting details:_____
Transitions: _____

Paragraph 4

U.S. men and women have differing opinions about many issues. For example, a poll conducted in the early 1980s showed

they differed in their political views: Women tended to vote more liberally and men more conservatively. One-third of all women voters call themselves liberals, while only one-fourth of the men do so. This split is increasing in the 1990s. Another example of gender difference is seen in men's and women's views of job equity. Over 70 percent of the men thought they had been fairly paid for their work, but only 55 percent of the women thought so. A third instance of gender difference occurred in Congress in 1993, when that body considered an amendment to ban funds for medicaid abortions. Nearly all the women who make up 10 percent of Congress voted against the ban, while nearly all the male representatives voted for it.

Supporting details:_____
Transitions: _____

Paragraph 5

When researchers compare U.S. men and women on the basis of how they stand on various issues, wide differences in the sexes have been obvious for at least fifteen years. Men are more likely than women to consider themselves conservative and to vote Republican. They tend to think the economy is getting better. And only one-fourth of U.S. men are dissatisfied with their incomes. In contrast to men, U.S. women are more likely to consider themselves liberal and to vote Democratic. They tend to think the economy is getting worse, perhaps because their average annual income is much lower than that of men. And about half the women polled think they have not received adequate pay throughout their working years.

Supporting details:_____
Transitions: _____

Ex. 2. **After reading each paragraph, state the topic and list the chief details.**

Paragraph 1

E-mail is a less expensive medium for correspondence: It eliminates the costs of paper, print cartridges, envelopes, and postage, as well as the costs associated with the distribution, filing, and storage of paper correspondence. E-mail messages are composed, distributed, received, filed, and stored through your computer. For a typical organization, the savings are substantial. For example, the rising costs of paper and postage are minimized, and fewer file folders and file cabinets are required for sorting and storing correspondence.

Topic:_____
Details:_____

Paragraph 2

Most of us pass through two stages in our attitudes toward statistical conclusions. At first we tend to accept them, and the interpretations placed on them, uncritically. In discussion or argument, we wilt the first time somebody quotes statistics, or even asserts that he has seen some. But then we are misled so often by skillful talkers and writers who deceive us with correct facts that we come to distrust statistics entirely, and assert that "statistics can prove anything"—implying, of course, that statistics can prove nothing.

Topic:_____
Details: _____

Paragraph 3

Today, most of the books that shape our culture are adapted to other media, which expands their influence. Magazine serialization put Henry Kissinger's memoirs in more hands than did the publisher of the book. More people have seen Carl Sagan on television than have read his books. Stephen King thrillers sell spectacularly, especially in paperback, but more people see the movie renditions. Books have a trickle-down effect through other media, their impact

being felt even by those who cannot or do not read them. Although people are more in touch with other mass media day to day, books are the heart of creating American culture and passing it on to new generations.

Topic: _____
Details: _____

Paragraph 4

It is hard to stretch a small vocabulary to make it do all the things that intelligent people require of words. It's like trying to plan a series of menus from the limited resources of a poverty-stricken, war-torn country compared to planning such a series in a prosperous, stable country. Words are one of our chief means of adjusting to all the situations of life. The better control we have over words, the more successful our adjustment is likely to be.

Topic: _____
Details: _____

Paragraph 5

As the size of the listening audience increased, so too did the cost of air time. At the same time, however, radio's novelty began to wane. Audiences no longer granted the medium their uncritical attention. Consequently, to minimize cost and magnify audience attention, other means of audience enticement including music, song, and testimony from supporters were added to unadorned speeches. Campaigning politicians also turned from long messages to shorter ones. In 1928 the usual time purchased by candidates was one hour. In 1980 the typical political message was thirty seconds long.

Topic: _____
Details: _____

Paragraph 6

Many people find it helpful to define media by whether the thrust of their content is entertainment or information. By this definition, newspapers almost always are considered an information medium, and audio recording and movies are considered entertainment. As a medium, books both inform and entertain. So do television and radio, although some networks, stations and programs do more of one than the other.

The same is true with magazines, with some titles geared more for informing, some for entertaining.

Topic: _____
Details: _____

Paragraph 7

Language I would approach from two points of view. First, learning our own and learning it well is a must. Rhetoric, elocution, public speaking, and the associated arts of logic would be so constant a theme as to be a routine expectation. Consider the intellectual and rhetorical barrenness, that must affect every teenager and youth constantly confusing "like, you know" with conversation. Complementing that theme would be the mastery of two other languages. That learning would be pushed using every modern aid to make it effective and functional.

Topic: _____
Details: _____

Paragraph 8

Tourism can be a major industry for a developing country. In Rwanda, where visitors flock to see some of the last remaining mountain gorillas, tourism is the number one foreign-exchange earner. The gorilla project employs as many local Rwandans as a

timber company might have if it had moved into the park and removed all the trees. The difference is that tourism, provided it is well managed, can furnish employment in perpetuity, whereas logging provides employment only until the forests are gone.

Topic: _____
Details: _____

Paragraph 9

Teens pay for their purchases with their allowances and with the money they earn doing part-time work. With half of all 16- to 19-year-olds holding jobs, teens average an astounding $64 a week in income. Most teens spend 84 percent of their money on food, movies, and compact discs. They hoard their meager savings only until they can afford to buy such big ticket items as sound systems and rock concert tickets.

Topic: _____
Details: _____

Ex. 3. **After reading each paragraph state the paragraph's topic, main idea, and list key details.**

Paragraph 1

The corner of the office where I work has no windows. The climate is what they call controlled. I can be there all day without knowing if it's hot or cold outside. I commute in a machine on pavement, following the directions of red and green lights. My work day is determined by a clock that remains the same through all tides, moons and seasons.

Topic: _____
Main Idea: _____
Details: _____

Paragraph 2

About $90 billion is spent annually in the United States on various media. Approximately $30 billion goes to books, newspapers, and magazines, while the remainder is spent on audio-visual media, such as records, compact discs, videotapes, and movies (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1991). In terms of time rather than dollars spent, however, television is undoubtedly the most popular public medium. More than 98 percent of U.S. households have at least one television; almost 69 percent have videocassette recorders, and 56 percent subscribe to cable television (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1991). It is estimated that average household viewing time is six hours per day (Staples and Jones, 1985).

Topic: _____
Main Idea: _____
Details:_____

Paragraph 3

In a survey of almost 2,000 doctors in San Francisco who treated AIDS patients, slightly more than half said they had granted the request of at least one patient for assistance in dying. A survey of doctors in the state of Washington published last year in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* found that 1 in 4 said they had received a request for suicide assistance, and that a fourth of the patients who asked for help were given prescriptions for lethal drugs. In a study of cancer doctors in Michigan, nearly 1 in 5 said they had participated in assisted suicide.

Topic: _____
Main Idea: _____
Details: _____

Paragraph 4

Intel no longer simply reports earnings, it reports earnings that "exceed" or "failed to live up to" expectations. *Entertainment Weekly*, a skilled master of the expectations game, reports in its *Holiday Film Preview* issue not only what movies are opening but what will happen to them when they do — what reviewers will say and what the box office will show. When Alanis Morissette sells 469,000 copies of her new album in its first week, the best ever for a female artist (though less than the best for male artists), news accounts say the album "did not pull the record-breaking numbers many had predicted."

Topic: _____
Main Idea: _____
Details: _____

Paragraph 5

In the war against tobacco, we do not expect help from the tobacco industry. If someone were to call upon the tobacco industry to cut back production as a matter of social conscience and concern for public health, we would regard that person as simple-minded, if not frankly deranged. Oddly enough, however, people have persistently assumed that the television industry is somehow different — that it is useful to appeal to its social conscience. This was true in 1969 when the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence published its recommendations for the television industry. It was equally true in 1989 when the U.S. Congress passed an anti-violence bill that granted television industry executives the authority to hold discussions on the issue of television violence without violating antitrust laws. Even before the law was passed, the four networks stated that there would be no substantive changes in their programming. They have been as good as their word.

Topic: _____
Main Idea: _____
Details: _____

Ex. 4. **After reading, state each paragraph's topic, the main idea and the major details. Some of the paragraphs have a stated topic sentence (the main idea); some have an implied topic sentence.**

Paragraph 1

Advanced technology has led to the elimination of much of the labor that relied upon pure physical strength and thus gave men an advantage in the workplace. The evolution of heavy-lifting blue-collar jobs into positions requiring computer and decision-making skills can be seen in industries from auto manufacturing to steel production. As a result, women since the late 1970s have been joining men on the shop floor and in the union hall, increasing their participation in nonmanagement jobs in these industries by more than 300 percent in just the last decade.

Topic: _____
Main Idea_____
Major Details: _____

Paragraph 2

Computer memory chips are perhaps the most spectacular example of overinvestment. So many plants were built in the mid-1990s that prices for memory chips went into free fall. The glut meant that, although more personal computers and chips were being sold, worldwide sales of DRAM memory chips declined from $41 billion in 1995 to an estimated $13 billion in 1998, according to the Semiconductor Industry Association.

Topic: _____
Main Idea: _____
Major Details: _____

Paragraph 3

Products that are successful in one country may be useless in another. Snowmobiles, for example, are popular for transportation and recreation in Canada and the northern United States and actually revolutionized reindeer herding in Lapland. However, there is no demand for snowmobiles in Central America. Although this is an extreme example, the point is basic to the decision to go international: namely, that foreign demand for a company's product may be greater than, the same as, or weaker than domestic demand. Market research and/or the prior market entry of competitors may indicate that there is an international demand for a firm's products.

Topic:_____
Main Idea: _____
Major Details: _____

Paragraph 4

Through argument we can examine our own thoughts and beliefs. Our opinions can be challenged, requiring us to justify them. As we continue to rebuke the challenge we may discover underlying assumptions we did not know we had. This can enable us to see the world with a broadened perspective by illuminating the values we hold. Suppose you and I were to share a box of ice cream. If I assert that ice cream "A" is better than ice cream "B," you could claim the opposite. I might then present justification for my opinion, that "A" has nuts and chunks of chocolate. When you reply that you prefer smooth ice cream, I realize that my definition of good ice cream is based on chunkiness. I now know that not everyone likes chunky ice cream. I then argue that "A" has the best flavor. You counter that "B" costs considerably less than "A." While I place more value on the quality of the ice cream, you place more value on its affordability. The more we argue back and forth, the more we learn about the values each of us has and how strongly we cling to them.

Topic: _____

Main Idea: _____
Major Details: _____

Paragraph 5

The wonder of dinosaurs also is that they are an enigma seemingly beyond solution. Science has explained so much: the divisibility of atoms and the nature of subatomic particles; the decipherable code of heredity contained in DNA; the earth's restless crust; gravity, electromagnetism, and the age of the solar system. Science has identified hundreds of species of dinosaurs, assembling their bones and dating their time on earth, but so much about the lives of these strange and monstrous creatures defies explication. It is reassuringly human of scientists that, when it comes to dinosaurs, they can be just as stricken with puzzlement as the next person and find themselves with little more to work with than their imaginations. Yet they persist in their search for solutions to the riddle, knowing they will never fully succeed but believing they will learn something about the greater mysteries of life. This is the wonder of humans, their faith that there is much about dinosaurs worth knowing.

Topic: _____
Main Idea: _____
Major Details: _____

Paragraph 6

To understand the circumstances confronting contemporary Native Americans, we must begin with the fact that their ancestors emigrated to North America between 20,000 and 30,000 years ago. By the time the Europeans started to arrive, there were at least 400 distinct tribes inhabiting the territory north of the Rio Grande, and they encompassed a wide variety of cultural types. There were the

hunting and fishing groups of Alaska and the sub-Arctic regions, as well as the herding and farming societies of Arizona and New Mexico. Some tribes were egalitarian like the Hopi of the southwest, while still others, such as the Kwakiutl of the Pacific northwest, were highly stratified with both chiefs and slaves. And there was a vast array of languages spoken — at least 161 — derived from about a dozen language stocks "as disparate as English and Russian" (Kitano, 1985:135; Mohawk, 1992; Dorris, 1981; Price, 1981).

Topic:_____
Main Idea: _____
Major Details: _____

Paragraph 7

Here is a clue to the question of why our performance in government is worse than in other activities: because government offers power, excites that lust for power, which is subject to emotional drives — to narcissism, fantasies of omnipotence, and other sources of folly. The lust for power, according to Tacitus, "is the most flagrant of all the passions" and cannot really be satisfied except by power over others. Business offers a kind of power but only to the very successful at the very top, and even they, in our day, have to lay it down. Fords and Du Fonts, Hearsts and Pulitzers nowadays are subdued, and the Rockefeller who most conspicuously wanted power sought it in government. Other activities — in sports, science, the professions, and the creative and performing arts — offer various satisfactions but not the opportunity for power. They may appeal to status seeking and, in the form of celebrity, offer crowd worship and limousines and recognition by headwaiters, but these are the trappings of power, not the essence. Of course, mistakes and stupidities occur in nongovernmental activities too, but since these affect fewer people, they are less noticeable than they are in public affairs. Government remains the paramount field of unwisdom because it is there that men seek power over others — and lose it over themselves.

Topic: _____
Main Idea: _____
Major Details: _____

Paragraph 8

Human beings are made up mostly of water, in roughly the same percentage as water is to the surface of the earth. Our tissues and membranes, our brains and hearts, our sweat and tears — all reflect the same recipe for life, in which efficient use is made of those ingredients available on the surface of the earth. We are 23 percent carbon, 2.6 percent nitrogen, 1.4 percent calcium, 1.1 percent phosphorus, with tiny amounts of roughly three dozen other elements. But above all we are oxygen (61 percent) and hydrogen (10 percent), fused together in the unique molecular combination known as water, which makes up 71 percent of the human body.

Topic:_____
Main Idea: _____
Major Details: _____

Paragraph 9

Because water is dense, it provides considerable support for organisms that, after all, are themselves mostly water. But organisms also contain bone, proteins, dissolved salts, and other materials that are more dense than salt or freshwater. These would cause organisms to sink were it not for a variety of mechanisms that reduce their density or retard their rate of sinking. Many fish have a swim bladder, a small gas-filled structure whose size can be adjusted to make the density of the body equal to that of the surrounding water (Denton 1960). Some large kelps, a type of sea-weed found in shallow waters, have analogous gas-filled organs. The kelps are attached to the bottom by holdfasts, and gas-filled bulbs float their leaves to the sunlit surface water.

Topic: _____
Main Idea: _____
Major Details: _____

Ex. 5. **Preview the following passage (skim the title, the source, the first paragraph, the first sentence of next paragraphs) and say what you expect to learn from it. Answer the questions that follow.**

Women in Charge

(1) In these days of upward mobility for women, even the woman who never dreamed she would have to develop management skills is discovering that she will need them as she moves up the career ladder. The woman who enters a large corporation with an M.B.A. or other business degree usually expects to become a manager; that is the aim of a business career. But the woman who becomes a nurse, a doctor, a lawyer, an editor, a journalist, a teacher, a factory worker, or a secretary rarely thinks that she will ever need managerial skills.

(2) Many of these women are finding, however, that as they enter their thirties and forties and the main growth stages of their careers, they are seeking or unexpectedly being thrust into managerial positions. They are becoming nursing supervisors or factory superintendents. They are becoming heads of professional offices. They may have a secretary. They may supervise younger workers. They may have to hire and fire.

(3) Men usually slide into these roles with many fewer problems than women. Somehow, they find that they have always anticipated being in such positions and discover they already have many of the tools to handle them. For women, these roles often come as a complete surprise, a result they had not bargained for, had not prepared for — even when they had been bold enough to enter the labor field on a footing they hoped would be equal to that of men. Especially for the woman who has worked her way up from a menial job — the type that men are rarely required to take — the

role of ordering someone else to do a task she knows firsthand to be boring or degrading can be uncomfortable.

(4) I was once responsible for leading a team of reporters and found myself experiencing some of these doubts. I was required to divide the coverage of our beat among members of the team. I also needed to collect from them their schedules for the following week, which I then was to combine into a lengthy note to be sent to editors. Not too difficult, really. But why did I sometimes feel that a nagging edge crept into my voice when I reminded the team members of their responsibilities? And why, when some did not fulfill their duties, did I try to cover up for them? Why was I lenient when some were late with their schedules, even when it meant I had to stay late? Worst of all, why did I giggle helplessly when one of my team members referred to me jokingly as the "beat matron"?

(5) Clearly, I was afraid of becoming a boss lady. I did not want to be thought of as a nag or a harsh schoolmistress. I tried joking when I should have been serious. Above all, I feared being labeled with those female stereotypes I abhor. Is there such a thing as a *male* nag or a *male* shrew? No. There are male bosses who are hated but respected. There are kind bosses and ineffectual bosses who are men. But a nagging boss? A scatterbrained boss? A boss with a heart of gold? That boss is likely to be female.

(6) Being in charge is more than a matter of title. It requires a stock of tools and a range of attitudes that do not always come as easily to women as to men — although they can be acquired.

Allen Jacobson, a writer and lecturer on financial topics and women's issues.

Women in Charge: Dilemmas of Women in Authority

1. What is the section's topic?
2. What kinds of women may not have anticipated becoming a manager?
3. What is the topic sentence in paragraph 5?
4. Give an example of a minor detail in paragraph 2 that you think is important enough to remember.
5. Give an example of a minor detail in paragraph 4 that you find interesting but would not study for a test.

6. Why do men seem to handle positions of authority more easily than many women?

7. State the main idea or thesis of the passage.

Unit Four

Organizational Patterns

You have now retraced the expository writer's path quite a distance toward the final, finished product: the chapter, article, essay, feature story, opinion piece, argument, report, and so on. You know that the writer begins with a topic, then establishes a main

idea about the topic, then develops support for the idea through details. You know that the writer often "points" at the major details or sections with signals or transitions.

There is one more aspect to the structure of informational prose that a skilled reader finds useful: organizational or writing patterns. Writers do not just throw all their supporting details at you. They usually develop their main point according to one or more recognizable patterns.

Say, for example, a writer has been assigned an article explaining results of the education reform for the community. The writer decides to focus on the effect this event causes on the whole society and the thousands of professionals already working in this sphere. He or she decides to interview the top officials already engaged in the project. Most of them agree about the effects, but a few disagree, so a subpattern emerges of comparison and contrast among those interviewed. The writer may have to provide a little background for the average reader: a description of present state of affairs, plus a short history of the project told in time sequence or chronologically. But in this actual article, the dominant overall pattern remains cause and effect — the effects caused by reformation of the system of education.

The concept of organizational patterns is really no more complicated than that. Often, the thesis is set up so clearly in the introduction that it indicates which pattern or two will govern the supporting details.

Naturally, the longer the work, the more patterns will appear. Several sub-patterns can operate at once. When you read, however, look for only the dominant patterns, and only to the extent that this helps you comprehend better and more quickly.

Here are eleven common writing patterns. For each, a description is given, a one-paragraph demonstration, and words or phrases that frequently signal the pattern. Be aware that other experts in composition and rhetoric may teach more, or fewer, than eleven; they may use slightly different names, like "thesis-examples" for "example/illustration."

1. Examples pattern. The writer lists two or more specific examples of his or her main idea or thesis. Examples are often facts or figures — actual persons, places, dates, events, things, numbers, and so on.

If the thesis is supported by only one well-developed example, the pattern may be called a *thesis-illustration pattern.* (The illustration may consist of an anecdote, an episode, or an example discussed at length.)

Examples may be typical or specific. A *typical* example will not name specific individuals, dates, places, and so on but will support the idea with a general case. A *specific* example, on the other hand, does name one particular individual, date, place, and so on. You will learn to recognize both kinds of examples in the practices.

- **Example (typical):**

The kind of breakfast I most enjoy is one with the most calories and variety of foods. For example, an outstanding breakfast must have eggs, meat, pastries, pancakes, fruits, and coffee. Anything less is simply a business breakfast.

- **Example (specific):**

Our family enjoys getting together once a month for Sunday breakfast. For example, last Sunday we all met at 9 A.M. at Farmer Joe's, a family-style restaurant on the west side of town. We sat, all ten of us, around a big, round table and shared bacon and eggs, pancakes, and good conversation.

- **Signals:**

for example, to illustrate, to give just one example of, for instance, specifically, in particular, especially, one example is, as in the case of, proof is found in

2. Time-sequence (sequence of events, chronological) pattern. In this organizational pattern, the writer develops his or her thesis in time order, in a series, or step-by-step. It is probably the oldest and simplest of the patterns, going back to storytelling. Time sequence is the dominant pattern in any narrative, anecdote, story, movie, play, biography, or autobiography. In nonfiction prose, time sequence is also used in directions *(how-to),* process, the development or evolution of something, archaeology, history, and so on.

- **Example:**

The first sign any of the hikers had of the impending storm was a tall white cloud looming in an otherwise bright blue Sierra sky, far to the north. Late that day, the cloud had grown larger and had moved closer. By sundown, the sky had turned uniformly gray; the temperature dropped ten degrees. They made camp hurriedly, ate a cold meal, and set up camp as snugly as possible.

- **Signals:**

first, second, third, and so on; *now, later, next, soon, then, finally, afterward, before, after.* Times and dates are also common.

3. Cause-and-effect pattern. Here the writer tries to show a causal connection between two or more events (outcomes, situations, and so on). *A* is believed to lead to *B*, or *B* is the result of *A.* Since a cause can hardly occur simultaneously with an effect, this pattern often includes a strong chronological component as well. The writer must assemble proof, evidence, logical reasons, or data, or must appeal to shared experience, to convince the reader that *A* did indeed bring about *B.* This pattern is commonly used in the social sciences, the physical sciences, medicine, laboratory research, biography, and autobiography.

- **Example:**

Some popular experts say that a large vocabulary is closely correlated with a large income. It is no doubt true that high-salaried people in business and the professions have fair-sized vocabularies, because they nearly always possess college and university degrees. Also, they must learn the specialized jargon of their fields. But how much more civilized to show a relationship between knowledge of one's language and the ability to think. After all, words are thoughts. Without words, we could not have an abstract idea; we could only react and feel. Our high-salaried sample may simply be people who could learn and listen, could think and express themselves. Their big vocabularies did not lead directly to dollars but to an effective, civilized person — who might or might not choose to make a lot of money.

- **Signals:**

cause, effect, because, leads to, result, results in, brings about, ends in, traced back to, correlation, correlated with, link between, causal relationship, contributes to, proceeds toward, brings about, thereby, hence, since, if this . . . then that

4. Reasons (reasons why) pattern. The writer gives one or more reasons why the thesis is sound or valid. This pattern is common in opinion, persuasion, and argumentation. Fields that commonly use the reasons pattern are medicine, history, the social sciences, and the natural sciences. The writer begins with an assumption that some belief or condition exists and then tries to show why it exists. Or the writer presents a conclusion (an outcome) and supports it with logical reasons. The reasons pattern is sometimes hard to distinguish from a cause-and-effect pattern. "Why did this happen?" is not very different from "What caused this to happen?"

- **Example:**

The hikers had no reason to expect anything but beautiful late-summer weather. Storms seldom moved in before the end of

September. And this weekend of September 5, the rangers assured them, would be three days of fair weather. So they were totally unprepared for the sudden blizzard that swept down on them Saturday night.

- **Signals:**

so, reasons, why, because, hence, therefore, as a result. (And of course the ubiquitous *first, second, third.)*

5. **Process pattern.** The writer tells how something works or functions, or how something came about. (If the writer tells *you* how to do or make something, the process is informally called a *how-to.)* We often see this pattern in history, the physical and social sciences, and vocational courses. As we mentioned before, writing patterns often overlap or coexist. A process, a procedure, or a development by its nature occurs chronologically; it probably also involves some cause-and-effect pattern.

- **Example:**

How does a person grow up to be an Easy Reader? Usually the process starts soon after birth. The first necessity is parents who read to the child from earliest days on, holding him or her warmly and sharing a delight in the big picture books. Then the child notices that the home has books and magazines scattered about (good for playing with), and sometimes Mother and Father are sitting reading with evident enjoyment. The family sometimes give the child not just toys and money for presents, but wonderful books; they are the child's, to cherish as he or she cherishes games and other toys. The people in this thoughtful home read things to each other — sharing fun, facts, ideas. To this child, the whole world reads — so he or she reads — not well at first, but as naturally as learning to ride a bicycle. By the time the child is a teenager, he or she likes many activities, many ideas. Of course one of them is reading.

- **Signals:**

process, procedure; first, second, third; next, then, later, finally; happen; when, as, during; after, afterward, following; step(s); dates and times; *interactions; leads to*

6. Problem-solution pattern. In a sense, this pattern is a special type of cause-and-effect pattern because the problem causes the solution to be necessary.

The writer's main idea or thesis is that a problem exists, and there are one or more possible solutions to the problem. The exposition usually falls into two parts: a description of the problem in detail followed by a presentation of the possible solution(s). A signal word, phrase, sentence, or paragraph (in long works) announces the second part.

This pattern often occurs in business and government writing because individuals in both areas must do so much problem solving: balancing budgets, designing better products, complying with environmental and consumer regulations, and so forth. If the problem is complex or not commonly recognized as a problem, the first part will be longer than the second. We often see this lopsided organization in "Letters to the Editor," where the writer presents a gripe in great detail followed by a brief solution: "Throw them out of office!" Here is a more evenly balanced use of the pattern.

- **Example:**

Major depressive disorder — often referred to as depression — is a common illness that can affect anyone. About 1 in 20 Americans —over 11 million people — get depressed every year. Too often, people do not get help for their depression, because they don't recognize the symptoms, have trouble asking for help, blame themselves, or don't know that treatments are available. But help is available and effective. If you have symptoms of depression, you can start by going to your family practitioner, clinic, or HMO. These health-care providers will find out if there is a physical cause for the depression, they can treat the depression, and they can refer

you to a mental-health specialist if necessary. If you do not have a regular health-care provider, contact your local health department, community mental-health clinic, or hospital. University medical centers also provide treatment for depression.

- **Signals:**

words such as *problem* and *solution, issue, if... then, the way things are now, the current crisis, the present situation* (and varying degrees of alarm); *but, if, solve, resolve, compromise, answers, a way out, propose, handle, suggest, demand, urge* (and varying degrees of certainty); questions such as *"How can we solve.. . ?," "What can be done... ?"*

Note: The writer did not need to spend much time on proving that there is a "problem" — depression is a common condition. After the one-word transition, which we hope you saw immediately, she launched into the "solutions."

7. Compare-contrast pattern. The writer discusses two or more subjects and points out differences (contrast), similarities (comparison), or both differences and similarities (comparison), which are usually points, features, or aspects of the two subjects. The passage may describe the features of one subject, then the features of the other subject(s), in separate sections. Or the writer may proceed one by one through the features, alternating among two or more subjects. This pattern is useful in all writing — fiction, nonfiction, light reading, or serious reading. We often learn what something is by noting how it is like or unlike something else.

- **Example:**

The demonstration in our city was similar to several others around the country that day, in numbers and makeup. However, the outcome was very different. Unlike the mass arrests in Boston and Atlanta, no one was arrested, and in fact the demonstration did not even make the television news.

- **Signals (comparison):**

also, like, compared with, similarly, in the same way, as, just as, likewise, similar to, resemble

- **Signals (contrast):**

however, unlike, in contrast, whereas, but, on the contrary, opposite, opposing, on the other hand, unlike, differing from, contrary to, dissimilar, unique, unusual

8. Spatial-geographic pattern. The writer organizes the details according to physical placement and spatial relationships. The details are often largely visual, structural, and quantitative; you read about amounts, distances, sizes, or outlines. This pattern asks you to visualize, imagine, or see relationships. Graphics such as photographs, sketches, diagrams, and maps may also be added to the text to help you "see" the writer's ideas.

Like the other patterns, this pattern is found in all reading and in every field, but it is especially common in the natural and life sciences, medicine, mathematics, engineering, architecture, art, urban and ethnic studies, anthropology, history, population studies, and so on. These are fields in which parts, movement, proximities, and physical interrelations are paramount.

- **Example:**

The new mall is planned to be user-friendly. The ground floor will contain food shops, fountains, benches, and tables where people can stroll, eat, and chat. The second and third floors will contain the thirty or so shops — the business heart of the mall. The top floor will be open to the sun and sky, with small gardens and fine restaurants, and a 180-degree view of the bay.

- **Signals:**

left, right, up, down, in the rear, behind, in front; upper, lower, outward, inward; external, internal, dorsal, ventral,

anterior, posterior; east, west, north, south; bordering, adjacent, next to

9. Definition pattern. The writer tries to explain or define a concept or object by delineating its qualities or aspects. Of course, a dictionary contains definitions of words — their *denotations.* Usually, the entry begins by assigning the general class of the word. Then it gives the particular features of the word that distinguish it from others in its class. (For example, "A horse is a large, four-legged, hoofed mammal that has been domesticated for riding and for carrying loads.") In our other reading, terms may be defined just as briefly, with one or two sentences, or the writer may expand on a word for a paragraph, a chapter, or even a book.

Whether brief or lengthy, correct definitions of terms and concepts are essential if one is to learn anything in any field. In mathematics and the sciences, most terms lend themselves to clear and universally accepted definitions. In the social sciences, terms may not be so easy to define or may vary somewhat with the writer or with the context: aggression, adaptability, free elections, and so on. In the arts and in our daily lives, definition is even more difficult. What do you — or I — mean by a healthy mind? A romantic idea? Natural foods? Beauty? Success?

A pure definition is usually fairly brief. If the writer goes on at length about the term, the pattern may verge on general description rather than being simple definition. This is especially true when *connotations* (the associations a word calls up) or specific examples and anecdotes are used to help explain the term.

- **Example (denotation):**

Depression *is a mental condition of gloom or sadness; dejection.*

- **Example (personal definition, connotations):**

Depression *is the conviction that nothing matters, nothing will work out. Depression is also the physical feeling of being twenty pounds heavier, twenty years older, than usual. You can hardly take a deep breath or move your large ungainly body. You can feel the sad droop of your eyes, each weighted down by puffiness.*

- **Signals:**

define, definition, describe accurately, explain exactly, mean, meaning, aspects of, discuss, analyze, is

10. Classification pattern. The writer discusses a subject by breaking it down into parts, which are then organized on the basis of traits, interrelationships, hierarchies, or some other system. Groups, classes, categories, types, flowcharts, family trees, chains of command in companies, job analyses — all these subjects lend themselves to the classification pattern. It is often the dominant pattern in these fields — botany, biology, and linguistics (language families) — as well as in popular articles about types of cars, travelers, students, colleges, fashions, and so on.

- **Example:**

We can all recognize the three dominant types of students at this college. First, we have the overachievers — they do everything twice as well as necessary, worry themselves sick over grades and exams, and usually get A's. Then there are the remittance kids — their parents are paying to keep them in college and out of trouble. They do the minimum, ignore exams and grades, and try to get D's just for showing up in class. The third type is the ...

- **Signals:**

classify, group, type, sort out, analyze, order, arrange. This pattern often includes diagrams, flowcharts, "trees," and other graphics to show groupings.

11. Description pattern. The writer recreates a subject for you — a person, place, event, experience, mood, object, time, and so on —through many specific details. These details may be highly personal and imaginative, as in essays and stories, or they may be factual, as in a scientific or a police report. The details are often sensory; that is, they involve the senses of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. Writers add description anywhere. They insert it within other dominant patterns to enliven the content and make it vivid. Descriptive details can make a vague or abstract discussion more concrete. They help the reader see or experience the topic. As in all organizational patterns, a description may include a stated main idea or thesis. But sometimes the main idea — the focus of all those details — will be implied, left for the reader to infer.

Descriptive passages are so common, and the pattern is so vague, that you may easily be tempted to label much of what you read *description.* However, outside of fiction, few long works are descriptions alone. Most description functions within some other dominant pattern. For example, a detailed description of a boat will form part of a chronological account of a prehistoric dig.

The description pattern itself is sometimes broken down into kinds of description, or sub-patterns: facts and statistics, spatial-geographic, and so on.

- **Example:**

This self-portrait by the Mexican painter Frida Kahlo is striking, even when reproduced in a textbook in black and white. She has set herself before a backdrop of lush tropical greenery; a small pet monkey peers enigmatically from behind her right shoulder. Like the monkey, she stares straight out of the canvas — unsmiling, serious, self-aware, proud but not defiant. Her head and neck take up most of the frame; she has given herself an extremely long, straight, strong neck, almost a pillar. Her face ...

- **Signals:**

describe, description, the appearance, the look, in detail. (The writer may use no signals. He or she may simply begin to describe, filling in the broad statements with many specific details.)

Practice

Ex. 1. **Here you will find five paragraphs on various subjects. Read each one carefully for its organization. Then determine which of the eleven patterns it best follows. Write this pattern under each paragraph. Remember the eleven patterns: examples, time sequence, cause-and-effect, reasons, process, problem-solution, compare-contrast, spatial-geographic, definition, classification, and description.**

Paragraph 1

Linguists, those scientists of language, tell us that human languages are living entities that constantly change over time. Their histories can be traced almost as if they were persons. English, like all the others, has its long history of change and influences. It belongs to the large family called Indo-European, which researchers think originated somewhere in what is now eastern Europe and northern Iran 5,000 to 6,000 years ago. Using advanced techniques, they have reconstructed some of this parent language, Proto-Indo-European. Tribes migrated, lost contact with each other. Over hundreds and thousands of years, languages developed into dialects and then separate tongues. One branch of Indo-European, the Germanic, split into North, East, and West subgroups. West Germanic moved into England with the Anglo-Saxons around A.D. 500-600. Even the Norman (French) invasion of 1066 did not shake loose this dominant language of the British Isles. Fifteen hundred years later, the basic grammar and over 90 percent of our common, daily words are still "native" — that is, a modern version of the Anglo-Saxon spoken by those Germanic tribes.

Organizational pattern: _____

Paragraph 2

Social scientists do not agree on whether blue- and white-collar workers have become increasingly alike in their values and attitudes in recent decades, but they may continue to look at life differently even at similar income levels. Regarding marriage, for example, working-class couples tend to emphasize values associated with parenthood and job stability, whereas white-collar partners are more inclined to value companionship, self-expression, and communication. Middle-class parents value self-direction and initiative in children, whereas parents in working-class families stress obedience and conformity.

Organizational pattern: _____

Paragraph 3

The amateur sport of triathlon seems to be growing in popularity in the United States and the rest of the world. Perhaps this is because triathlons vary widely, from short and fairly easy to extremely grueling — for example, the "Iron Man" annual triathlon in Hawaii. Somewhere, every weekend of the year, there is a triathlon for every level of athletic ability except Confirmed Couch Potato. One local event is designed for novices. Another one, a rigorous regional championship event, announces that it is open to "the professional, the elite age-group triathlete, and the first-time long-course competitor." For yuppie types, the sport provides a goal, a reason to keep in shape. For many other young men and women, it's simply the thing to do; a triathlon is a social event. For serious athletes, triathlons are a way of life or almost an obsession: They may train six hours a day, six days a week to compete for lucrative endorsements. It seems the only thing triathlons have in common is the "tri" events: swimming, bicycling, and running.

Organizational pattern: _____

Paragraph 4

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization announces [1994] that 600 breeds of domestic animals are now extinct worldwide. These include chickens, pigs, cattle, goats, sheep, horses, and donkeys. Four hundred other breeds are listed as endangered. Of the 4,000 breeds existing in the world today, one-fourth are not being valued and preserved as they should, and so they may be headed for extinction. For example, only 1,000 Rubia De El Molar sheep exist today, and only 30 Andalusian spotted pigs. Yet both were developed over many centuries for their value to humans and — more importantly — their ability to flourish in harsh conditions. Animal geneticists are alarmed. They warn that unless genetic stocks of valuable farm animals are preserved, the loss to humans will rival the loss of genetic variety that we already see in the destruction of the world's rain forests.

Organizational pattern: _____

Paragraph 5

What is major depressive disorder, or depression? It is not just "feeling blue" or feeling "down in the dumps." It is more than being sad or feeling grief after a loss. In fact, one major form of depression — bipolar or — maniac-depressive disorder — includes periods of euphoria, or "highs." Depression is a medical disorder — just as diabetes, high blood pressure, or heart disease are medical disorders — that day after day affects one's thoughts, feelings, physical health, and behaviors. It can be caused by genetics, other general medical illnesses, certain medicines, drugs or alcohol, and by other psychiatric conditions. Depression is not a weakness or "your fault." It is a medical illness, thus it is treatable.

Organizational pattern: _____

Ex. 2. **Read, annotate, and then answer the questions that follow each of the selections. Part of your task in this exercise is**

to identify the structure or strategy used in each of the selections.

Paragraph I

Potential energy is stored energy, or energy an object possesses due to its relative position. For example, a ball located 20 ft above the ground has more potential energy than when located 10 ft above the ground and will bounce higher when allowed to fall. Water backed up behind a dam represents potential energy that can be converted into useful work in the form of electrical or mechanical energy. Gasoline is a source of chemical potential energy. When gasoline burns (combines with oxygen), the heat released is associated with a decrease in potential energy. The new substances formed by burning have less chemical potential energy than the gasoline and oxygen did.

1. What is the paragraph's topic sentence? Underline it.
2. What structure or strategy is used in this paragraph?
3. What techniques are used to develop the paragraph's strategy?
4. What signals are used in the paragraph?

Paragraph 2

SEX AND GENDER

An understanding of the difference between sex and gender is critical to the use of bias-free language. Sex is biological: people with male genitals are male, and people with female genitals are female. Gender is cultural: our notions of "masculine" tell us how we expect men to behave and our notions of "feminine" tell us how we expect women to behave. Words like *womanly/manly*, *tomboy/sissy*, *unfeminine/unmasculine* have nothing to do with the person's sex; they are culturally acquired, subjective concepts about character traits and expected behaviors that vary from one place to another, from one individual to another....

Gender describes an individual's personal, legal, and social status without reference to genetic sex; gender is a subjective cultural attitude. Sex is an objective biological fact. Gender varies according to culture. Sex is a constant.

1. What structure or strategy is used in this passage?
2. What is the main idea? State it so as to indicate the structure used.
3. List three points from the passage in a pattern that reveals the passage's structure.
4. What signals are used?

Paragraph 3

Most in-house agencies [advertising departments within companies] are found in retailing, for several reasons. First, retailers tend to operate under small profit margins and find they can save money by doing their own advertising. Second, retailers often receive a great many advertising materials either free or at a reduced cost from manufacturers and trade associations. Local media, for example, will provide creative and production assistance for free. Third, the timetable for retailing tends to be much tighter than that for national advertising. Retailers often create complete campaigns in hours, whereas advertising agencies may take weeks or months.

1. What is the paragraph's topic sentence? Underline it.
2. What structure or strategy is used?
3. List three points from the paragraph in a pattern that reveals the paragraph's structure.
4. What signals are used?

Paragraph 4

In addition to the massive erosional and depositional work carried on by Pleistocene (Ice-Age) glaciers, the ice sheets had other, sometimes profound, effects upon the landscape. For example, as the ice advanced and retreated, animals and plants were

forced to migrate. This led to stresses that some organisms could not tolerate. Hence, a number of different plants and animals became extinct. Furthermore, many present-day stream courses bear little resemblance to their preglacial routes. The Missouri River once flowed northward toward Hudson Bay, while the Mississippi River followed a path through central Illinois and the head of the Ohio River reached only as far as Indiana. Other rivers that today carry only a trickle of water but nevertheless occupy broad channels are testimony to the fact that they once carried torrents of glacial melt-water.

1. What structure is used in this paragraph?
2. What is the main idea? State it so as to indicate the structure used.
3. List three points from the paragraph in a pattern that reveals the paragraph's structure.
4. What signals are used?

Paragraph 5

Population mobility offers openings for highly advertised international, national, or regional brands; retail chains and franchises; and major credit cards — among others. Their names are well known when consumers relocate and these names represent an assurance of quality. For example, Crest toothpaste, Heineken beer, British Airways, Honda, McDonald's, and Visa are recognized and successful worldwide, as well as throughout the United States. Macy's department stores do good business in Florida and California because a number of Northeasterners who were loyal customers have relocated there; yet, Macy's could not build a satisfactory customer following for its Missouri and Kansas stores and sold them.

1. What is the paragraph's topic sentence? Underline it.
2. What structure or strategy is used?
3. List three points from the paragraph in a pattern that reveals the paragraph's structure.

4. What signals are used?

Paragraph 6

There is general agreement that the plague began in Europe when Genoese merchants brought it from the Middle East to the island of Sicily off the coast of southern Italy in October of 1347. It spread quickly, reaching southern Italy and southern France and Spain by the end of 1347. Usually, the diffusion of the Black Death followed commercial trade routes. In 1348, the plague spread through France and the Low Countries and into Germany. By the end of that year, it had moved to England, which it ravaged in 1349. By the end of 1349, it had expanded to northern Europe and Scandinavia. Eastern Europe and Russia were affected by 1351, although mortality rates were never as high in eastern Europe as they were in western and central Europe.

1. What structure is used in this paragraph?
2. What is the paragraph's topic?
3. List three points from the paragraph in a pattern that reveals the paragraph's structure.
4. What signals are used?

***Ex. 3*. Preview the article.**

1. From what you know about the author and the selection, what can you predict about purpose and format or style?
2. State briefly what you expect to read about.
3. What do you already know about the topic?
4. Use the title to pose questions about the reading selection.
5. Preread the selection. Then read and annotate the article and answer the questions for discussion and reflection.

Differences Between Public Speaking and Conversation

Stephen E. Lucas

Stephen Lucas has been teaching communication arts at the University of Wisconsin at Madison since 1973. He directs the introductory course in public speaking and teaches a popular course on "The Rhetoric of Campaigns and Revolutions." This excerpt is from the fifth edition of Professor Lucas's textbook The Art of Public Speaking*, published in 1995.*

Despite their many similarities, public speaking and everyday conversation are not identical. Let's consider an example in which casual conversation expanded gradually into a true — and vital — public speaking situation. Here the speaker originally had no intention of becoming a *public* speaker and had not trained formally for that role. She was forced to learn by trial and error — in circumstances where the outcome has affected one of the vital issues of our time:

Mary Fisher's life changed forever on July 17,1991. Two weeks earlier, her ex-husband had called to say he had tested positive for the HIV virus. Now, as Fisher listened to her doctor, she learned that she, too, was HIV-positive.

Born into one of Detroit's most prominent families, Fisher was a successful artist, onetime television producer, and former staff assistant to President Gerald Ford. She was used to meeting challenges. But this was different. At the age of forty-three, the mother of two young sons, she felt a sense of shock "so great," she recalls, "that it took every ounce of energy for me to move."

For the next several months, Fisher wrestled with her grief and fear. In conversations with friends and family she wondered, "Why me?" and "What will happen to my children?" But as she came to terms with her condition, she also asked, "Can any good come out of this?" and "Is there anything I can do in the fight against AIDS?" Knowing that conversations with a few people would not solve the problem, in February 1992 she told her story to a reporter from the *Detroit Free Press.* The story made headline news and launched Fisher's career as an AIDS activist.

As Fisher moved more and more into the public eye, she found herself in many public speaking situations — from high-

school auditoriums around Detroit to the International AIDS Conference in Amsterdam. In the process, she had to adapt her conversational abilities to larger audiences and more structured occasions. The spontaneous give-and-take of conversation and informal interviews evolved into speeches prepared carefully in advance.

In April 1992 Fisher created the Family AIDS Network, a nonprofit organization devoted to expanding public understanding and resources in the battle against AIDS. Four months later, she presented a deeply moving speech at the Republican National Convention in Houston, Texas. The speech mesmerized delegates in the Astrodome and won the hearts of millions who saw it on television.

Again Fisher had to adapt — this time to the glare of national publicity. After Houston, her audience became the whole nation. Soon she was crisscrossing the land, speaking to church and community groups, health-care providers, educators, students, and government officials. Today she delivers about 75-80 speeches a year — not including radio, television, and newspaper interviews — to spread her message of awareness, compassion, and caring. She will continue, she says, as long as her health allows.

What a long road Mary Fisher has traveled in the past few years. If someone had asked her before July 17, 1991, "Do you see yourself as a major public speaker?" she would have laughed at the idea. Yet today she has become a compelling advocate for HIV-positive people of all ages, hues, and classes. Along the way, she has had to adapt to three major differences between conversation and public speaking:

1. *Public speaking is more highly structured.* It usually imposes strict time limitations on the speaker. In most cases, the situation does not allow listeners to interrupt with questions or commentary. The speaker must accomplish her or his purpose in the speech itself. In preparing the speech, the speaker must anticipate questions that might arise in the minds of listeners and answer them. Consequently, public speaking demands much more detailed planning and preparation than ordinary conversation.

2. *Public speaking requires more formal language.* Slang, jargon, and bad grammar have little place in public speeches. When Mary Fisher addressed the Republican National Convention, she didn't say, "We damn well better change our attitudes about people who are HIV-positive!" Instead, she delivered an eloquent appeal to "lift the shroud of silence which has been draped over the issue of HIV/AIDS." Despite the increasing informality of all aspects of American life, listeners usually react negatively to speakers who do not elevate and polish their language when addressing an audience. A speech is supposed to be "special."

3. *Public speaking requires a different method of delivery.* When conversing informally, most people talk quietly, interject stock phrases such as "you know" and "I mean," adopt a casual posture, and use what are called vocalized pauses ("uh," "er," "um"). Effective public speakers, however, adjust their voices to be heard clearly throughout the audience. They assume a more erect posture. They avoid distracting mannerisms and verbal habits.

Comprehension Check

Answer the following with a T (true) or F (false).

1. When Mary Fisher knew she was HIV-positive, she was an accomplished speaker.
2. Mary Fisher developed her speaking skills through trial and error.
3. Mary Fisher's most famous speech was given at the 1992 Republican convention.
4. Mary Fisher's experience shows that public speaking and ordinary conversation are quite similar.
5. In both public speaking and informal conversation, people can interrupt and ask questions.
6. Public speaking requires more preparation than informal conversation.
7. Audiences expect speakers to elevate their language.
8. Good public speakers stand and speak casually to help audiences relax.

9. Good public speakers speak loudly enough to be heard by all the audience.

Analysis of Content and Strategies

1. What is the topic of the article? (Indicate the title, author, source)
2. What is the selection's main idea? Where is it stated?
3. What data support the author’s controlling idea?
4. The wording of the main idea announces the passage's primary structure. What is that structure?
5. What two other structures or strategies are used by the author?

6. What signal word announces the second strategy used? What signal word announces the third strategy used? What visual signals are used to highlight each of these strategies?

7. Briefly state the three ways that conversation and public speaking differ.

For Discussion and Reflection

1. What do you think the author wanted to accomplish with his long example about Mary Fisher?

2. Were you interested in the story of Mary Fisher? Why or why not?

3. What two specific ideas in this passage about public speaking do you think are most important? Why did you choose these two?

4. In your view, what two characteristics of public speaking are the most difficult to produce? Why?

5. Are there any ideas in this selection that you could apply to your classes so that you could be more effective in discussions?

Ex. 4. **Preview the article.**

1. From what you know about the author and the selection, what can you predict about the purpose and format or style?
2. State briefly what you expect to read about.
3. What do you already know about the topic?
4. Use the title to pose questions about the reading selection.
5. Preread the selection. Then read and annotate the article.
6. Complete the comprehension check and answer the questions for discussion and reflection.

A Hard Look at How We Treat Children

Andrew Vachss

A lawyer whose only clients are children, Andrew Vachss also writes novels based on his experience defending abused children. The following article appeared in Parade magazine..

Years ago, I was in the middle of a hotly contested trial, representing an infant who had been so tortured that the testifying pediatric expert said the baby actually appeared "suicidal" even at such a young age. One of the opposing attorneys argued for the return of the child, saying his client was the "natural mother" and had certain rights. That phrase resonated deeply within me. There was nothing "natural" about the "mothering" this baby boy had received. He would have been better off in a camp. And I began to reflect on how even biology has failed some children, how our human species no longer practiced the lessons of our predecessors. I wondered, even then, if it was too late for us. I do not believe it is — but I do believe we are running out of time.

Although we all believe our human species to be the highest point on the evolutionary scale, there is one critical area in which we have failed to evolve, one area in which we do not represent an improvement upon our predecessors. And this is a failure so fundamental, so critical, that our long-term survival is at stake. Ultimately, it poses a greater threat than war, poverty, hunger,

crime, racism and tribalism — even of the genocidal I variety — combined.

That fundamental failure is this: We are not protecting and preserving our own. Our notion of the human "family" as the safeguard of our species has not evolved. Instead, it has gone in the opposite direction — it has devolved.

It has devolved to the extent that we tolerate unprotective, even violently abusive parents. It has devolved to the extent that we tolerate predators within a child's circle of trust — in schools, in clubs, within religious organizations. It has devolved to extent that abusers, even when they have been identified, are permitted further opportunities to prey. It has devolved to the extent that we insist on the "rehabilitative potential" of those who viciously injure and/or sexually assault their own children. And it has devolved to the extent that we permit convicted predators of children to be released and walk among us.

One distinguishing characteristic of highly evolved species is a long period of postnatal helplessness, when offspring are not able to fend for themselves. Another characteristic is pack behavior, a collectiveness which requires that all activity be geared to the ultimate survival of the group.

Among other mammals, nonprotective parents are considered defective by other pack members. Not only will they decrease the pack's numbers through direct attacks on their own young, but they also cannot be relied upon to guard the offspring of others while pack members forage, hunt or gather. And so they are expelled. Likewise, predators within a species are not tolerated. They are banished, avoided or killed. These are not moral judgments; they are biologically driven and, among all species but our own, compelling.

Human animals, by contrast, have tolerated — even tacitly condoned — the nonprotector and the predator, leading to an escalation of the rape, murder and torture of *our* children. Rather than making their survival, and the survival of our species, an unquestioned priority, we watch indifferently while the evolution of cruelty continues. Much of it comes from the individual family itself; all of it from the human family as a whole.

Instead of blaming the "destruction of the family" for every social ill and evil, we need to face the fact that this is a self-inflicted wound. The "family" is self-destructing — destroying itself from within by its failure to nurture and value its offspring. What are "family values" anyway? Unless and until the ultimate "family value" is protection of our children, such a term deserves no respect.

We cannot continue to tolerate those who prey upon our children — the future of our species. Evolution is a race, a relay race, with the baton passed from generation to generation. The competition is between those who value children as the seedlings of our species and those who value them as vassals and victims.

We are not winning this race. And we cannot, unless and until we change our priorities and our conduct. All the pious rhetoric on the planet will not save one child. And while we endlessly debate the "right" of pedophiles to post kiddie porn on the Internet, our species moves farther away from its biological roots.

We must take the abuse of a child as an offense against (and threat to) our survival. And we must replicate the conduct of our animal ancestors and respond as they did — or fail to do so and vanish as some of them did. Forever.

Comprehension Check

Answer the following with a T (true) or F (false).

1. Humans are protecting their children.
2. A failure to protect children is a more serious problem than war or poverty.
3. The way the human family protects its children represents an evolutionary advance over other species.
4. Predators of children include parents who physically or sexually abuse their own children.
5. In other mammal species, nonprotective parents are taught to be better.
6. "Family values" does not mean protecting and nurturing children.
7. Kiddie porn on the Internet is not a problem.

8. Each abuse of a child is a threat to the survival of the human species.

Analysis of Content Strategies

1. What is the article's topic?
2. What is the selection's primary structure or strategy? How do you know?

3. What comparison does the author use as another strategy and to advance his argument?

4. What action does the author want to see in our society?

5. State the essay's main idea or thesis.

For Discussion and Reflection

1. Do you agree that we have a serious problem in our failure to protect our children? Why or why not?

2. If you agree with Vachss, do you agree with his implied solutions? If you do not agree with his solutions, what solutions would you offer?

3. After reflecting on what you know about various mammal groups (wolves, for example), do you find Vachss's comparisons with other mammals useful in advancing his argument? How does his comparison dramatize his point about human society's treatment of its children?

Unit Five

Summarizing

The summary, one of the most important strategies, is a brief restatement of the main ideas of a work – a story, an article, or a chapter section. You should nor be misled by the variety of terms (abstract, summary, precis, annotation) and specific ways critics treat them. A formal summary (abstract) of a long expository work is often called a precis. Summaries are similar to paraphrases in that both restate the ideas in the original work but do not react to or comment on the original in any way. Summaries differ from paraphrases, though, because summaries condense the original whereas paraphrases are either the same length as or longer than the original. The primary purpose of a paraphrase is to clarify difficult material. The primary purpose of a summary is to create a shortened version of the original that focuses on main ideas. A summary is similar to an outline except that the format is different, for a summary is written in complete sentences and paragraphs.

Thus, the summary is a secondary text which equals the primary one in informative value though being much shorter. This newly created piece should be well-structured and have to follow its own logical thread. Writers are only too often verbose in creating suspense or determined to bring ample illustrative examples to make their arguments convincing. You on the other hand cannot enjoy the luxury of this winding path, but take a short cut expressing the writer's ideas concisely. A summary is not an invitation to reading (unlike annotation only indicating the writer's ideas) but rather a substitute to the original text stating briefly not only all the ideas but all the arguments of the author.

A summary makes a useful record for a future study or helps you prepare for discussions. It is also a useful skill to practice because you may have summary assignments in your work. It is frequently used for official purposes, when a summary of letters or documents must be prepared for an official who has no time to read the originals.

Summarizing means condensing, "squeezing down", the content of a passage into a shorter form. In condensing ten pages of

print into two or three, it is clear that much must be omitted. The art of summarizing lies in making the right omissions and in skillfully combining the left. The omissions depend on the type of the summary you are writing.

The ***informative precis*** preserves the great part of the material contained in the original and quite often follows the logic of the original. It is very helpful in preparing for your classes when you want to keep as close to the original as possible.

The ***indicative precis***, characterized by maximum semantic compression, requires greater condensing and omissions. Our aim is to master this particular skill invaluable for professional practice.

The precis based on one informational source is called a ***monographic precis***. The precis founded on two or more pieces of writing which are discussing one topic (theme) is called a ***review precis***.

To summarize a written paper successfully you do not necessarily have to follow the original order of ideas. You must, however take care to (1) state fairly the main idea, (2) include the most significant or striking supporting details, plus the pattern of organization, and (3) do all this in a short space, without serious omissions or distortion of the writer's message.

Note that a summary is more complete than a restatement of the writer's main idea or theme found in an annotation. Furthermore the summary tries to be objective, fair, and complete. It does not include the summarizer's personal opinions or any critique of the writing, acting and so on.

Some expository styles are so concise that a reader can find little to eliminate in a summary. This may occur in mathematics, the sciences, legal and medical materials, operating manuals, straight news and so on. But much of what we read, even in textbooks, is wordier than it needs to be.

One question often arises: when you summarize, are you allowed to copy the writer's words? There is a division of opinions here. As long as you use quotation marks or other attributions, you should not be guilty of plagiarism. Usually, however, your summary will be more satisfying if you paraphrase (use synonyms for the original wording). Even better, you should condense the content

into your own words, without referring back to the original. It is only too evident that as you have to squeeze a whole paragraph into a couple of words you need some special wording different from the writer's.

Summary/precis plan

1. Introduction
   a. author, title, source, date of the article
   b. topic of the article
2. Main idea
   a. why the article was written
   b. the writer's position concerning the problem discussed
3. Major details
   a. generalities pertaining to present state of affairs
4. Supporting minor details
   a. 1-2 examples
   b. statistical data, presented by the author
   c. allusions to opponents
   d. arguments, allusions to proponents
5. Conclusion
   a. restatement of the purpose of the article
   b. possible ways of the problem solution, suggested by the paper

Useful words and expressions

1. *Author, writer, journalist, narrator, observer, article, work, paper, publication, survey.*

2. *Deal with, scrutinize, analyze, emphasize, point out, pinpoint, highlight, limelight, stress, underline, elaborate, draw attention to, treat the question of, reveal, mention, tackle the problem of, suppose, quote, allude, conclude, imply, infer, interpret, state, maintain, challenge, question, denounce, repudiate, assert, confirm, doubt, demand, recollect, allege, reminisce, proclaim,*

claim, imply, comment on, abstain from (comments, criticism), attribute to, report, rebut, recant, renounce, deny, acquiesce, admit, speak out, come up with, put forward, disclose, forecast, insinuate, reiterate, gather, reveal, discover, dissuade, reckon, go on to speak, conclude, arrive at/ draw conclusion, find.

These words and expressions can be helpful in combining parts of the summary into one meaningful whole. Note however the differences between the words in the second list. Using them respectively you can make your summary (precis) an elaborate piece of work.

Practice

Ex. 1. **Read the following five paragraphs carefully. Then in one or two sentences, summarize them. As you summarize, ask yourself if you have considered the topic of the paragraph, the main idea, and one important detail. When you first identify these parts of each paragraph, your one- or two-sentence summary should prove accurate.**

Paragraph 1

The complexity of the meaning of love is illustrated by the fact that the language of classical Greece differentiated three aspects of love within a couple: *philos*, which referred to an attraction characterized by deep, enduring friendship; *eros*, which referred to a passionate sexual attraction; and *agape*, which referred to the self-sacrificing, nondemanding spiritual satisfaction a person feels when providing for the other. There was no single word for love in classical Greece.

Summary in your own words (1-2 sentences)

_____
_____

Paragraph 2

One obvious component of loving is liking. However, loving is not simply an extreme manifestation of liking. One of the first scientific studies of love found that both liking and loving are characterized by respect, attraction, affection, need, care, trust, and tolerance. However, liking emphasizes respect, attraction, and affection, whereas loving emphasizes need, care, trust, and tolerance.

Summary in your own words (1-2 sentences):

_____
_____

Paragraph 3

The Smoke Mountain Triathlon is an exciting event through our county's late-spring wildflowers. It consists of a 25-mile swim in Williams Lake, which will be warm this time of year, an 8-mile bike ride along a construction road on the mountain, and a 1.5-mile run down the other side, mostly in shade and by a stream. The Smoke Mountain is designed for people who are new to triathlon, and it offers a wide range of categories for boys, girls, men, and women. Age groups begin at ten years and continue to seventy-plus. Local businesses will be offering a variety of merchandise for prizes: T-shirts, shoes, food, and wines. If you have never tried a triathlon, this may be the best introduction to the sport. See you there in May!

Summary in your own words (2 -3 sentences):

_____
_____

Paragraph 4

A middle-aged woman, with an MBA from the University of Chicago, owns and operates an unusual business in Los Angeles. It's

a school designed to teach clients how to save their lives when confronted by hardened street criminals. Through a harrowing experience of her own, plus several years in a volunteer street patrol, the woman decided that surrendering to attackers does not guarantee one's safety. In fact, police records show that compliant victims are as likely to be killed as resistant ones. So, the school shows adults and children how to counterattack viciously enough to escape. But first, clients must learn acting skills. They must seem to surrender while actually waiting for the chance to disable their attackers. The techniques are so violent that the actors who train with clients must wear heavy protective clothing. The fit, attractive owner has apparently identified a need and is meeting it; her classes are filled long in advance.

Summary in your own words (2 -3 sentences):

_____
_____

Paragraph 5

Every modern government offers some form of subsidies to its food producers. Farmers and ranchers the world over rely on these programs. But international studies are turning up dismaying evidence that subsidies often do more harm than good to a nation's soil and its food consumers. For example, cheap electricity causes excessive pumping of water, which lowers the water table. Low-priced water and pasture fees encourage growers to plant the wrong crops for an area, ranchers to overgraze their cattle on public lands. These two "savings" lead to depletion of natural water supplies, excess pesticide use, desertification of large areas, and long-term erosion of vast tracts of land. Food-growing practices that are not naturally sustainable end up costing all of us heavily, in damage to our environment and to our health.

Summary in your own words (2-3 sentences):

_____

_____

Ex. 2. **In this multiparagraph passage, you will be putting many of the skills you learned in this unit as well as in the previous ones together. Look for the topic and the main-idea statement of the entire passage, transitions, main supporting details, and dominant writing pattern. The main idea should be stated in one sentence (by you or the author). Your summary will include a few major details, but it should not run more than one long sentence, or possibly two to three shorter sentence**

Why Do Women Live Longer?

There are six million more women than men in the United States. Women outlive men not only in the United States but in all industrialized nations. Despite different cultures, different ways of life, different diets, and different causes of death, there is one overriding constant: Women outlive men by about seven years throughout the industrialized world (Dolnick 1991).

Differential survival rates begin at conception, and at all life stages thereafter mortality rates are higher for males than for females. Male infants die in larger numbers than do female infants. Throughout childhood and adolescence, males continue to have higher death rates. As adults, every one of the leading causes of death—heart disease, lung cancer, homicide, cirrhosis of the liver, and pneumonia—kills men at a rate about twice that of women. More male disorders are inherited, predisposing men to have lower life expectancies (Renzetti and Curran 1989; Sorensen etal. 1985).

Part of the damage that leads to men's higher death rates is self-inflicted. About a third of the longevity gap can be traced to the ways men act. Men smoke more than women, drink more, and take more life-threatening chances. Men are murdered (usually by other men) three times as often as women are, and men commit suicide two or three times as often as women do. Male drivers are more

likely to drive through a red light, more likely to drive after drinking, and less likely to signal a turn. Men have twice as many fatal accidents per mile driven as women do (Dolnick 1991). But behavior doesn't explain all of the longevity gap. Even among nonsmokers, for example, death rates from heart disease, lung cancer, and emphysema are two to four times higher for men than they are for women. During the 1950s stress was commonly blamed for men's higher mortality rates. It was hypothesized that men were subject to significantly more stress in the workplace than women experienced at home. However, from the 1950s to the 1990s the proportion of women employed outside the home more than doubled. Women who work away from home were found to be just as healthy as women who work at home (Dolnick 1991).

Researchers have suggested that one reason for females' lower mortality rate from infancy on may be a result of the production of immunogenic agents in the genes of the X chromosome. Researchers have also hypothesized that females have a higher ability than males to fight infections because of the action of female hormones (estrogen and progesterone) on certain blood cells (Lips 1988).

It should be noted, however, that despite their lower mortality rate, women have higher levels of stress than men and higher rates of exhaustion, headaches, dermatology problems, mental illness, and chronic illnesses (Berkow et al. 1987; Sheldrake, Cromack, and McGuire 1976).

Lloyd Saxton, ***The Individual, Marriage, and the Family****, 8th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth), 30-31.*

Topic of entire passage:_____

Main idea – a sentence in your own words:

_____

_____

Supporting details:

_____

_____

Dominant pattern:_____

Summary in your own words:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Ex. 3. **Preview the article (skim the headline, first paragraph, first sentence of each paragraph) and speak about the information you expect to find in this reading. Do you know anything else pertaining to the subject discussed.**

Music Is Good Medicine

Whether you 've had heart surgery or a bad day at the office, some soothing sounds may help.

Things don't come easily to Matteo, a 4-year-old New Yorker with brown bangs and a cowboy bandanna. Afflicted by cerebral palsy, he moves awkwardly. He thinks slowly and doesn't talk much. Small frustrations upset him terribly. But when Matteo visits Clive Robbins, his music therapist, he bangs gleefully on a snare drum. Placing one hand on the rim to steady himself, he uses the other to rap in tempo to Robbins's improvised song. As the tune progresses, Matteo moves his act to the piano, banging along with one or two fingers and laughing excitedly. By following the rhythm, he's learning to balance his body and coordinate the movement of his limbs. He's also learning to communicate. "He's grown much more motivated and intent," says Robbins, the cofounder of New York University's Nordoff-Robbins Center for Music Therapy.

Disabled children aren't the only ones feeling the therapeutic power of music. A 79-year-old stroke survivor listens to Viennese waltzes on his headphones to help him relearn to walk. A woman in labor has LeAnn Rimes's country tunes blaring from a stereo to help her keep in step with her contractions. And, yes, ostensibly healthy

people are listening to airy New Age discs, and maybe lighting a candle or two, to lessen stress and promote well-being. They may all be on to something. Mounting evidence suggests that almost any musical stimulus, from Shostakovich to the Spice Girls, can have therapeutic effects.

Music therapy isn't mainstream health care, but recent studies suggest it can have a wide range of benefits. In 19%, researchers at Colorado State University tried giving 10 stroke victims 30 minutes of rhythmic stimulation each day for three weeks. Compared with untreated patients, they showed significant improvements in their ability to walk steadily. People with Parkinson's disease enjoyed similar benefits. A musical beat from any genre seemed to provide a rhythmic cue, stimulating the brain's motor systems.

Other body systems seem equally responsive. Scottish researchers have found, for example, that a daily dose of Mozart or Mendelssohn significantly brightens the moods of institutionalized stroke victims. Using psychological tests, the Scottish team showed that patients receiving 12 weeks of daily music therapy were less depressed and anxious, and more stable and sociable, than other patients in the same facility. Music therapy has also proved useful in the management of Alzheimer's and other neurological diseases. And Deforia Lane, a music therapist at University Hospitals in Cleveland, has shown that music can boost immune function in children. That's consistent with a 1995 finding by Louisiana researchers that preemies exposed to lullabies in the hospital went home earlier.

Some of the most encouraging research has been done in pain management. Pregnant women who listen to music they like during labor are only half as likely to need anesthesia, according to a study done by two therapists in Texas. A Michigan cardiologist gave eight patients recovering from open-heart surgery a choice in pain medications: a morphine drip or a regimen of 20 minutes of low-frequency humming. The patients preferred the vibrations to being drugged, and their hospital stays decreased by four days.

How does music work all this magic? No one really knows. "It's a mystery," Lane says. But there are hints. Researchers have long known, for example, that listening to music can directly

influence pulse, blood pressure and the electrical activity of muscles. Neuroscientists now suspect that music can actually help build and strengthen connections among nerve cells in the cerebral cortex. This is probably why listening to Mozart before an IQ test boosts scores by roughly nine points, as researchers at the University of California, Irvine, discovered in 1993.

The word is getting out. The American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) now has 5,000 members, and 69 U.S. universities have started graduate programs in music therapy. But the medical world has yet to embrace it fully. Only 20 percent of music therapists reported third-party payments last year. Most health plans decided on a case-by-case basis whether it can be reimbursed. If you think that you or a family member could benefit from music therapy, call AMTA at 301-589-3300, or visit the organization's Web site (www.namt.com). In the meantime, you can always self-medicate. Therapists say music you like can be all you need. It doesn't have to be Andrew Weil's "healing vibrations." No prescription is needed to pop in a CD, turn up the soothing sounds of Ella Fitzgerald and relax.

Marian Westley
Newsweek

1. Read the article, identify “umbrella” sentences, discriminate between the paragraphs stating the writer’s key messages and those providing examples. Map the article if necessary, drawing arrows to connect controlling ideas with supplementary details.
2. What is the topic of the article?
3. What is the writer’s main idea?
4. What details, examples, statistical data does the writer support his stance with?
5. What conclusion does the writer arrive at?
6. Summarize your findings in written following the plan given in unit 5.

Ex. 4. **Preview the article (skim the headline, first paragraph, first sentence of each paragraph) and speculate about the information you are going to find in it.**

How 'Demographic Fatigue' Will Defuse the Population Bomb

It was 200 years ago that English cleric Thomas Malthus warned that unchecked population growth could lead to famine, disease and conflict. His reasoning was simple: populations tend to increase faster than food supplies. So far, the world's farmers have managed to overcome short water supplies and depleted croplands to feed a population that has more than doubled in the last half century. United Nations demographers predict that the global population could climb from its current 5.9 billion to as high as 11.2 billion in 2050. But at least one expert on global population sees signs that the scenario predicted by Malthus is already coming true — with a twist.

In a report on demographic trends conducted by the think tank Worldwatch Institute, Lester Brown, president of Worldwatch, identifies signs of faltering growth in some of the countries that were expected to have the greatest population increases. Populations in 32 countries — all in the industrialized world — have stabilized because of declining birthrates. Some, including Russia, Italy and Germany, are even losing populations. But in a handful of developing countries where population growth is slowing, the cause isn't something to celebrate: it isn't increased education or family planning. The population is growing more slowly now because more people are dying.

The trend is called, chillingly, "demographic fatigue," and it's beginning in many of the developing countries that have experienced soaring birthrates and sharp population growth for several decades: India, Ethiopia, Pakistan and Nigeria. Governments are having trouble dealing with feeding, housing and educating an increasing number of children, while at the same time confronting the falling water tables, deforestation and soil erosion that rapid

population growth brings. In these conditions, any new threat — infectious disease, drought or famine — can become a full-blown crisis.

AIDS is a case in point. The most recent World Health Organization estimates calculate that one quarter of the adult populations of Zimbabwe, and Botswana are infected with the virus that causes AIDS, with Zambia, Swaziland and Namibia not far behind. In other words, these countries stand to lose at least one quarter of their adult populations in the next decade from AIDS alone, a situation unparalleled since the bubonic plague swept through Europe in the 14th century.

Disease is far from the only threat to overburdened societies.U.N. projections show India may add 600 million more people by 2050, overtaking China as the world's most populous country. But India already faces serious water shortages. A recent report from the International Water Management Institute shows that recent growth in food production and population has been based on unsustainable use of water. So far, the government has taken no steps to manage resources.

Social unrest is also increasing. One example is the longstanding conflict between the Tutsis and the Hutus in Rwanda, where population pressures reduced cropland to a point where it could no longer feed those who lived on it. Demands on the world's fisheries and shared water resources are likely to spark similar conflicts. Already the waters of the Nile are so heavily used that little reaches the Mediterranean, so any increase in demand or shift in allocation will also increase tensions.

The bottom line, says Brown, is that human population growth is destined to slow, one way or the other. Developing societies will either recognize problems on the horizon and act to encourage smaller families — or unchecked births will have their price in rising death rates.

MARY HAGER
Newsweek

1. Read the article, identify “umbrella” statements, discriminate between the paragraphs stating the writer’s key messages and those providing examples.

2. What is the topic?
3. That is the writer's main idea?
4. What examples, statistics does the writer provide to support his controlling ideas.
5. What is the conclusion the writer comes to?
6. Summarize the findings following the plan in unit 5.

Ex. 5. **Preview the article (skim the headline, first paragraph, first sentences of the other paragraphs) and speculate about the information you are going to find in it.**

Cracking the Ceiling

Barriers frustrated women this century. Things are changing fast

How about one more nomination to the pantheon of business giants: the American working woman — *Femella commercia Americana* — the one who is pushing against the glass ceiling despite its seeming indestructibility.

Women have not been captains of industry until recently (and there are precious few in that position now). But that should be no surprise to anyone. For the first 20 years of the century, women couldn't even vote. Every time I think of that, it startles me. Even as Edith Wharton wrote many of her novels, as Helen Keller graduated from Radcliffe with honors, even as women — tens of thousands of them — typed the documents and ran the offices and manufactured the arms that led to victory in World War I, we still could not vote.

Long before this century and well into it, women without means labored hard — inside the home, without vacuum cleaners or even electricity, and for pitifully low wages outside the home. In 1900, most of the 21% of white women who were employed found themselves confined mainly to textile and garment factories; almost

all the 41% of black women who had jobs were agricultural laborers or servants.

Today many women are still underpaid and stuck in low-level jobs, but times are changing. My nominee for business titan is the woman who is determined to make it to the top, who is giving 110% to compete with the boys. She may still get passed over when a promotion is available. When she brings up an idea at a meeting, it may still even now be ignored until a male colleague restates it. If she's feminine, she may be seen as weak. If she's tough, she may be seen as bitchy or grasping.

These male perceptions of the women they work with were first identified in 1977 by Rosabeth Moss Kanter in her pioneering work *Men and Women of the Corporation.* Her descriptions often still hold; they are confirmed by the women themselves. We have the stories, the surveys and the numbers. If our woman has neared the top in the FORTUNE 500, our research tells us she is probably a staff officer. If she is a top earner, she is one of 63 women, vs. 2,257 men.

Until recently, women were all but excluded from the upper reaches of corporate America. Women superlative enough to make their mark expended their energies mostly in social causes or education. Those who somehow managed to build businesses or transform companies were mainly the wives, the widows, the daughters or the partners of hugely successful men.

Happily, small business is an aspect of the economy in which women do wield power, in the U.S. nearly as many people work for women-owned businesses as are employed by FORTUNE 500 companies worldwide. Small businesses are often founded by women who have left corporations because they felt that the glass ceiling was impeding their progress.

In fact, the entrance of women into the business world is having an astoundingly significant effect on the way we all live. The simple fact that there are so many of us now — 49% of the professional, managerial and administrative work force — is stunning. Our much increased presence in the offices of Big Business — yes, even a few of the corner offices — has made the world we knew unrecognizable. Clearly, with 86% of all

FORTUNE 500 companies having at least one woman board member (right now it is only one, but this too shall pass), the impact of women's changing focus and fortune is being felt at the very top of the corporate hierarchy.

With all the barriers the working woman faces, with all the hurdles that have been in her way, we are betting on her, and so should the nation. The men who head America's greatest companies have a stake in the success of this talented, skilled, hard-driving, confident workingwoman. These men know competence comes in all shapes and sizes, and they don't want to lose out on half the nation's talent pool. They won't have the smartest employees, managers or executives. She'll go to the competition or to small business and, as has happened in the past, those small businesses will grow into big competitors. So, despite all the obstacles she faces, we're convinced the future looks good for our nominee, the American woman in business. Our prediction is that the next time TIME does this kind of roundup, it will find builders and titans aplenty — in both genders.

Sheila Wellington

Time

1. Read the article, identify "umbrella" statements, discriminate between paragraphs stating the writer's key messages and those providing examples.
2. What is the topic?
3. What is the main idea?
4. What examples, statistics does the writer provide to support her stance.
5. What conclusion does the writer arrive at?
6. Summarize your findings following the plan in unit 5.

Unit Six

Reading – and Thinking – Critically

The key steps to reading — and thinking — critically are to examine, infer the idea or point and to evaluate. We need to understand the facts, grasp the ideas (stated or implied) that connect to the details, and then evaluate those ideas. If you choose to learn from a textbook, presumably you have decided that the text's information is organized, current, and reliable. You judge reliability based on the author's credentials and your instructor's endorsement of the text. When reading literature, you want to evaluate the creativity and effectiveness of the work and to judge the quality of the insights offered by the work. When reading persuasive writing, you first want to evaluate the writer's argument: Do the facts and the reasons build a convincing case for the writer's position? Then you need to determine your own position on the issue.

Although we talk about reading or thinking critically as somehow different from "ordinary" reading or thinking, many experts argue that active reading — or reading well — is the same thing as thinking critically. Remember: You read with your brain, not with your eyes; reading is a thinking activity. Perhaps when we speak of *reading critically*, we are emphasizing the important role of evaluating or judging ideas, not just passively taking them in. How can you develop critical reading skills? Let's begin by reviewing some basics about critical readers and then develop additional reading skills that will enable you to read critically.

A critical reader is:

• skeptical •

(Just because it's in print doesn't mean it's right.)

• fact-oriented

(Give me the facts and convince me that they are the relevant ones.)

• analytic

(How has the work been organized? What strategies has the writer used?)

• open-minded

(Prepared to listen to different points of view.)

• questioning

(What other conclusions could be supported by the evidence presented?)

• creative

(What are some entirely different ways of looking at the problem or issue?)

• willing to take a stand

(Are the insights valuable? Is the argument convincing? What is my position on the issue?)

UNDERSTANDING FACTS

What do these statements have in common?

My grammar class meets in room 2047.
Up to age forty-four, injury is the leading cause of death.
The Earth is in the Milky Way galaxy.

These statements are all facts. *Facts* are verifiable. Factual statements refer to what can be counted or measured or confirmed through observation or by turning to trusted sources. If you want to find your grammar class, you check the schedule of classes and then confirm the location by going to the room and meeting the class. You might find the second fact in a magazine article and learn the third fact from your astronomy textbook. In a dispute over the facts, one person has the facts, the other does not. Some people think they have the facts, but they have misinformation, false facts. When reading statements that sound like facts, we need to be alert to the possibility that the "facts" are incorrect. Why would anyone communicate false facts? Here are some possibilities:

• Sometimes the "facts" change as we learn more about the world. (We gain new facts in molecular biology at a rapid rate.)

• Sometimes people pass on what they have been told without confirming the facts. (Rumors, gossip, old-fashioned notions, and information not correctly remembered fit into this category.)

• Sometimes people present facts in such an incomplete or distorted way that the total impression is not factual. (Look to product advertising and negative political ads for examples.)

Critical readers remain skeptical of the "facts." If a statement doesn't sound quite right to you, perhaps because of something you have read or heard, then check it out.

UNDERSTANDING OPINION

Now, what do these statements have in common?

My home-reading instructor is cool.

We need to restrict handguns to reduce the number of fatal injuries to young people.

The Milky Way galaxy was formed about 10 billion years ago.

These statements are not facts. They are all opinions. Therefore they are open to debate and must be supported with evidence. Most writing combines facts and opinion, sometimes even in the same sentence. You need to be able to tell the difference so that you can question the opinions and judge whether the facts are accurate and actually support the opinions. Keep in mind that conclusions (opinions) are found in writing meant to inform as well as in argumentative writing. Often the main idea of a paragraph or section in a textbook is opinion.

Authors sometimes (but not always) use signal words to distinguish between facts and opinions, so be alert to these guides. The following are some of the words and phrases signaling opinions:

as a result	*in my view*
consequently	*most experts agree that*
in conclusion	*this suggests*

Practice

Ex. 1. **Mark each of the following statements as either F (fact) or O (opinion). For each statement that is a fact, indicate how you would verify it. For each statement that is opinion, indicate how it might be supported.**

1. About 400,000 people die each year from smoke-related health problems.

2. Smoking is prohibited on all flights in the continental United States.

3. Many people have lost confidence in their elected officials.

4. The best way to lose weight is to reduce the amount of fat in one's diet and to exercise regularly.

5. It is discourteous to talk during a movie or lecture.

6. *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was written in the nineteenth century.

7. Young people are fascinated by movie stars and sports figures.

8. I would rather eat frozen yogurt than ice cream.

9. The United States has proportionally more deaths by guns each year than other western democracies.

10. Taking another person's life is wrong.

Did this exercise help you to see that there are several kinds of opinions? We need to make distinctions among several types of statements that are labeled opinion and then respond differently depending on the type of opinion we are facing.

"Just" an Opinion

Some people use the word *opinion* when they think a statement has little value. They say, "That's just your opinion," as if the label is a sufficient reason to reject the statement. Since the statement asserts a view with which I disagree, I can" reject the statement by dismissing it as mere opinion. But, suppose that the opinion just rejected is the statement that secondhand smoke is a

health hazard. Is this *just* someone's notion, or is it a widely held and heavily documented opinion of scientists and medical personnel? Smokers may wish to dismiss the idea as "just opinion," but if they have children, they should think seriously about the health risks to which they are exposing their children. Many opinions have strong factual support and cannot be easily rejected *just* because someone prefers not to believe them.

Personal Preferences

Other people — sometimes students — have been known to say, "Well, that's my opinion," as if that is a sufficient reason to justify the statement. If it's *my* opinion, I can believe it if I want to, and I don't have to defend it in a debate. There are some opinions we can hold without having to defend them. They are called *personal preferences.* If you prefer frozen yogurt to ice cream, that's fine. You car prefer your class in economics; I can prefer my English grammar class. You would rather study in the morning, I like to study at night.

The problem comes when we try to turn personal preferences into debatable opinions but then refuse to defend them. If you *prefer* rock and roll to jazz music, that's fine — until you assert that rock and roll is a *better kind of music* than jazz. Now you have shifted to a debatable opinion, an opinion you cannot defend by labeling it *your opinion.* Expect jazz fans to challenge your opinion and be prepared to explain and defend your assertion.

Judgments

Your assertion about music is a *judgment,* an opinion based on values and beliefs. Judgments need to be defended with facts and reasons and clear explanations or underlying values. If you say that you like to watch action films, that is a personal preference. If you say that action films are the best films possible, then you must give evidence in support of your judgment. Your argument will include your criteria for evaluating different types of films. As critical readers we must evaluate arguments in support of judgments and

decide whether we agree with each argument's main idea or assertion. Judgments concern right and wrong, good and bad, should and should not. The following statements are judgments:

1. Julia Roberts is the best actress ever to appear on the screen..
2. The sunrise was beautiful.
3. Government should balance the national budget.
4. Capital punishment is wrong.

Inferences

There is one more type of opinion to identify — inferences. An *inference* is an opinion based on evidence — on facts or a combination of facts and less debatable inferences. You already draw inferences — every time you read a paragraph with an unstated main idea. You *infer* the main idea from the details in the paragraph. Inferences vary from those closely tied to facts to those that are highly debatable. Here are four examples.

1. Julia Roberts has been one of the most successful actresses.
2. The sun will rise tomorrow.
3. Balancing the national budget will result in either cutting or abolishing many popular programs.
4. Capital punishment in the United States has been applied in a racist manner.

Notice that the four inferences are about the same subjects as the four judgments given previously, but the statements in each case are quite different. Let's think about the necessary support for each one.

1. In support of the first inference we expect to read facts about the number of the films she appeared in, how many prizes these films won, how popular these films were. These facts can be found in special records to support the inference about Roberts' success.

2. You may think that the second inference is a fact, but until the sun actually rises, we can only assume (and hope) that it will do what it has done consistently in the past. These first two inferences are closely tied to many facts that we either know or can easily understand.

3. Look again at the third inference. The writer does not make a judgment about cutting programs. The statement just asserts what the facts seem to lead to. However, what assumption does the writer make? Can you think of a way to balance the budget and not cut programs? Of course. We can raise taxes. The writer assumes a consistent tax base. Remember: Critical readers ask, "What other conclusions can be drawn? What is another way to look at the issue?" You may not think that raising taxes is a good idea, but you can recognize that it is an alternative that makes the third inference open to debate.

4. The last inference is also a conclusion drawn from facts, not a judgment based on values. If more blacks receive the death penalty than whites for the same type of crime, then the death penalty has not been applied in a color-blind way. Legal scholars have studied the court records and have drawn the inference stated above. (This inference has then been used by some to defend the judgment that capital punishment is wrong.)

Inferences and judgments are found in all kinds of writing. How do we, as critical readers, distinguish between reasonable inferences and those that seem to have little or no factual support? How can we evaluate arguments in support of judgments beyond simply agreeing or disagreeing with the writer?

Guidelines for evaluating inferences

1. *Evaluate the writer's expertise*. People without expertise can have good ideas, and experts can be wrong. However, in general, writers with reputations to protect are likely to present facts to support opinions and are likely to label opinions as such. In textbooks and scholarly writing, experts usually indicate the issues over which the experts disagree.

2. *Compare the experts*. Read more than one book or article on a topic to see if similar views are expressed. In a course, compare your instructor's discussion with the textbook's. The more you know about a subject, the less likely you are to accept questionable statements.

3. *In science, distinguish between hypotheses and theories.* Remember that a hypothesis is a tentative idea, a possible inference based on some observation, but one that needs testing. A theory, on the other hand, is an inference based on many facts and reasoning from those facts. Theories are supported by most experts in a field. (Most physicists accept some version of the "Big Bang" theory.)

4. *Be skeptical of generalizations*. There are many laws in science, but there are few laws in the social sciences. That is, there are few generalizations about *all* human beings that are true statements. Consider, for example, this generalization: Teenagers are reckless drivers. Is this a sound inference? Of course not. What is true is that drivers between the ages of 16 and 24 have the greatest number of accidents. (That is why their insurance rates are the highest.) It is incorrect to infer, from this fact, that *all* teenagers are reckless drivers. Also be cautious about generalizations that are only slightly qualified. For example: Most Americans believe in fair play. (If this is a fact, why do so many cheat on their taxes?)

5. *Don't trust inferences based on studies that are not identified by the writer.* Sometimes you will read "Studies show that..." something or other is true. Don't buy it. Writers who have studied their subject will identify the sources of their information.

6. *Analyze and evaluate the evidence provided*. Question and debate with yourself as you read. Does the inference follow from the facts? Is it the only logical conclusion? If other facts were considered, would the inference have to be changed? Consider this argument:

Mr. Bradshaw's students all received As and Bs. He must be a great teacher. Is the conclusion the only possible inference? No. Mr. Bradshaw could be an easy grader. The students could have been above-average students to begin with. We do not have enough facts to decide among the possible explanations.

To evaluate arguments, we need to do more than distinguish between fact and opinion. We need to recognize the type of opinion(s) presented and then decide if the support is appropriate.

Guidelines for evaluating judgments

1. Distinguish between facts and inferences used to support the judgment. Do not read over inferences, taking them as statements of fact.

2. Evaluate each inference according to the guidelines provided in the previous list. Try to break down an argument into a series of smaller parts. Study each part in the writer's line of reasoning to see whether each inference is supported and is a logical conclusion from the evidence. Always ask if there are other possible conclusions, or if there are facts left out of the discussion that would change the inferences.

3. Recognize strategies used to move readers emotionally. If you can analyze a writer's strategies for creating strong emotion, you will be less swept up in the emotion and therefore more able to judge the logic and evidence in the argument.

4. *Seek and evaluate unstated assumptions*. Sometimes writers assume that others share their values, their thinking on a topic, so they do not stop to explain and defend each step in their argument. For example, should a writer assume that no one favors tax increases? If the alternative is cutting popular programs, many could favor a tax increase.

Practice

Ex. 2. **Read each of the following paragraphs and underline all statements of opinion (sentences or parts of sentences). Then answer the questions that follow.**

Paragraph I

American society has become increasingly violent in the last twenty-five years. People of many ages and backgrounds seem more ready to use violence to solve problems. According to Adam Smith, each year in America now about 10,000 people die from gun deaths, in contrast to 3 in Great Britain and 17 in West Germany. An increasing number of victims are children and teenagers who are settling quarrels over drug territories or girlfriends by shooting. Sometimes the victims are parents, the murderers their children who are ending arguments over money or the use of the car. According to the *Washington Post*, in the first three months of 1989 in Washington, DC, over 100 people were murdered. Also, a youngster in a Maryland community shot both parents in a quarrel over money. And a Virginia teenager shot his stepmother and left her body in a truck. The conclusion that "average" citizens, not crooks, are increasingly resorting to violence seems inescapable.

1. What is the main idea of the paragraph?
2. What type of opinion is the main idea of the paragraph?
3. Do the facts, in your judgment, support the writer's opinion?
4. If you do not find the argument convincing, explain why.

Paragraph 2.

Consciously or unconsciously, human activity has often had an extremely negative effect on the environment. From the outset of human history, our species's need for basic resources, such as wood for fuel, ran counter to the preservation of the natural habitat. But while our ancestors did pose a threat to the environment, the damage inflicted was insignificant in comparison to the current level

of destruction. Some experts would argue that if current conditions continue, we are headed toward a collision with nature: this disaster can only be averted if international priorities on resources are thoroughly overhauled.

1. Is the paragraph mostly fact or opinion?
2. What type of opinion is found in the conclusion?
3. If there were no signal words for the opinion, what other words would help you identify the sentence as opinion?
4. Have the authors persuaded you to their position? Why or why not?

Paragraph 3

Jennifer: "I just read an interesting study showing that people who watch a lot of TV are more fearful, think there is more violence in the world, and are more suspicious of other people than those who don't watch much TV."

Jim: "Oh, you can't believe all those studies. They're just used to try to take all the good cop shows off TV. I watch lots of TV, and I'm not violent."

Jennifer: "But this study wasn't just about violence making us more

violent. It was about TV distorting our view of reality. That's serious. Maybe we should demand more realistic programming."

Jim: "Oh, don't be a wimp. And don't believe everything you read."

Jennifer: "You're the one who's being close-minded."

Jim: "Well, that's your opinion. I can have my opinion, too."

1. What type of opinion was the study's conclusion (expressed by Jennifer)?
2. What type of opinion is expressed by Jim at the end of the dialogue?

Who is the better critical thinker? Why?

Paragraph 4

Despite the laws restricting minors from buying alcohol, liquor is widely used by the nation's youth. More than one-fourth of children 12 to 13 years old said they have had at least one drink of alcohol, rising to two-thirds of the mid-teens, and nearly 90 percent of the young adults. Males and females were equally likely to have tried alcohol, but males 18 and older were more likely to be current or binge drinkers. (*From a study of the National Center for Health Statistics)*

1. What is the paragraph's main idea?
2. What type of opinion is the main idea of the paragraph?
3. What kind of support is provided for the main idea?
4. Are you surprised by the paragraph, or are the details consistent with your knowledge of teens?

Paragraph 5

The social structure of vervet monkeys is similar to that found in other Old World monkeys, particularly baboons *(Paplo cynocephalus)* and the various species of macaques (genus *Macaco).* Adult females typically remain throughout their lives in the groups in which they were born, maintaining close bonds with their maternal kin even as adults. As a result, the stable core of any vervet group consists of several families of closely related adult females (mothers, sisters, and their adult daughters) and their dependent offspring.

1. What is the paragraph's main idea?
2. Where is the main idea stated?
3. What type of opinion is the main idea?
4. What kind of support is provided for the main idea?
5. The authors are a professor of anthropology and a professor of psychology; their book is based on years of fieldwork in East Africa. How does this knowledge affect our evaluation of this passage?

RECOGNIZING YOUR BIASES

Some writers develop and defend their inferences or judgments with reasoned discussions of the relevant facts. Others, believing strongly in their opinions, write passionately but not always with reason or the facts. Readers are no different. With some topics you may not have much experience or hold strong feelings. You are more open to following the writer's argument and perhaps agreeing with his or her position. On other topics, however, you hold strong opinions that can affect the way you read material on those topics. You may get angry when you read, or want to dismiss the argument as "just the writer's opinion." Critical thinkers, though, are open-minded; they can "listen and learn" and perhaps be persuaded by facts and good reasons to change their views. One way to become a better critical reader is to be aware of your strongly held positions or attitudes. Then use your self-knowledge to keep your biases and emotions from interfering with your ability to read critically. The following exercise will help you identify some of your biases.

Practice

Ex. 3. **Complete each of the following sentences by writing what you think of first. Finish the entire exercise as quickly as you can, and then read over and reflect on what you have written.**

1. Politicians are_____ _____.
2. Hispanics are _____ .
3. Teachers are _____ .
4. Parents are _____ .
5. Teenagers are _____ .
6. Welfare recipients are _____.
7. Football players are _____ .
8. Alcoholics are _____ .
9. Vegetarians are _____ .

Compare your responses with those of classmates and discuss the class's various reactions. Do you have strongly positive or strongly negative opinions about some of the groups listed? Do you have good evidence to justify your generalizations? Do others in the class have experiences that contradict your point of view? Are sweeping generalizations about entire groups of people more likely to be accurate or inaccurate?

THE WRITER'S STANCE

In all types of writing, we need to recognize the writer's stance, that is, the writer's subject and purpose and attitude toward the subject and the characteristics of writing that create tone. Where does the writer "stand" on the subject? What does the writer want to "do" with the topic—or what does the writer want readers to do after reading about the topic? When we understand the answers to these questions, we create a meaningful reading context.

When the writing purpose changes to persuasion, there are a variety of stances that writers can take. A group of social scientists reporting the results of their studies of television violence to colleagues may select a straightforward, objective style to present their facts and conclusions (inferences). In a magazine article for general readers, they may change their stance to express their concern for the effects of TV violence on viewers. They may even recommend controls on TVs or ratings of shows. That is, they want readers to do something after reading their article.

Other persuasive writing relies more on strongly worded opinion than facts. The writer may express anger, or seek to shock readers into thinking about a current problem. The writer is convinced that the best way to reach readers is through the stirring of emotions. These are all possible approaches to presenting an argument. One is not necessarily better than another; each has its place. Our task as readers is to identify the writer's stance and understand the strategies that have been used to develop that stance.

Attitude

Identifying the writer's subject is only the first step to understanding stance. You also need to identify the writer's attitude toward the subject. To begin, consider the following paragraph on city life:

The city energizes the people who live there. The noises wake them and urge them to get going. There is excitement "pounding the pavement" with all the others forming that energetic force of workers heading for offices. The tall buildings, the honking of taxis, the dense crowds, the opportunities for fulfilling ambitions all contribute to the euphoria that is city life.

What is the writer's attitude toward life in the city? The city provides excitement, energy, and opportunity. The words have positive connotations. Clearly the writer expresses a positive attitude toward city life. Now read this paragraph on the city:

The stress of city life is nearly unbearable. Day and night the noises of the city never stop pounding into one's head. Each day brings another struggle to push through the hordes of workers stampeding to their offices. The buildings hover overhead, ready to crush those who cannot survive the struggle to get ahead.

What is this writer's attitude toward city life? Many of the same details are noted about the city: the noises, the crowds going to work, the tall buildings, the competition. Here, though, the attitude is entirely negative. How are two such different attitudes toward the same subject created? The answer is primarily through word choice, through both connotation and figurative language.

Practice

Ex. 4. **Read and answer the questions for each of the following passages.**

Paragraph I.

In a nation of 40 million handguns — where anyone who wants one can get one — it's time to face a chilling fact. We're way past the point where registration, licensing, safety training, waiting periods, or mandatory sentencing are going to have much effect. Each of these measures may save some lives or help catch a few criminals, but none — by itself or taken together — will stop the vast majority of handgun suicides or murders. A "controlled" handgun kills just as effectively as an "uncontrolled" one.

1. What is the writer's subject?
2. What is the writer's attitude toward his subject?
3. What words have alerted you to the writer's attitude?
4. Does the writer's position seem reasonable to you?
5. Is your answer to question 4 influenced by opinions you hold strongly?

Paragraph 2

Even technological developments seem to be isolating. Television has for decades reduced opportunities for interaction, dialogue, and plain talk. In recent years millions of youngsters have turned to play with computerized games, both in arcades and at home, instead of with each other (although some of the games — actually surprisingly few — involve more than one player). The symbol of the age may become a teenager with his ears plugged with earphones, eyes riveted to a Pac-Man, fingers manipulating a joy-stick.

1. The first sentence establishes the topic: the isolating characteristics of technology. Is this, in the writer's view, good or bad?
2. How did you determine the writer's attitude?
3. Do you share the writer's attitude? Why or why not?

Paragraph 3

Today the world is threatened simultaneously by social and political conflict, impoverishment, resource depletion, and environmental deterioration on a level that few would have expected at the beginning of the twentieth century. These problems arise at global, national, and local levels and are so serious that the future of humanity and the biosphere itself is at risk for the first time in human existence. It would not be too dramatic to say that a global crisis exists. Major cultural adjustments will be required to see us through the twenty-first century.

1. What is the writer's topic?
2. What is the writer's attitude toward his topic?
3. What words have alerted you to the writer's attitude?
4. Do you share the writer's attitude? Why or why not?

Paragraph 4

There's a third dilemma. As much as companies love low-cost production and high profits, they fear instability. But the same forces that produce the one threaten to produce the other. The incipient instability is not immediately obvious, as it might be in periods of high unemployment. But look at the nature of much of today's employment: part-time work, contingent work, sporadic work — erstwhile employees transmogrified into "independent contractors," which is to say workers without security and the fringe benefits we had come to expect.

1. What is the writer's topic?
2. What is the writer's attitude toward his topic?
3. What words have alerted you to the writer's attitude?
4. Do you share the writer's attitude? Why or why not?

Tone

Closely related to the writer's attitude is the writer's tone. Attitude is the writer’s position on the subject. The way that attitude

is expressed — the "voice" we hear and the feelings conveyed through that voice — is the writer's *tone*. When talking with friends, you can hear the seriousness or teasing in the voice, and you can also observe body language and facial expressions. When responding to the written word, readers have to work a bit harder. You can't see if the speaker is smiling or about to cry; you have to "hear" the jovial or sad tone in the words on the page and by recognizing writing strategies that help shape tone.

Writers can express attitude through a variety of tones. A positive attitude toward the topic can be expressed in an enthusiastic, serious, sympathetic, light, or admiring tone. A negative attitude can be revealed through an angry, somber, sad, serious, sarcastic, mocking, or ironic tone. We cannot be sure that the writer's attitude is positive just because the tone is light. One way to create a mocking, ironic stance is to use a light tone with a very serious subject. When the tone seems inappropriate for the subject, the writer is probably ridiculing the issue.

Practice

Ex. 5. **Read and respond to the questions following each paragraph.**

Paragraph 1

How can you even think about restricting smoking on your flights to Europe and Asia? Don't you know how long those flights are? What do you think smokers are going to do all those hours without a cigarette? Whether you like it or not, smoking is an addiction; we *have* to have a cigarette — and we will, damn it! What are you going to do about it? Throw us out of the plane?

1. What is the writer's attitude?
2. What tone has been used?
3. What has helped you recognize tone?

Paragraph 2

I do understand the attitude of nonsmokers. I appreciate their desire not to have to be closed in with smoke for the length of a flight to Europe. I just wish that they could also understand the needs of smokers. Many of us feel guilty that we can't seem to quit the habit, but we know that as long as we continue to smoke we will need a cigarette before a seven-hour flight is over. If smoking is prohibited, many smokers will abide by the rules, but, I'm afraid, not all. I would be worried that some smokers would use the lavatories to sneak a smoke, and then we would all be in grave danger.

1. What is the writer's attitude?
2. What tone has been used?
3. What has helped you recognize tone?

Paragraph 3

I just want to say thank you for finally making a decision for health, the health not only of customers but of your crew members as well. I have loved every trip I've taken to Europe — except for the going and coming on the plane. It's been so awful having to put up with seven hours of a smoke-filled plane. But now, thank goodness, we are free of that one difficult part of travel to Europe. I am so excited by your decision I am already planning my next trip. Thank you, thank you!

1. What is the writer's attitude?
2. What tone has been used?
3. What has helped you recognize tone?

Hyperbole, Understatement, and Irony

These three strategies are similar in that all create a discrepancy between what the writer *says* and what the writer actually *means* for the reader to understand.

Hyperbole is probably the easiest to recognize. Here the writer so overstates the case that we hear the joking or satiric intent. When an exasperated parent says to a five-year-old, "I've told you a million times to brush your teeth," we recognize that humor, created by exaggeration, is being used to get the youngster to the bathroom. Overstatement (hyperbole) often creates a lightly joking tone, but it can also be used to create an angry, mocking, or sarcastic tone.

Understatement can be used for a light touch, but often creates a more serious or biting tone. When you come in dripping wet and say, "It's a bit damp outside," you are using understatement for light humor. To play down what is important is to give emphasis to the issue's seriousness.

Hyperbole expresses more than is meant; understatement expresses less. *Irony*, *t*he third option, expresses the opposite of what is meant. When your friend sees you in your grubbiest clothes and comments, "Wonderful outfit!" you know the friend really means that you look awful. Recognizing verbal irony in writing takes careful attention to the entire context of the passage.

Practice

***Ex. 6.* Read and respond to the questions that follow**.

Paragraph 1

Guns. Everywhere guns. Let me start this discussion by pointing out that I am not anti-gun. I'm pro-knife. Consider the merits of the knife. In the first place, you have to catch up with someone to stab him. A general substitution of knives for guns would promote physical fitness. We'd turn into a whole nation of great runners.

1. What is the writer's attitude toward guns?
2. What is the writer's tone?
3. What strategy has the writer used? How do you know?

Paragraph 2

If guns are outlawed, only the government will have guns. Only the police, the secret police, the military. The hired servants of our rulers. Only the government—and a few outlaws.

1. What is the writer's attitude toward gun ownership?
2. What is the writer's tone?
3. What strategy has the writer used? How do you know?

Paragraph 3

Since so many politicians are reluctant to bring up drugs now, how about legalizing the whole thing so we can stop bothering our heads? Dr. Rosenthal, like most drug experts, says it would be suicide for America. But then, nothing is perfect.

1. What is the writer's attitude toward drug policies?
2. What is the tone of the paragraph?
3. What strategy/strategies has the writer used? How do you know?

You will find writers of serious articles using one, or perhaps several, strategies for shaping tone. For example, you may find several negative connotations, some metaphors, and one ironic statement. Writers of humor — whose purpose is to ridicule or satirize something in society, not just make us laugh — may blend most of these strategies in one essay. When you read the delightful columns of the humorists, after you stop laughing, try to analyze the various strategies that are used and understand at what, exactly, the writers are poking fun. Also think about why they are calling attention to that issue. Humorists want us to see problems in ourselves or in our society.

Practice

Ex. 7. **Preview the following article (skim the headline, information about the writer, introductory paragraph, first sentences of the next paragraphs) and speculate about the information you are going to find here.**

A humor columnist for the **Miami Herald** ***since 1983, Dave Barry is now syndicated in more than 150 newspapers.***

Unplugged

Recently I was in my office, with a lot to do, including write a column, when I got a phone call informing me that the electric company had cut off my power.

Years ago, I would have responded to this petty annoyance with a pointless, immature outburst of anger. But since then I have learned that stress management is vital to health. So I hung up the phone, took a deep breath, exhaled slowly, then punched my desk so hard that I could not make a fist for three days.

Then, using my other hand, I called the electric company, which has one of those automatic call-routing systems, designed by escaped Nazis with the aid of the Educational Testing Service, wherein you must use your touch-tone phone to pass a lengthy multiple-choice test ("... If you know your first name but NOT your last name, press ..."). This is the electric company's way of testing your worthiness as a customer; it's similar to the way knights of old had to prove themselves by slaying dragons, except that instead of winning the hand of a fair maiden, you get put in line to speak with an actual Customer Service Representative.

While waiting, I kept my stress level down by calmly going over the points I planned to make, as follows:

1. You stupid idiots.
2. Give me back my electricity THIS INSTANT.
3. What are you people using for brains?

While I was refining these points, a Customer Service Representative came on the line and immediately irritated me by — I believe this was a deliberate tactic on her part — being polite. She explained to me that my electricity had been turned off because — get a load of THIS excuse — I had not paid my bill.

I was furious. The only thing that prevented me from hiring the entire O. J. Simpson defense team and suing the electric company for every last volt it owns was the realization that I had not, in fact, paid my electric bill. You know how you sometimes make a pile of papers that you Definitely Have to Get to Soon, and then you avoid making eye contact with the pile for several weeks, secretly hoping — you crazy optimist — that a giant comet will strike the Earth and wipe out all human life and you won't have to deal with it? My electric bill was in a pile like that.

The irritatingly polite woman told me that they could turn my electricity back on that day, but only if I paid the bill in person before 2 P.M. She told me to pay at a drugstore near where I live. (I don't know why she didn't have me pay at the electric company; probably they don't want anybody to find out their secret method for generating electricity, which I suspect involves a carpet being scuffed by a giant pair of mechanized shoes.)

So I had to rush home to get my electric bill, and naturally my car chose that exact moment to be low on gas, so I had to stop at one of those all-purpose gas stations that also sell beer, cigarettes, magazines, hats, beef jerky and hot dogs the same age as Strom Thurmond. Naturally I wound up standing in line behind some moron who was investing his family's grocery money in some kind of state lottery transaction so complex as to require the full attention of ALL THREE store clerks for about 15 minutes, during which time I controlled my stress level by staring laser holes into the back of the moron's neck and shrieking silently, inside my head, WHY NOT SAVE YOURSELF SOME TIME? WHY NOT JUST SET YOUR MONEY ON FIRE?

So as you can imagine I was feeling very nonstressed when, with 2 P.M. rapidly approaching, I finally got back out onto the highway and immediately got stuck in severe traffic behind a driver with ears the size of pie plates who had just this moment arrived

here from the year 1937 and had therefore never seen a left-turn arrow. You could see him studying it, trying to figure it out — A green arrow! Pointing left! Here in the left-hand lane! Whatever could it MEAN? — while those of us behind him controlled our stress levels by pounding our horns and then yelping with pain because we had accidentally used the same hand that we had used, in an earlier stress-control effort, to punch our desk.

Finally, with only minutes to go, I got to the drugstore — a cramped and dingy place selling unattractive housewares on layaway — and found myself at the end of a long, Soviet-style line of people paying their utility bills in cash, which they pulled out of their wallets one dollar at a time in slow motion, pretending that they couldn't hear my brain shrieking at them HURRY UP YOU FOOLS but of course they knew exactly what they were doing because they were ALL PART OF THE PLOT, along with the electric company and the big-eared driver and the lottery moron and the black federal helicopters constantly monitoring my movements, all of them working together to RAISE MY STRESS LEVEL BUT I KNOW WHAT THEY'RE TRYING TO DO AND IT'S NOT GOING TO WORK HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA HEY GET AWAY FROM ME YOU

Editor's Note: There will be no Dave Barry column this week. Dave is taking the week off.

1. Barry's opening sentences appear to be serious. At what point in your reading did you decide that Barry was not writing in a serious tone?

2. The title and opening sentences could suggest that Barry's subject is the electric company. What details in the essay lead you to conclude that Barry's subject is something else?

3. What is Barry's subject?

4. What is his purpose in writing? What does he want to accomplish in this essay?

5. How would you describe the essay's tone? Serious? Humorous? Ironic? Angry? Something else?

6. What do you conclude to be the author's thesis? Does he have more than one main idea? You may have to write a couple of sentences to state his thesis.

7. List several examples of hyperbole.

8. Find an example of understatement in paragraph 3.

9. When Barry writes, in paragraph 10, that "they were ALL PART OF THE PLOT," does he mean what he says? If not, what does he mean? What strategy is he using?

10. Explain the ending of the essay. What apparently happens to the narrator, the "I" of the essay? Why is the Editor's note included? How are we to read the note?

11. What parts of the essay did you find the funniest? Why?

Evaluating Arguments and Taking a Stand

Evaluating arguments does not mean reading only until you discover a position different from yours and then closing the book. When you read an argument that takes a stand you disagree with, try to stay open-minded while you are reading. You may come away with a better understanding of those with whom you disagree. You may find some common ground and also discover that there are not just two sides to the issue but many "sides."

Reading critically does mean making *informed* judgments, revising old ideas if necessary, and taking a stand — every time you read. It is a "cop-out" to hold the view that one opinion is as good as another. If you really believed this, you would have to say that decisions to murder, rape, or kidnap are just as valuable as decisions to do your job, be helpful to neighbors, and be honest in your dealings with others. Surely you would not try to support such a viewpoint. To be open-minded *while* you read is not the same thing as saying that all positions have equal merit.

With some complicated public policy issues, you may feel that you do *not* know enough to judge someone's argument and take a stand. Try at least to have a position on those parts of the issue that you do understand.

Evaluating arguments that support judgments can be difficult because judgments involve values — and therefore strong emotions.

Still, these arguments usually contain some facts, inferences, and reasons in addition to value statements. We can make judgments about the reliability of the facts, the soundness of the inferences, and the logic of the reasons. Many bad arguments can be spotted because they use one or more patterns of illogic that we call *logical fallacies.* These patterns are so common they have been given names. You can find the weaknesses in some arguments by recognizing that they contain logical fallacies.

Recognizing logical fallacies

Overstatement: An overstatement is an error in generalizing. The inference if properly qualified, may be sound, but when stated as a sweeping generalization, it is illogical. Overstatements are frequently signaled by such words *all*, *every*, *always*, *never*, and *none.* Remember that a statement such as "Children love clowns" is understood to mean *"All* children love clowns." This is an overstatement; some young children are afraid of clowns. Challenge overstatements by thinking of exceptions. For example:

Lawyers are only interested in making money.

Non Sequitur*:* This Latin term means, literally, "it does not follow." In this type of argument the “glue" that connects evidence to conclusion is missing. It can be missing because whatever connection the writer sees is not made clear to the reader. It can also be missing because there is no logical connection. The writer has made some false assumptions. You challenge the *non sequitur* by pointing out the false assumptions. For example:

Bill will definitely get a good grade in physics; he did so well biology.

(If Bill is not good at math, he will not "love" physics. The illogic comes from assuming that success in one science course predicts success in other science courses. The skills needed are not always the same.)

Slippery Slope: This argument says that we should not take step *A* because if we do so, then the terrible consequences *X*, *Y*, and Z will follow. This type of argument oversimplifies by assuming, without evidence and often by ignoring existing laws or traditions, that *X*, *Y*, and Z will follow inevitably from *A.* Arguments that project into the future may be sound—based on evidence and logic. For example, economists study present trends to predict future inflation or recessions The illogic of the slippery slope fallacy occurs when current events and some reasonableness in people are ignored because the writer desperately wants to keep the first step *(A)* from happening. One of the best contemporary examples is found in the gun-control debate in the U.S.:

If we allow the government to control handgun purchases, next it will restrict rifles and then ban all guns, at which point only criminals will have guns.

(Handgun control will not necessarily lead to banning. We restrict and register cars and boats and planes. We have never considered banning them.)

False Dilemma: A false dilemma occurs when one argues that there are only two choices to deal with a problem, when there are clearly more than two. The thinking of this kind of argument can be effective if we fail to recognize the tactic. If the writer gives us only two choices, and one of those is unacceptable, then the writer can push us toward the preferred choice. You challenge a false dilemma by showing that there are other possibilities. Here is an example:

Either we legalize drugs, or we will never get rid of the country's drug problem.

(Although this argument is appealing, we need to recognize its flawed logic. The antidrug program has made a difference. We can also get tougher with countries supplying the drugs.)

Post *Hoc* Fallacy: This term (literally, "after this") refers to an error in arguments about causation. The error is confusing a time relationship with a causal relationship. Just because *B* occurs after *A* does not mean, necessarily, that *A* caused *B* to happen. You can challenge illogical causal arguments by explaining more likely causes. For instance:

Teenage pregnancy is on the increase. It must be the result of all those sex education classes in the high schools.

(The sex education classes were started to try to address the problems of teenage pregnancies; they are not the cause but an attempted solution to the problem. The classes may not be having much impact on the problem because the real causes remain powerful influences: poverty, history of single parenting in the family, social and psychological needs.)

Straw Man: The straw man fallacy argues that opponents hold views they do not hold. Usually these views are ridiculous and thus easier for the opposition to attack. You point out the weakness in such an argument by explaining that the arguer's opponents do not hold such views, or by demanding that the arguer provide proof that they do hold those views.

Bilingual education is a mistake because it encourages students to use only their native language.

(Supporters of bilingual education see it as a way to keep students learning subjects while they also learn English.)

Bandwagon: To argue that an action should be taken or a position accepted because "everyone is doing it" is illogical. The majority is not always right. This is a desperate argument by someone who knows the action or position isn't ethical and can't be defended any other way.

There's nothing wrong with fudging on your income taxes. Everybody does it, and the government expects everyone to cheat a little.

(First, not everyone cheats on taxes. Second, if it is wrong, it is wrong no matter how many people do it.)

Practice

Ex. 8. **After reading each passage, explain what is illogical about the argument. Then identify the type of fallacy.**

Paragraph 1

We should stop giving handouts to the homeless. The poor of this world, of which we have all been a part at one time in our lives, have pride and work hard to improve themselves. The homeless have no pride and don't try to work.

_____
_____

Paragraph 2

It is time to recognize that XYZ University's football players are really professionals who should be paid for their work. All other colleges "pay" their players with cars from alums and money under the table to recruit players. If we want to win, we need to use the same tactics as our competitors. After all, students and alums expect the university to do whatever it takes to win.

_____
_____

Paragraph 3

We have to stop genetic research now. We are tampering with vegetables, and we have already cloned a sheep. What's next? Cloning humans? Who will use this knowledge and for what evil purposes? Rulers will clone a private military and become tyrants. New diseases are bound to emerge, making humans extinct within the century.

_____
_____

Paragraph 4

College doesn't seem to make people better. In fact, it seems to make them worse. Think of the "unabomber." Although he is a college graduate and was a college professor, he sent bombs through the mail to kill people. And then there are the lawyers, using all that education to defraud clients by overcharging them. Maybe we should close down the colleges so they can't do any more harm.

_____
_____

Taking a Stand

You may have been cautioned not to "rush to judgment." That is good advice. Decisions should be based on study and thoughtful consideration. Still, at some point, you need to make decisions. As you continue to read listen and learn, reflect, and then take a stand.

Practice

Ex. 9. **Read each passage and answer the questions related to it. Then answer the questions on the issue. The first excerpt is from "The Ultimate Punishment: A Defense," written by psychoanalyst Ernest van den Haag and published in 1986 in the Harvard Law Review. The second excerpt is from "Capital**

Punishment," written by law professor Anthony G. Amsterdam and published in the 1977 issue of Stanford Magazine.

From "The Ultimate Punishment: A Defense

We threaten punishments in order to deter crime. We impose them not only to make the threats credible but also as retribution (justice) for the crimes that were not deterred. Threats and punishments are necessary to deter and deterrence is a sufficient practical justification for them. Retribution is an independent moral justification. Although penalties can be unwise, repulsive, or inappropriate, and those punished can be pitiable, in a sense the infliction of legal punishment on a guilty person cannot be unjust. By committing the crime, the criminal volunteered to assume the risk of receiving a legal punishment that he could have avoided by not committing the crime. The punishment he suffers is the punishment he voluntarily risked suffering and, therefore, it is no more unjust to him than any other event for which one knowingly volunteers to assume the risk. Thus, the death penalty cannot be unjust to the guilty criminal.

There remain, however, two moral objections. The penalty may be regarded as always excessive as retribution and always morally degrading. To regard the death penalty as always excessive, one must believe that no crime—no matter how heinous—could possibly justify capital punishment. Such a belief can be neither corroborated nor refuted; it is an article of faith.

Alternatively, or concurrently, one may believe that everybody, the murderer no less than the victim, has an imprescriptible (natural?) right to life. The law therefore should not deprive anyone of life. I share Jeremy Bentham's view that any such "natural and imprescriptible rights" are "nonsense upon stilts."

1. What is the purpose of punishing a criminal, according to van den Haag?

2. Explain, in your own words, the author's justification of legal punishment, including the death penalty.

3. To argue that the death penalty is always excessive, what must one believe? Does the author believe this?

From "Capital Punishment"

Capital punishment is a dying institution in this last quarter of the twentieth century. It has already been abandoned in law or in fact throughout most of the civilized world. England, Canada, the Scandinavian countries, virtually all of Western Europe except for France and Spain have abolished the death penalty. The vast majority of countries in the Western Hemisphere have abolished it. Its last strongholds in the world — apart from the United States — are in Asia and Africa, particularly South Africa. Even the countries which maintain capital punishment on the books have almost totally ceased to use it in fact. In the United States, considering only the last half century, executions have plummeted from 199 in 1935 to approximately 29 a year during the decade before 1967, when the ten-year judicial moratorium began.

Do you doubt that this development will continue? Do you doubt that it will continue because it is the path of civilization — the path up out of fear and terror and the barbarism that terror breeds, into self-confidence and decency in the administration of justice? The road, like any other built by men, has its detours, but over many generations it has run true, and will run true. And there will therefore come a time — perhaps in 20 years, perhaps in 50 or 100, but very surely and very shortly as the lifetime of nations is measured — when our children will look back at us in horror and unbelief because of what we did in their names and for their supposed safety, just as we look back in horror and unbelief at the thousands of crucifixions and beheadings and live disembowelments that our ancestors practiced for the supposed purpose of making our world safe from murderers and robbers, thieves, shoplifters, and pickpockets.

All of these kinds of criminals are still with us, and will be with our children — although we can certainly decrease their numbers and their damage, and protect ourselves from them a lot better, if we insist that our politicians stop pounding on the whipping boy of capital punishment and start coming up with some real solutions to the real problems of crime.

Our children will cease to execute murderers for the same reason that we have ceased to string up pickpockets and shoplifters at the public crossroads, although there are still plenty of them around. Our children will cease to execute murderers because executions are a self-deluding, self-defeating, self-degrading, futile, and entirely stupid means of dealing with the crime of murder, and because our children will prefer to be something better than murderers themselves. Should we not — can we not — make the same choice now?

1. What has been the history of capital punishment?
2. What does Amsterdam predict about its future?
3. What is Amsterdam's position on capital punishment, and what are the reasons for his position?

On the Issue:

Amsterdam argues that capital punishment is, among other things, futile. Here he is referring to the issue of deterrence, which he discusses earlier in his essay. Legal scholars have found no evidence that capital punishment deters crimes that would get the death penalty. Van den Haag argues that the threat is appropriate if there is any possibility of deterrence, but that retribution is a sufficient reason for the death penalty. What do you think?

1. Which writer makes the more convincing argument in the excerpt that you have read? Why?
2. What view on the death penalty did you hold before reading these excerpts'
3. Has your view influenced your evaluation of these two arguments? Has your view changed at all from having read the two arguments? Explain.
4. Summarize your findings in written form.

The goal of critical thinking is to solve problems. We need to make decisions about where to attend school or what kind of career goals are best for us. As responsible citizens we need to understand

the issues of political debate and prepare ourselves to vote in elections. As humans we need to develop a moral code, to think about how we want to live with family, friends, co-workers, and strangers. We need to think about the kind of person we want to be and to become. That s a long list of problems to solve and decisions to make. We don't make them all at once, or only once. Learning is a lifetime activity. As we read and talk to others and listen and learn, we continually revise our plans and goals and values. Sometimes we make mistakes; sometimes we have to get rid of bad habits, false facts, and misguided codes. The key is to seize every opportunity to learn, to think, and to reevaluate who we are and what we believe.

Ex. 9. Preview the article (skim the information about the writer, headline, introductory paragraph, first sentences of the paragraphs that follow) and speculate about the subject of the reading.

Why Women Are Paid Less Than Men

Lester C. Thurow

Lester Thurow is a professor at MIT and a consultant to both government and private companies. He has written books and articles on economics and public-policy issues. The following article was published in the New York Times.

In the 40 years from 1939 to 1979 white women who work full time have with monotonous regularity made slightly less than 60 percent as much as white men. Why?

Over the same time period, minorities have made substantial progress in catching up with whites, with minority women making even more progress than minority men.

Black men now earn 72 percent as much as white men (up 16 percentage points since the mid-1950s) but black women earn 92 percent as much as white women. Hispanic men make 71 percent of what their white counterparts do, but Hispanic women make 82 percent as much as white women. As a result of their faster progress, fully employed black women make 75 percent as much as fully employed black men while Hispanic women earn 68 percent as much as Hispanic men.

This faster progress may, however, end when minority women finally catch up with white women. In the bible of the New Right, George Gilder's "Wealth and Poverty," the 60 percent is just one of Mother Nature's constants like the speed of light or the force of gravity.

Men are programmed to provide for their families economically while women are programmed to take care of their families emotionally and physically. As a result men put more effort into their jobs than women. The net result is a difference in work intensity that leads to that 40 percent gap in earnings. But there is no discrimination against women — only the biological facts of life.

The problem with this assertion is just that. It is an assertion with no evidence for it other than the fact that white women have made 60 percent as much as men for a long period of time.

'Discrimination against women" is an easy answer but it also has its problems as an adequate explanation. Why is discrimination against women not declining under the same social forces that are leading to a lessening of discrimination against minorities? In recent years women have made more use of the enforcement provisions of the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission and the courts than minorities. Why do the laws that prohibit discrimination against women and minorities work for minorities but not for women?

When men discriminate against women, they run into a problem. To discriminate against women is to discriminate against your own wife and to lower your own family income. To prevent women from working is to force men to work more.

When whites discriminate against blacks, they can at least think that they are raising their own incomes. When men

discriminate against women they have to know that they are lowering their own family income and increasing their own work effort.

While discrimination undoubtedly explains part of the male-female earnings differential, one has to believe that men are monumentally stupid or irrational to explain all of the earnings gap in terms of discrimination. There must be something else going on.

Back in 1939 it was possible to attribute the earnings gap to large differences in educational attainments. But the educational gap between men and women has been eliminated since World War II. It is no longer possible to use education as an explanation for the lower earnings of women.

Some observers have argued that women earn less money since they are less reliable workers who are more apt to leave the labor force. But it is difficult to maintain this position since women are less apt to quit one job to take another and as a result they tend to work as long, or longer, for any one employer. From any employer's perspective they are more reliable, not less reliable, than men.

Part of the answer is visible if you look at the lifetime earnings profile of men. Suppose that you were asked to predict which men in a group of 25-year-olds would become economically successful. At age 25 it is difficult to tell who will be economically successful and your predictions are apt to be highly inaccurate.

But suppose that you were asked to predict which men in a group of 35-year-olds would become economically successful. If you are successful at age 35, you are very likely to remain successful for the rest of your life. If you have not become economically successful by age 35, you are very unlikely to do so later.

The decade between 25 and 35 is when men either succeed or fail. It is the decade when lawyers become partners in the good firms, when business managers make it onto the "fast track," when academics get tenure at good universities, and when blue collar workers find the job opportunities that will lead to training opportunities and the skills that will generate high earnings.

If there is any one decade when it pays to work hard and to be consistently in the labor force, it is the decade between 25 and 35. For those who succeed, earnings will rise rapidly. For those who fail, earnings will remain flat for the rest of their lives.

But the decade between 25 and 35 is precisely the decade when women are most apt to leave the labor force or become part-time workers to have children. When they do, the current system of promotion and skill acquisition will extract an enormous lifetime price.

This leaves essentially two avenues for equalizing male and female earnings.

Families where women who wish to have successful careers, compete with men, and achieve the same earnings should alter their family plans and have their children either before 25 or after 35. Or society can attempt to alter the existing promotion and skill acquisition system so that there is a longer time period in which both men and women can attempt to successfully enter the labor force.

Without some combination of these two factors, a substantial fraction of the male-female earnings differentials are apt to persist for the next 40 years, even if discrimination against women is eliminated.

Comprehension Check

Fill in the blanks to complete each of the following statements.

1. From 1939 to 1979, white women made _____ percent as much as white men.
2. Conservatives (the New Right) explain the difference in income as the result of _____, not _____ .
3. Women are more _____ workers than men.
4. Men who are not successful by the time they are _____ are not likely to become successful.
5. Women need to remain _____ between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-five to compete equally with men.

Answer the following with a T (true) or F (false).

6. Hispanic women earn more than Hispanic men.
7. Thurow believes that the income difference is explained by biological differences.
8. Thurow believes that discrimination against women is not the primary cause of the income gap.
9. The income gap is the result of differences in education.

Analysis of Content and Strategies

1. What is Thurow's subject?
2. What writing strategy does he use? (When he asks "Why?" at the end of paragraph 1, what strategy does that signal?)
3. List each of the arguments that Thurow examines and his reason for dismissing each one.
4.What is Thurow's explanation for the difference in income between men and women?
5. Evaluate Thurow's two solutions. If he is right about the cause of the problem, are his solutions good ones?
6. Thurow says that most people who are going to be successful will be so by age thirty-five. Is this statement fact or opinion? Do you agree with the statement? If you do not agree, what evidence would you need to challenge the assertion?
7. The author's figures are based on the total earnings of all full-time workers; they are not comparisons by job category. What facts about the jobs that men and women hold may account for some of the difference in pay?
8. Do you think that Thurow underestimates the degree of discrimination against women? Why or why not?

For Discussion and Reflection.

1. Should women be able to take time out for children without this hurting their careers? Why or why not?
2. How can women be encouraged to enter well-paying fields such as engineering?

3. Should men be favored over women in advancement? Should affirmative action be continued to help women and minorities gain access to jobs?

4. Should all workers receive equal pay for equal work?

Ex. 10. **Preview the article and speculate about the subject under consideration.**

Apologize for Columbus?

Peter H. Gibbon

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At the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, life-size replicas of the Nina, Pinta and Santa Maria floated across a man-made lagoon. On display were 71 portraits of Christopher Columbus, facsimiles of his ships' logs, his letters. Visitors could stroll through a full-scale reproduction of the monastery where Columbus stayed in Spain before petitioning Queen Isabella for the funding to sail to an uncertain world. One in three Americans attended the Chicago Exposition named after the famous explorer.

Leading up to the exposition had been a year of parades, dedications, ceremonies, sermons and speeches all over the nation commemorating the 400th anniversary of Columbus's first voyage. It was in 1892 that Anton Dvorak composed his "New World" symphony, New Yorkers dedicated their 84-foot Italian marble statue at Columbus Circle, President Benjamin Harrison proclaimed Columbus Day a national holiday, and Francis Bellamy wrote the Pledge of Allegiance, which was recited by millions of schoolchildren for the first time in October 1892 to honor Columbus and became an instant hit.

For the past two years I have been visiting classrooms all over America, talking to students about heroes. Why today should they

admire an explorer whose discovery was a blunder, who thought he had reached China, when he was in fact in Cuba.

Why admire a man who was searching for gold and tolerant of slavery? In Mexico and Peru, Indians call this a day of darkness. They blame the Spanish conquistadors who followed Columbus to the Americas for destroying their culture. In an age of contrition, when world leaders apologize for their nations' sins, should we apologize for Christopher Columbus? In 1998, how can students face reality yet still admire the man who first sailed from Europe to the New World?

Students should know that Columbus did not discover America by himself. Thousands of sailors before him had inched down the African Coast and out into the Atlantic. He was enlightened by mapmakers in Florence and Lisbon. The printing press made available the books he read in monasteries. New instruments, the astrolabe and the compass, helped him find his way. Improved ships kept him afloat.

And his motives were complex. Columbus was seeking adventure, glory, and wealth. At the same time, he believed he was doing God's work. With his Bible, he could convert the citizens of China and Japan.

Columbus was far from perfect. He demanded 10 percent of the profits for himself and titles of nobility he could pass on to his children. Brilliant as a navigator, he failed as a colonizer. Most regretfully, he came to see the Caribbean Indians not as fellow humans but as workers to be exploited, as sources of gold. While smallpox and swine fever inadvertently introduced by the sailors killed far more Caribbean Indians than did Spanish bullets, Columbus's acceptance of slavery also contributed to the destruction of a people.

Further, there were Spaniards who, unlike Columbus, transcended their time and abjured slavery. Bartolome de Las Casas settled in Hispaniola and became a landowner. He treated the Indians kindly but still profited from their labor. In 1512 he became a Dominican priest. Two years later, in a famous sermon, he announced that he was returning his serfs to the governor of Hispaniola.

Thus commenced his 40-year campaign against the cruelty of Spanish colonizers. Las Casas traveled to Spain and harangued the government. In his books and articles, he demanded that the Spaniards return the Indian land and end forced labor. By the end of his life, he also proclaimed a revolutionary idea: the equity of all human races.

Columbus was not a humanitarian. Still, while others talked about sailing west to new lands, he did it. Through a combination of intuition, faith, scholarship and reason, he believed he could sail to the Indies. Rebuffed by the king of Portugal, he traveled to Spain where he pleaded his case for six years. Spain was skeptical. He turned toward France. At the last minute, Ferdinand and Isabella, fearing France might acquire colonies before Spain, financed three ships.

It took to courage to sail into the unknown. It required faith to keep going when his crew lost hope and wanted to turn back. Above all it took extraordinary navigational skills to keep three clumsy ships on course. In the 15th century, ships could languish for days, be blown off course, sink without a trace. Columbus had a mastery of winds and currents. He could predict hurricanes and navigate at night.

Today, with all continents traveled, all mountains climbed, all oceans mapped, it is easy to underestimate the boldness and bravery of an explorer. Accustomed to motorized ships, we take for granted the skill of *a* sailor. In comfortable times, we forget the misery Columbus endured in his years at sea: the moldy hardtack, rancid wine, rats, lice and dysentery; the arthritis that slowly crippled and killed him.

Columbus discovered land where no European knew it existed. His voyage opened a century of exploration and led to the creation of the American colonies. It also produced a beneficial exchange easily overlooked: From the New World came corn and potatoes that fended off hunger for millions of people in Africa and Europe. From the Old World arrived horses, cattle, pigs, sugar, wheat.

Unlike Americans at the Columbian Exposition of 1893, we are committed to facing the dark side of our heroes. In the 19th

century classroom, history was patriotic, heroes perfect. Today we want to educate our students in the complexity of history without extinguishing their idealism.

We must admit that Columbus lacked the sense of justice and charity that made Las Casas a moral hero, but we need not apologize for a brave explorer whose voyage transformed the world. We can recognize Columbus as a visionary, a sailor of incomparable skill and a hero of exploration.

Comprehension Check

Fill in the blanks to complete each of the following statements.

1. The 400th anniversary of Columbus's first voyage was celebrated in___.
2. The Pledge of Allegiance was written by _____.
3. President _____ made Columbus Day a _____.
4. Columbus was helped by _____, _____, and _____.
5. Unlike Las Casas, Columbus accepted _____.
6. Columbus had courage to _____.
7. Columbus had extraordinary _____.
8. Columbus's voyage resulted in _____.

Analysis of Content and Strategies

1. What is Gibbon's topic, the issue he examines? (Write more than just "Columbus.")
2. What is his thesis, the judgment he wants to support?
3. What facts and inferences are presented to support his thesis?

3. Why does Gibbon include a discussion of Las Casas? What is he willing to concede? How does this approach strengthen his argument?

For discussion and Reflection

1. Gibbon asserts that today we look for the dark side of our heroes and apologize for past sins. Do you think it is important to emphasize the flaws in the lives of famous historical figures? Why or why not?

2. Do you agree with Gibbon that it is also important to appreciate what our flawed heroes of the past did accomplish? Why or why not?

3. Has Gibbon convinced you that we should recognize Columbus's achievements? If not, why not?

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