

8th Grade Language Arts Writing/Grammar: Essential Skills

Student Review Guide

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Verbs

Section 2.1

Verbs and Verb Phrases



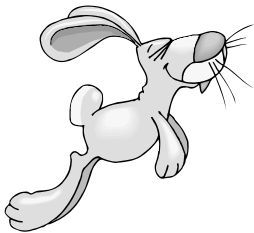
Key Terms

- **Verbs** – words that show either action or existence
- **Action verbs** – verbs that show things that someone or something can do
- **Being verbs** – verbs that show existence or a state of being; forms of the verb *to be*
- **Helping verbs** – being verbs that are used with action verbs, sometimes to show time
- **Verb phrase** – one or more helping verbs combined with an action verb

Verbs are another one of the eight parts of speech. Verbs are the words in sentences that either show action (action verbs) or show existence with no action (being verbs).

Action Verbs

Action verbs are easy to recognize because they show something that someone or something can do, such as *run*, *walk*, *talk*, *carry*, *read*, *play*, etc.



Example 1: The rabbit hopped through the yard.

Hopped tells the action occurring in the sentence or what the rabbit is doing.
Hopped is an action verb.

Being Verbs and Helping Verbs

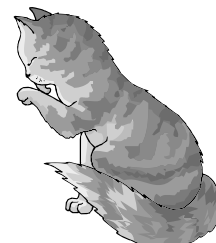
Being verbs are not as easy to recognize unless you're familiar with them. They show only existence or states of being. Sometimes these same being verbs are used as helping verbs in a verb phrase, which you will see next. See the chart below.

Chart 1:
Being Verbs/Helping Verbs

am	be	was	had been	shall be	must be	would be
is	being	were	has been	can be	might be	should be
are	been	have been	will be	may be	could be	

Example 2: Fluffy is their pet cat.

Is doesn't show any action but shows existence, or state of being.
Fluffy exists as the pet cat. *Is* is a being verb.



Section 2.1, continued

Verbs and Verb Phrases

Helping verbs are being verbs that are used along with an action verb to form a **verb phrase**. Any of the being verbs in Chart 1 on the previous page may be used with action verbs as helping verbs. There may be one helping verb or two or three together in front of an action verb.

Example 3: The child has been playing jacks for ten minutes.

Has been playing is the verb phrase of the sentence. *Has been* are helping verbs that go with the action verb *playing*. This verb phrase is considered an action verb.

Practice 1

Underline the verb or verb phrase in each sentence. Then in the blank, write *A* if the verb is an action verb or *B* if the verb is a being verb.

- _____ 1. Emily ran around the track twice.
- _____ 2. Thomas is calling all the team members.
- _____ 3. The car is clean.
- _____ 4. We eat there sometimes.
- _____ 5. The bag had leaked already.
- _____ 6. They are the most difficult ones.
- _____ 7. My music had been too loud.
- _____ 8. She will be the first one there.
- _____ 9. I am serious about it.
- _____ 10. Mark changed the tire quickly.
- _____ 11. Mr. Hayes will be announcing the winner.
- _____ 12. A train was leaving the station.
- _____ 13. We watch it every week.
- _____ 14. You were too late for the warm-up.
- _____ 15. He had been doing his math problems.

Parts of a Sentence

Section 4.8 Mixed Review



Review the basic parts of a sentence that you've seen so far.

Sentence Part	Description/Purpose	Location in Sentence
Prepositional phrase	begins with a preposition and ends with a noun or pronoun that is the object of the preposition; <i>cannot act as a subject, object, predicate nominative, or predicate adjective</i>	anywhere in the sentence
Subject (simple)	tells what the sentence is about; usually a noun or pronoun; answers "who or what did the action or is being"	usually near the beginning of the sentence
Predicate (simple)	the main verb in the sentence; gives the action or expresses being	usually in the middle of the sentence but can be at the beginning or end
Direct object	a noun or pronoun that receives the action of the verb	only after an action verb
Indirect object	a noun or pronoun that answers the question "to whom" or "for whom" in a sentence that also contains a direct object	only after an action verb and before a direct object
Predicate nominative	a noun or a pronoun that renames the subject	only after a linking (or being) verb
Predicate adjective	an adjective that describes the subject	only after a linking (or being) verb

In the examples below, can you identify the part of the sentence that is represented by each underlined word? If not, go back and review the different parts of a sentence covered in this Section.

Example 1: At the beach, the family played in the ocean and fed seagulls some bread.

Beach is the object of the prepositional phrase *at the beach*.

Played and **fed** are compound predicates in this sentence. They are both action verbs.

Family is the subject of the sentence. It answers the question "who played and who fed?"

Ocean is another object of a preposition. It is part of the prepositional phrase *in the ocean*.

Bread is a direct object. It answers the question "fed what?"

Seagulls is an indirect object. It answers the question "to whom is the bread fed?"

Section 4.8, continued

Mixed Review

Example 2: During algebra, Josh and Will become restless toward the end of class.

Algebra is the object of the prepositional phrase *during algebra*.

Become is a linking verb.

Josh and *Will* are compound subjects that tell “who become.”

Restless is a predicate adjective that describes Josh and Will, the subjects.

Toward is a preposition and *end* is the object of the prepositional phrase *toward the end*.

Class is the object of the prepositional phrase *of class*.

Practice 1

Read each sentence below and identify each underlined word as subject (S), action verb (AV), linking verb (LV), direct object (DO), indirect object (IO), predicate nominative (PN), predicate adjective (PA), or object of a preposition (OP).

- | | |
|---|---|
| _____ 1. Kohl's had a great <u>sale</u> . | _____ 6. Sonny sat on the <u>bench</u> . |
| _____ 2. Kari dove into the <u>pool</u> . | _____ 7. The day was a <u>disaster</u> . |
| _____ 3. After the show, <u>Marty</u> left. | _____ 8. The trees <u>swayed</u> in the wind. |
| _____ 4. Pablo showed the <u>nurse</u> his arm. | _____ 9. Eleven <u>spices</u> were ingredients. |
| _____ 5. The voice was <u>soft</u> . | _____ 10. Her boyfriend gave <u>Jan</u> a ring. |

Practice 2

In each sentence below, underline and label the subject (S), action verb (AV), linking verb (LV), predicate nominative (PN), predicate adjective (PA), direct object (DO), and indirect object (IO). Of course, all the parts will not be present in every sentence. Remember that you can have indirect objects and direct objects only after action verbs. Predicate nominatives and predicate adjectives come after linking verbs. Put parentheses () around any prepositional phrase.

Examples: S LV PN S LV PA
Devin should be the pitcher (in the game). The yellow flowers smelled fragrant.

S AV IO DO
The coach gave the players warm-up exercises.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. The little girl wanted a chocolate cake. | 6. Cathy is a cousin of mine. |
| 2. Geese can become nuisances in the yard. | 7. Fred wanted spaghetti with meatballs. |
| 3. Dora sent Aunt Mae flowers. | 8. The light grew dim. |
| 4. The young child is scared of the dark. | 9. Mrs. Gates will be so proud of you. |
| 5. The player gave his teammate the ball. | 10. The librarian will show the class the new center. |

Pronouns

Section 5.4

Pronoun Agreement with Antecedents



Key Terms

- **Antecedent** – the noun that a pronoun replaces
- **Pronoun-antecedent agreement** – correctly using a pronoun that agrees in number and gender with the noun it replaces

The noun that a pronoun replaces or refers to is called the **antecedent**. Possessive pronouns also have antecedents. Singular possessive pronouns are *his*, *her*, *its*; plural are *their*, *theirs*.

Example 1: John wore his costume for the play.

The costume belongs to John, so the pronoun *his* refers to *John*. *John* is the antecedent for the pronoun *his*.

Since pronouns take the place of nouns, each pronoun must agree in number and in gender with the noun that it replaces. If the noun is singular, its pronoun must be singular. If the noun is masculine, feminine, or neuter, the pronoun must be the same. Having a pronoun correctly match its noun antecedent is called **pronoun-antecedent agreement**.

Example 2: An actress must know her lines. **Correct**

An actress must know ~~their~~ lines. **Incorrect**

Actress is singular and feminine, so the correct pronoun is *her*. It is incorrect to use the plural pronoun *their*.

Example 3: All actors must study their lines.

Actors is plural, so the correct pronoun to use is *their* and not *his*.

A pronoun may have more than one antecedent in a sentence. If so, use the following rules to determine which pronoun correctly replaces the noun(s).

Rule 1

For two or more antecedents joined by **and**, use a plural pronoun.

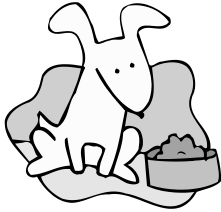
Example 4: An actor **and** an actress were waiting for their entrances.

The **and** makes the two singular subjects plural by combining them, so you use the plural pronoun *their*.

Section 5.4, continued
Pronoun Agreement
with Antecedents

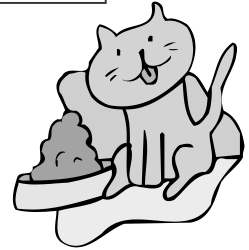
Rule 2

For two or more singular antecedents joined by **or** or **nor**, use a singular pronoun.
**Be careful. This one is tricky.*



Example 5: Neither my dog *nor* my cat ate its food.

*Dog and cat are the antecedents. Since each is singular and separated by **nor**, the pronoun **its** must be singular. It would be incorrect to say, “Neither my dog nor my cat ate their food.”*



Rule 3

When a singular and a plural antecedent are joined by **or** or **nor**, the pronoun should agree with the antecedent closer to the pronoun.

Example 6: Neither my dog *nor* my cats ate their food.

Since *cats* is closer to the pronoun, the correct pronoun is *their* (because *cats* is plural).

Example 7: Neither my cats *nor* my dog ate its food.

Since *dog* is closer to the pronoun, the correct pronoun is *its* (because *dog* is singular).

Practice

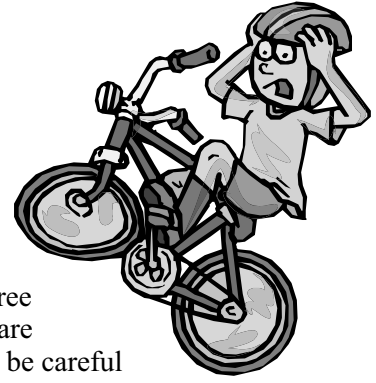
In the blanks on the left, write the pronoun that best completes each sentence. Remember that the pronoun must agree with its antecedent.

- _____ 1. This computer has a scratch on ____ monitor.
- _____ 2. A fireman must keep ____ body physically fit.
- _____ 3. The members of the club brought ____ own sandwiches.
- _____ 4. Are Angela and Julie taking ____ vitamins?
- _____ 5. One girl is bringing ____ prom dress.
- _____ 6. Either Beth or Ellen is painting ____ own room.
- _____ 7. Ron and Jeff are sanding ____ model airplanes.
- _____ 8. Mr. Jones needs ____ recorder now.
- _____ 9. Neither Connie nor her cousins will use ____ computers at home.
- _____ 10. The chair has gum on one of ____ legs.
- _____ 11. Can you return the gloves and hat to ____ right owner?
- _____ 12. Either my aunts or my sister will bring ____ binoculars.
- _____ 13. The children will begin ____ game soon.
- _____ 14. The mother bird had built ____ nest in the tall tree.

Subject-Verb Agreement

Section 6.2

Phrases Between the Subject and the Verb



As you probably saw in the previous practice, making sure the subject and verb agree is easy when the verb comes directly after the subject. However, words or phrases are often found between the subject and the verb in a sentence. To identify the subject, be careful to see who or what is doing the action or is being.

Be careful not to confuse the object of a preposition as the subject. *The subject of a sentence will never be found in a prepositional phrase.* Be sure the subject agrees with the verb and ignore any prepositional phrases.

Example 1:

singular subject		singular verb
↓		↓
<u>One of the puppies is barking.</u>		

Note: *Of the puppies* is a prepositional phrase. *Of* is a preposition and *puppies* is the object of the preposition. Remember, mark out the prepositional phrases because objects of prepositions cannot be subjects.

The subject is *one*, not *puppies*. *One* is singular so use *is barking*, not *are barking*.

Example 2: My bike, along with our old helmets, scooters, and skateboards, was sold at the yard sale.

Here the prepositional phrase *along with our old helmets, scooters, and skateboards* may make the subject appear compound, but it is not. Remember, the subject cannot be in a prepositional phrase. Pay no attention to phrases beginning with *including, in addition to, along with, as well as*, etc.

Example 3: The clothes in the dryer are still damp.

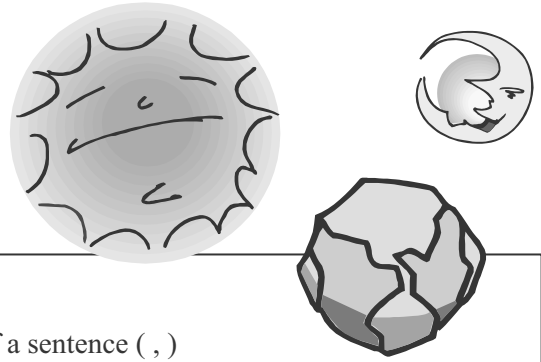
In this case, the subject *clothes* is plural so *are* is the correct verb to use. Again, ignore the singular noun *dryer* that is the object of the preposition because it is not the subject.

Example 4: Which type of laser printers has the best quality print?

Be careful with this type of question. Remember to ignore prepositional phrases. In this sentence, *type* is the subject and is singular. To agree, the verb must also be singular, so *has* is correct.

Punctuation with Commas

Section 9.1 Commas in a Series



Key Terms

- **Comma** – a punctuation mark that separates words or parts of a sentence (,)
- **Series** – a list of three or more words or phrases

A **comma** (,) is the punctuation mark used to separate words or parts of a sentence. As you'll see throughout this section and the next, commas have many uses.

Important Note:

A comma will never come before the first word of a sentence and will never end a sentence.

One use for commas is to separate words or phrases in a series. A **series** is at least three of the same type of words or phrases. Another word for a *series* is a *list*. To name a few examples, a series could be a list of three or more nouns, three or more verbs, three or more adjectives, three or more adverbs, or three or more prepositional phrases.

Example 1: The young student sat, thought, and wrote in the journal.

The three verbs *sat*, *thought*, and *wrote* are a list separated by commas and joined by the *and*. Notice that commas separate the words in the list by coming after each word except for the last one.

It is considered correct to omit the comma before the *and* or *or*, but including it makes the series clearer.

Example 2: They did a project on the sun, the moon, and Earth.

In this example, *sun*, *moon*, and *Earth* are three nouns in a series.

Example 3: I could put the letter on the desk, on the counter, or on the table.

On the desk, *on the counter*, and *on the table* are three prepositional phrases in a series.

Example 4: The over-ripe fruit became mushy, moldy, and smelly.

The adjectives *mushy*, *moldy*, and *smelly* make up a series of adjectives that describe the fruit.

Simple and Compound Sentences

Section 10.2 Other Fragments



Key Term

- **Fragment** – an incomplete “sentence” that does not make a complete thought

Remember that a sentence fragment does not make a complete thought. Fragments that are missing a subject or a verb are easy to recognize, but other types of fragments are more difficult to identify. Let’s look at a few more types of sentence fragments.

Some fragments appear to have a subject and a verb, but the verb is incomplete because it needs a helping verb to make a complete thought.

Example 1: The girl jumping on the trampoline. ☒ **fragment**

A progressive tense verb like *jumping* must have a helping verb in order to be the main verb in a sentence. As it is, this example is not a complete thought. (You’ll see later that the group of words *jumping on a trampoline* is called a participial phrase. These types of phrases are explained in Section 12.1.)

To change this fragment into a sentence, you must add a helping verb or add a main verb.

Example 2: The girl is jumping on the trampoline. **complete sentence**

Adding a helping verb makes this a complete sentence.

Example 3: The girl jumping on the trampoline is my sister. **complete sentence**

This is also a complete sentence because a main verb *is* has been added.

Example 4: The music played by my favorite band. ☒ **fragment**

Again, *played* is a verb that needs a helping verb to act as a main verb. This example is also a fragment.

Sometimes an extra word can turn a sentence into a fragment because the thought is incomplete. (You’ll see later that this type of construction is called a dependent clause, and it cannot stand alone as a complete sentence. Dependent clauses are explained in more detail in Section 11.1.)

Example 5: When Sadie called me. ☒ **fragment**

If you leave out *when*, this example is a complete sentence, but including *when* makes it an incomplete thought.

Section 10.2, continued

Other Fragments

Example 6: If he cooks the meal. ☒ fragment

Here the word *if* makes the thought incomplete.

Practice 1

Label each group of words: S for *complete sentence* or F for *fragment*.

- | | |
|---|---|
| _____ 1. Lynn talking about the show. | _____ 7. The cell phone ringing on the counter. |
| _____ 2. The turtle laid its eggs. | _____ 8. Since he was so tired. |
| _____ 3. Boyce was writing the script. | _____ 9. Jackson talked in front of the class. |
| _____ 4. The gift wrapped by the child. | _____ 10. My friend looking through the window. |
| _____ 5. If they tell the results. | _____ 11. She is going to the beach. |
| _____ 6. Because we changed the menu. | _____ 12. The leaves blown by the wind. |

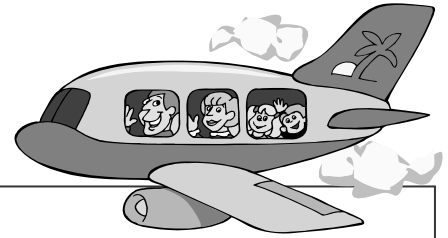
Practice 2

Read each question carefully. Darken the circle corresponding to your answer choice.

- (A) (B) (C) (D) 1. Choose the answer that is a correct and complete sentence.
- A. The squirrel is looking for food.
 - B. Some of the towels drying in the sun.
 - C. When you hear the beep.
 - D. The full moon shining brightly.
- (A) (B) (C) (D) 2. Choose the answer that is a correct and complete sentence.
- A. The bird pecking on the house.
 - B. When the bird pecks on the house.
 - C. The house pecked by the bird.
 - D. The bird is pecking on the house.
- (A) (B) (C) (D) 3. Choose the answer that is a sentence fragment.
- A. The radio was playing softly.
 - B. Because I burned my finger.
 - C. The wagon is working now.
 - D. Please leave.
- (A) (B) (C) (D) 4. Choose the answer that is a sentence fragment.
- A. Jason was running around the track.
 - B. His time broke the school record.
 - C. The stopwatch used by the coach.
 - D. A teammate also won a medal.

Complex Sentences

Section 11.3 Adverb Clauses



Key Terms

- **Adverb clause** – a subordinate clause found anywhere in a sentence that usually modifies a verb but can also modify an adjective or an adverb
- **Subordinating conjunctions** – words, such as *if, when, because, until*, etc.

Recognizing Adverb Clauses

An **adverb clause** is another type of subordinate clause that may be used in a complex sentence. It is introduced with a **subordinating conjunction** and usually modifies a verb but also may modify an adjective or an adverb. It may tell *when, where, how, why, to what extent*, or *under what conditions*. Remember that *when* and *where* can also introduce adjective clauses after a noun, as in *place where* or *time when*. An adverb clause must occur with a main clause, but an adverb clause can come anywhere in the sentence.

Chart 2:
Common Subordinating Conjunctions

after	as soon as	before	if	than	unless	where
although	as if	because	in order that	though	when	whenever
as	as though	even though	since	until	while	wherever

Example 1: When school is out, my family will fly to Arizona.

The adverb clause begins with *when* and modifies the verb *will fly*. It tells **when**.

Example 2: They parked where there were spaces.

Where there were spaces tells **where** they parked.

Sometimes words can be omitted from adverb clauses because they are understood.

Example 3: She can sing better than I.

The sentence is saying, *She can sing better than I can sing*. The adverb clause is *than I* and tells **to what extent** *better*. The main clause is *She can sing better*.

Caution! Adverb Clauses versus Prepositional Phrases

Be careful not to confuse prepositional phrases with adverb clauses. They both begin with words that look alike. *Hint: Remember that a clause must have a subject and a verb. If it doesn't, it's a prepositional phrase.*

Example 4: We will leave after lunch.

After lunch is **NOT** an adverb clause. It is a prepositional phrase. Notice that it has no verb, so it cannot be a clause.

Complex Sentences

Section 11.6 Punctuation Review



Since you have learned more comma rules with simple, compound, and complex sentences, let's review all the comma rules together.

Review of Comma Rules

Commas Needed:

- 1 In a series between words, phrases, and clauses
- 2 Between at least 2 items in a date or an address
- 3 After introductory words
- 4 After long introductory prepositional phrases
- 5 After or around interrupters/parenthetical expressions
- 6 Around unnecessary appositives
- 7 Before coordinate conjunctions between independent clauses in a compound sentence
- 8 After introductory adverb clauses
- 9 Around unneeded adjective clauses (always with those introduced by *which*)

No Commas Needed:

- 10 Not around needed appositives
- 11 Not after introductory prepositional phrases followed by a verb
- 12 Not between compound subjects
- 13 Not between compound verbs
- 14 Not before an adverb clause at the end of the sentence
- 15 Not around needed adjective clauses

Practice

Using the rule numbers above, write in the blank the number of every rule that applies to each sentence. Add commas where needed. Some sentences will need more than one comma, and some will need no commas. Remember to write the rule number even when a comma is not needed.

- _____ 1. No we weren't ready for the test and did not do well on it.
- _____ 2. At the bottom of the hill were Spencer and Liam who called to us.
- _____ 3. When he moves to Alabama he'll give me his sofa.
- _____ 4. It was by the way too long for the blank.
- _____ 5. We called everyone on the list emailed the chairman and gave out flyers.
- _____ 6. I couldn't stop because it was so interesting.
- _____ 7. Both Curt and his young daughter played the game that we showed them.
- _____ 8. After a very long day I voted for television but Mario wanted a nap.
- _____ 9. In May 2010 we visited the Barbers our cousins.
- _____ 10. Dara who collects pewter dragons found one at a yard sale.
- _____ 11. My dog Lucky stays in the fenced backyard and barks at strangers.
- _____ 12. The man who paints for us or his helpers left a radio.
- _____ 13. The toy that I wrapped is ready and I will take it to the post office.

Verbals

Section 12.4

Review of Verbals

Participle

- Ends in *-ing*, *-ed*, etc.
- Always used as an adjective
- Appears either right before or right after a noun and modifies the noun

Infinitive

- Always *to* plus a verb
- Used as an adjective, an adverb, or a noun
- Can act as a subject, a direct object, or a predicate nominative

Gerund

- Always an *-ing* verb
- Used only as a noun
- Can act as a subject, a direct object, a predicate nominative, or an object of a preposition

Practice 1

Review each type of verbal using the charts above. Then answer the following questions about verbals. Write your answers in the blanks.

1. Which verbal is always used as an adjective?

2. Which verbal is always used as a noun?

3. Which verbal ends only in *-ing*?

4. Which verbal is always *to* plus a verb?

5. Which verbal can be used as an adjective or an adverb?

6. Which two verbals are used as nouns?

7. Which verbal is the only one used as an object of a preposition?

8. Which verbal must come either right before or right after a noun?

Practice 2

Underline each verbal in the sentences below. Identify each type of verbal by writing *P* for participle, *I* for infinitive, or *G* for gerund. Some sentences may not contain a verbal. If the sentence has no verbal, write *N* in the blank.

1. Your coughing constantly will make your throat sore.

2. It was too dry to dig in the yard.

3. She was driving to the train station.

4. The woman playing the harp is talented.

5. He asked to borrow my book.

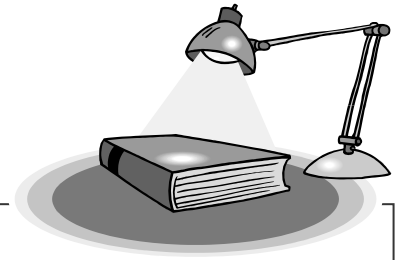
6. Holding the newborn was a scary experience.

7. Practicing his throwing, Thomas worked hard.

8. They loved dressing up as princesses.

Informational Writing

Section 15.1 The Writing Process



Key Terms

- **Informational writing** – writing that gives information about a topic or subject; may include reports, letters, textbooks and reference books, presentations, and expository essays
- **Topic sentence** – the sentence that tells the main message of a paragraph
- **Conclusion sentence** – the sentence that ends a paragraph by restating the ideas discussed in the paragraph
- **Brainstorming** – generating ideas that may be used when writing

Informational writing is simply writing that gives information about a given topic or subject. You practiced research skills in Section 14 that may be necessary before writing an informational report or essay. Now consider the actual process of writing an informational paragraph or report.

Most likely, you’ve written informational paragraphs, reports, and essays in the past. This type of writing usually follows a certain structure. Effective informational writing is built by well-written paragraphs, so first review the elements of writing a good informational paragraph.

Writing an Effective Paragraph

Writing an effective informational paragraph means conveying a message to the reader in a way that is clear, concise (to the point), and interesting. In order to make the message easy to understand, you should pay careful attention to the ideas you present and the words you use to present them.

Although all paragraphs are different, the basic structure of most good informational paragraphs includes four parts: the topic sentence, idea or reason sentences, detail or example sentences, and a conclusion sentence. These elements create a meaningful paragraph.

Topic Sentence

The **topic sentence** is the sentence that tells what the paragraph is about. It gives the main idea or message of the paragraph. Think of a topic sentence like a good movie trailer. After watching a movie trailer, you know whom and what the movie is about and have a good idea about what will happen, but it leaves you wanting to know the details. Like a movie trailer, a topic sentence should give enough information to interest the reader without giving too many details or explanations. The details and explanations follow the topic sentence to make up the rest of the paragraph.

Ideas or Reasons/Details or Examples

The topic sentence is followed by specific ideas or reasons. These ideas or reasons are then often followed by additional details or examples. Every sentence in the paragraph should give information that supports the main idea. These sentences may look different depending on the organization of the paragraph, but all informational paragraphs will include a combination of ideas, reasons, details, or examples.

Section 15.1, continued

The Writing Process

Conclusion Sentence

After stating the message and supporting it with ideas and examples, it is important to close the paragraph with a strong **conclusion sentence**. An effective conclusion sentence will close the topic being discussed in a way that makes the reader feel satisfied with the ending. It is important that the ending doesn't leave the reader "hanging," so the conclusion sentence ends the paragraph in a way that completes the message. A conclusion sentence in informational writing often restates the main idea of the paragraph in a way that gives the reader a sense of closure.

Example 1: Read the following paragraph.

(1) Local governments are structured around the needs of a community, usually a city or a county. (2) The head of most city governments is the mayor. (3) The mayor's job is to oversee the main departments of the city, such as the fire and police departments. (4) There are also city or county commissioners. (5) Commissioners help by approving budgets, overseeing spending, and hiring county employees. (6) City managers and city clerks are also common. (7) Their jobs include carrying out the decisions made by the mayor and commissioners and getting information about such decisions to the citizens of the community. (8) Overall, local governments are important because they oversee the daily needs of entire communities with the goal of making life better for all involved.

Sentence 1 is the topic sentence. It gives the topic and focus of the paragraph. This topic and focus is about the structure of local governments to meet the needs of a community.

Sentence 2 is an idea that supports the topic sentence by revealing the mayor as the head of that structure.

Sentence 3 gives a detail about the idea given in sentence 2. It describes the mayor's main job.

Sentences 4 and 6 are additional idea sentences that further reveal the structure of local governments.

Sentences 5 and 7 are additional detail sentences that explain the roles of the officials introduced in sentences 4 and 6.

Sentence 8 is the conclusion that restates the main idea of the paragraph. It summarizes the main points by emphasizing the importance of local governments.

This paragraph is structured by giving the organization of local governments from the highest office to lower offices. The mayor is the highest office. Commissioners are under the mayor, and finally city managers and clerks are under the commissioners. Notice that each idea sentence supports the main idea, and each detail sentence supports an idea sentence. Together, the sentences explain how local governments are structured.

Planning for Writing

The facts in an informative essay should be focused on the main topic of the essay, but writing an essay doesn't begin by writing paragraphs. Writing begins with planning. Before writing an informational paragraph or essay, it is important to plan the ideas and details that should be included so that the essay makes sense. Some methods of planning include brainstorming, note-taking, and outlining.

8th Grade Language Arts: Writing/Grammar TE

DIRECTIONS

This practice test will test Writing/Grammar skills. Vocabulary/Reading skills are in a companion volume.

Some Writing/Grammar items will be related to short paragraphs or passages, and others will be stand-alone items.

Stand-alone items may reference a stimulus for you to study before you respond to the question.

The following two boxes contain samples of Writing/Grammar items.

SAMPLE A

Read the following sentences.

- (1) When Saturday arrived, it was pouring rain.
- (2) Natalie and Jordan planned to go to the amusement park on Saturday.
- (3) They decided to stay home and play video games instead.
- (4) None of their favorite rides would be running in the rain.

Which of the following is the correct order for organizing these sentences into a paragraph?

- A 1, 3, 4, 2
- B 2, 1, 4, 3
- C 3, 2, 1, 4
- D 4, 3, 1, 2

(A) (B) (C) (D)

SAMPLE B

Which sentence below is compound?

- F Julie and Jacqui studied together before the final exam on Friday.
- G Jada's aunt came to visit over the weekend but left on Monday.
- H Dan's favorite activities are fishing, hiking, and hunting.
- J Natalie helped Bruce with his chores, and then they ate pizza.

(F) (G) (H) (J)

GO ON 

3. Which of the following sentences correctly punctuates a parenthetical expression?

- A In fact when John Grisham was twelve, his family moved from Arkansas to Southaven, Mississippi.
- B John graduated from Mississippi State University in accounting, but his law degree, on the other hand, came from the University of Mississippi.
- C *The Firm*, his second novel earned him \$600,000 from Paramount Pictures for movie rights.
- D There are currently over 60 million John Grisham books in print worldwide, and of course six of his novels have been made into movies.

(A) (B) (C) (D)

5. Stuart is to write a report on the effects of last year's flooding and temporary closing of the local mall. Which of the following would not be helpful for his report?

- A Interview the mall owner.
- B Look up newspaper articles about the flood.
- C Go to the stores at the mall and talk to the managers.
- D Read material about the causes of flooding and how to prevent it.

(A) (B) (C) (D)

4. Barbara is working on research about the influence of a poet's life on his poems. Which two types of materials will she use when doing her research?

- F a history of the poet's era and a list of his poems
- G information on poets of his time and their influence on him
- H the poet's autobiography and a collection of his poems
- J information on the poet's contributions to literature and a list of his poems

(F) (G) (H) (J)

6. Which of the following correctly uses parallel structure?

- F Jumping high, running quickly, and having good vision are all necessary for success when playing basketball.
- G When playing basketball, it is necessary to jump high with quick running and good vision.
- H Jump high, run quickly, and having good vision are all necessary for success when playing basketball.
- J When playing basketball, it is necessary for success to jump high, running quickly, and to have good vision.

(F) (G) (H) (J)

GO ON 

22. Shamika has written the following compound-complex sentence.

Canadian geese are beautiful and graceful birds however when they live in neighborhoods, they can steadily destroy a lawn.

Which of the following sentence correctly punctuates the conjunctive adverb in the sentence?

- F Canadian geese are beautiful and graceful birds, however, when they live in neighborhoods, they can steadily destroy a lawn.
- G Canadian geese are beautiful and graceful birds, however when they live in neighborhoods, they can steadily destroy a lawn.
- H Canadian geese are beautiful and graceful birds; however, when they live in neighborhoods, they can steadily destroy a lawn.
- J Canadian geese are beautiful and graceful birds; however when they live in neighborhoods, they can steadily destroy a lawn.

(F) (G) (H) (J)

23. Read the following sentence.

My red comb, the one without the handle, pulls my hair too much.

Which of the following choices uses the same type of sentence structure?

- A The pink princess brush, appealing to the eye, really breaks my hair at the ends.
- B Target®, to get a good deal, is where I go to buy my hair accessories.
- C Target®, the store with the bull's eye logo, sells great hair accessories.
- D The pink princess brush, featuring the tiara handle, gets all the tangles out of my hair.

(A) (B) (C) (D)

24. Which of the following sentences does not use the emphatic form of the verb?

- F I did wash the strawberries before I sliced them.
- G Brice always did his homework when he got home.
- H Before the boys put the boat in the water, they did check the plug.
- J Since Sheila was in a hurry, she did leave her book in the car.

(F) (G) (H) (J)

GO ON 

Writing/Grammar Practice Test 1

Evaluation Chart

On the chart below, circle each question that you answered incorrectly on Practice Test 1. Review the sections for each question that you missed.

If you missed question #:	Go to section(s):	If you missed question #:	Go to section(s):
1	17.3	21	18.4
2	18.4	22	10.5
3	9.2	23	9.4
4	14.1	24	2.3
5	14.1	25	17.2
6	12.5	26	17.3
7	15.4	27	18.1
8	15.5	28	12.3, 12.4
9	16.1	29	19
10	2.1, 2.2	30	17.3
11	10.5, 16.1	31	17.1
12	18.2	32	18.4
13	18.2	33	9.4
14	6.1, 6.4	34	6.1, 6.5
15	14.3	35	13.4
16	12.2, 12.4	36	6.1, 6.3
17	16.3	37	8.2, 8.6
18	17.3	38	17.3
19	15.2	39	15.5
20	15.1	40	15.3