

1

To the Student: What's Important?

Ancient Cuneiform Writing



e-nu-ma e-lish la na-bu-ú shá-ma-mu
enüma elish lä nabû shamämü

Translation: When above heaven was not (yet) named

ca. 2800–2500 BCE (before the Christian era)

Source: http://saturn.sun.nl/~jbeise/akkadian/Welcome_effects.html

Medical Advice

The Japanese eat very little fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.

On the other hand, the French eat a lot of fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.

The Japanese drink very little red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.

The Italians drink excessive amounts of red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.

Conclusion: Eat and drink what you like. **It's English that kills you.**

Source: yahoogroups.com, March 2002

Think about the Topic

- What do the contents of the two boxes have in common?
- Why do people need written communication?
- Can writers exist without readers?
- Are written and oral communication equally important?
- Make a guess about the meaning of this book's title, *The Reading-Writing Workshop: Strategies for the College Classroom*.

Introduction

The Reading-Writing Workshop: Strategies for the College Classroom is for ESL students who plan to enroll in U.S. college or university classes. Even when second language students have graduated from a first or native language university, they will need to adjust their reading and writing skills to fit U.S. college or university expectations. The focus of *The Reading-Writing Workshop* helps you prepare for academic reading and writing. You will work on understanding a writer's meaning and responding in your own writing. To help you understand the writer's meaning, you will also work on two common strategies for learning unfamiliar words. The wide variety of reading selections is an important feature of this book. The strategies that successful students use in their reading and writing assignments are another important feature. These three areas of focus—reading, writing, and vocabulary—will prepare you for the more advanced coursework you will do to get ready for other college or university classes.

Becoming Acquainted with This Textbook

Chapter 1 introduces you to ideas about reading, vocabulary, and writing and is different from the other chapters because it asks you to think about your own thinking and learning processes. Becoming more aware of your own learning processes will help you become a better learner.

Chapter 1 also describes the activities in the book. It looks a little different from the other chapters because it explains how to use the book. The **About** sections explain how to do the activities and exercises. The first time you come to an activity or exercise, you will find a gray **About** box above it. Pay careful attention to this information because you will do similar exercises and activities in each chapter.

An Overview of a Chapter

Each chapter opens with a picture, a quote, and some questions for discussion related to the topic of the chapter. Each chapter, except Chapter 1, includes two related readings.

Each reading selection in a chapter includes:

- a writing journal question
- pre-reading activities
- comprehension and vocabulary activities arranged in steps
- additional journal writing

Each chapter ends with a **Writing Workshop**, which includes writing instruction, practice activities, and a writing assignment.

Reading 1: Confessions of an ESL Teacher

In Your Writing Journal

About In Your Writing Journal

You will always do the ***In Your Writing Journal*** activity before you read each selection in a chapter. You will need a writing journal. This can be a spiral notebook or a section of a loose-leaf notebook.

Read the question and be sure you understand it. Write the question at the top of a new page in your writing journal. Write your response below it. Write as much as you can based on your own knowledge and experience. Focus on your thoughts and ideas, and do not worry about grammar or spelling errors for now. There are no right or wrong answers, so write freely.

You will add to your response after your pre-reading discussion and after completing the reading selection. You will not find specific answers to the question in the reading selection, but you will have new ideas to add to your journal response. You will also gain new ideas from your classmates.

Keep your writing journal in a safe place. Everything you write in it will be useful for your writing assignment in the ***Writing Workshop*** at the end of each chapter. You will find many ideas for your writing assignment in your writing journal. Many professional writers collect ideas this way.

Write this question at the top of a new page in your writing journal. Then write an answer based on your own knowledge and experience. Write as much as you can. Save your writing journal so you can add to it later.

How do you learn new words in a new language? Think about what works best for you.

Before You Read...

About "Before You Read..."

These activities will help you focus on the topic of the reading selection.

Discuss with Your Classmates is a way to explore and share what you already know about the topic. You can learn more ideas from your classmates. Discuss the topic with two or three classmates, and then read and discuss ***Consider This Background Information***. It provides additional useful information about the topic. Next, add any new ideas and thoughts you gained from your discussion to your writing journal.

Discuss with Your Classmates

- Are you or any of your friends collectors? What kinds of things do you or your friends collect?
- Why do people collect things?
- Describe some unusual collections. Do you know anyone who collects words?
- What do you do when you come to an unfamiliar word in a text that is written in your first language? In a text that is written in your second language?
- What makes you remember a word?
- What does it mean to really know a word?

Consider This Background Information

- Unabridged dictionaries include all of the words for a language. Abridged dictionaries include only the most common words in a language.
- A lexicographer is a person who writes dictionaries.
- A logophile is a person who loves words.
- *The Complete Oxford Dictionary of the English Language* includes 20 volumes and costs more than \$1,000.
- One hundred words make up about half of all written English.

- Second language learners worry about their lack of vocabulary more than any other aspect of their new language.¹
- Good second language readers and writers have large vocabularies in their second language.²
- Educators have learned that the number of times a student encounters a new word is the most important factor in learning the word.³

Visit Your Writing Journal

What new ideas from your discussion can you add to your writing journal?

Step 1: Read for the Main Idea

About Step 1: Read for the Main Idea

Knowing the main idea of a reading selection is an important step to understanding it. Reading without stopping is a good strategy for discovering the main idea. Do not try to understand everything. Do not stop to find meanings for unfamiliar words, but underline them so you can work on them later.

These questions may help you think about the main idea:

- What is the topic of the reading selection?
- What is the most important idea the writer states about the topic?
- How can I state this idea in one sentence?
- What are a few supporting ideas that make the writer's main idea believable?

When you finish your quick reading, complete the short outline about the topic, the main idea, and a few supporting ideas that you remember from the reading. Your second reading of the selection will be a more careful reading.

Do not worry about the marginalia in Step 1.

¹Keith S. Folse, *Vocabulary Myths: Applying Second Language Research to Classroom Teaching* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 19–34, 130–31.

²*Ibid.*, 25.

³Folse, Vocabulary Question (E-mail to Evelyn Hall, August 29, 2005).

First, read the selection quickly. Read it from beginning to end, and try to understand the writer's main idea and a few supporting ideas. Notice that some words for vocabulary study are underlined. Underline any other words that are unfamiliar to you. Don't stop reading to look them up. Note: Do not underline the *italicized* words you see under the title of this reading selection. Complete the outline at the end of the selection.

Confessions of an ESL Teacher

*Disambiguate. Cacophony. Ubiquitous. Puerile.
Mendacious. Ambit. Esoteric. Beholden. Brio.
Spoonerisms. Egregious. Long Johns. Perchance.
Pugnacious. Ratchet. Pejorative. Unrequited.
Quixotic. Omnipotent. Omnipresent. Omniscient.
Lugubrious. Probity. Excoriate. Quintessential.
Caveat. Pontificate. Whence.*

marginalia

I confess. I am a logophile. That means I am a word lover. The words above are from my word collection. I am a compulsive word collector. With all my hundreds of words, I must be a terrific ESL teacher.

Of course, word collecting is a good hobby for an ESL teacher, but there are other advantages.

First, word collecting is a very cheap hobby. Words are everywhere, and the collecting process requires only paper, pencil, and a dictionary. My words reside in special little notebooks. Sometimes a word finds a home on a yellow sticky note, on the blank inside pages of books, or in the margins of the text. Housing my collection requires none of the fancy or expensive equipment other collections require.

Second, I get to decide what is collectible. I get to make decisions about which words are worth saving. I am attracted to some words because they are fun to say. Other words, such as *disambiguate*, have the perfect meaning for a thought or feeling that I was sure could not ever be described. *Disambiguate* is a verb, but it's not in the dictionary. It means to make something clear. It was formed from the adjective

marginalia

ambiguous, which describes something that is unclear or confusing. *Disambiguate* was coined (made up) by the Pentagon, the military department of the U.S. government. I bet a lot of ESL students want their teacher to disambiguate English grammar. Another one of my favorite words is *caveat*. It is on my list because I simply cannot remember its meaning. I have finally given in, and I have dog-eared that page of one of my dictionaries. These are only a few of the reasons for my word choices.

Finally, the most important advantage is a professional one. Shouldn't a logophile make a good ESL teacher? Word collecting is the perfect hobby for an ESL teacher. But here is my most embarrassing confession: *I really do not know how to teach vocabulary*. Maybe I can help students find ways to study new words, but really teach? I am guilty of having students match words and meanings, write definitions, identify related words, write sentences, fill in blanks, take words apart and put them back together, play word games, discuss meanings and uses, and countless other activities. Now, this list of activities makes me laugh. Even funnier is my final confession: I have forgotten the meanings of *many of the words* on the opening list just like many A+ students who have forgotten word meanings after a vocabulary test. How can this be possible?

I can only conclude that there must be many secrets to second language vocabulary learning. In this chapter, you will begin working on unfamiliar words, and most important, the activities that depend on words—reading and writing. Maybe, you can solve the mystery of learning second language vocabulary.

Based on your first reading, complete this outline:

The topic: _____

Write a word or phrase.

The main idea: _____

Write a sentence. Choose from a, b, or c.

Choose the sentence that best states the main idea, and write it down. Remember to think about the entire reading selection.

- a. This ESL teacher confesses that she has tried many different activities to help students learn new vocabulary, but she still isn't sure how to teach vocabulary.
- b. Good ESL teachers usually have hobbies that involve words.
- c. Word collecting is a convenient hobby, but it may not help ESL teachers teach vocabulary.

Some supporting ideas: need only paper, pencil, and a dictionary _____

Write a different phrase or sentence on each line.

Word collecting didn't help this teacher. _____

Do the supporting ideas help prove the main idea?

Step 2: Read for New Words

About Step 2: Read for New Words

Before you reread a selection for a more thorough understanding in Step 3, you need to understand unfamiliar words. You will study words from the reading selection that are on the **Academic Word List (AWL)**. The words on this list are important because they are in many academic textbooks. You will also work on the unfamiliar words that you underlined during your first reading of the selection.

Selecting Words for Study

Did you underline *logophile* as an unfamiliar word to learn? This word is an example of a **passive** vocabulary word. Passive vocabulary includes words that you recognize and understand while reading and listening, but you do not usually use them while writing and speaking. These are also words that you will see but that you may not need to study because you don't use them frequently. **Active** vocabulary includes all the words that you are able to use and use correctly. For example, *logophile* is a word for which you do not need to learn the exact meaning because you probably will not use this word in your speaking and writing after you complete this reading selection, although you might call someone a "word lover." It's good enough in this case to recognize the word when you see it in context. Because your goal is to increase your active vocabulary, you should make frequently used words and the AWL words part of your active vocabulary. If you are unsure about including a word in your vocabulary journal, your instructor can help you decide.

Practicing Vocabulary-Building Strategies

To learn and practice vocabulary-building strategies, take the time to study Appendix A and do the exercises provided. After each reading in the text, you will be prompted to return to this appendix to refresh your memory of these strategies and to sharpen your skills. These vocabulary-building strategies will make it possible for you to successfully complete your vocabulary journal. These strategies will also help you acquire many new words that will be valuable to you when you complete reading and writing tasks in other college courses.

Starting Your Vocabulary Journal

The best way to learn new words is to interact with them. Simply reading a new word or even looking up its definition in the dictionary will not add the word to your active vocabulary. To make the new words your own, follow these steps to complete your vocabulary journal:

First, write each underlined word (the AWL words and the words that you have underlined) in your vocabulary journal. Copy the sentence in which you found the word. Copying the sentence is important because the sentence provides clues to the word's meaning. It will also give you an example of the correct usage of the word. It is important to work with an unfamiliar word in a sentence.

Second, decide what part of speech the word should be, based on its place in the sentence, and note this in your vocabulary journal.

Third, guess the meaning of each word as it is used in the sentence. Consider the meaning of the whole sentence and the main idea of the entire reading.

Fourth, confirm your guess by looking the word up in your translation and ESL dictionaries. Discuss the word's meaning with your classmates and instructor. Add to your vocabulary journal any notes that will help you remember the meaning of the word and prepare you to use it correctly in your own speech and writing.

Fifth, write your own sentence using the word. Now you have made the new word *your* new word, a part of your active vocabulary.

Sixth, gloss the reading selection, which means returning to the reading and adding notes in the wide margin next to the text. These notes are called glosses. They are similar to the glossaries at the end of textbooks because they provide word meanings. While glossing the reading selection, you are studying new vocabulary. Also, after glossing, you will have vocabulary information available the next time you read the selection, so it will be easier to comprehend the reading.

AWL Words to Know

These AWL words in order of appearance are underlined in the reading selection. Add them to your vocabulary journal.

process	reside	ambiguous	professional	identify
require	equipment	military	definition	conclude

Next, add any unfamiliar words that you underlined in Reading 1.

Follow these steps to complete your vocabulary journal:

1. Write the word and the sentence in the reading containing the word.
2. Note what part of speech the word should be based on its place in the sentence.
3. Guess the meaning of the word based on the sentence's meaning and the main idea of the reading selection.
4. Discuss your guess with your instructor and classmates, and confirm your guess by looking the word up in the dictionary. Add any notes that will help you remember the meaning of the word.
5. Use the word in your own original sentence.
6. Gloss the reading selection before reading it a second time.

Step 3: Read for Answers

About Step 3: Read for Answers

By now you have an idea of the writer's main idea, and you have studied vocabulary words that you need for a more complete understanding. In this step, you will reread the selection carefully and add **marginalia** or special notes in the wide margin on the right side of the reading selection. Adding notes is a special way for the reader to become involved with the writer. (You will learn about marginalia in Reading 2 of this chapter.) Answers to these questions can be found in the reading selection; you may need to return to it to find the answers.

Reread Reading 1. Then return to the reading to find the information that you need to complete this exercise. Prepare to discuss your answers.

1. What is a *logophile*?

2. List three advantages of word collecting as a hobby. Write an example for each.

<u>Advantage</u>	<u>Example</u>
a. <i>It's a cheap hobby.</i>	<i>You only need paper, a pencil, and a dictionary.</i>
b.	
c.	

3. The writer says the most important advantage of word collecting is a professional one. However, this advantage turns out to be a disadvantage. Why?

4. The writer makes a confession about teaching vocabulary. What is it?

Step 4: Read between the Lines

About Step 4: Read between the Lines

You will not find answers to these questions in the reading selection, but it is still possible to answer them. Meaning that is not stated directly is called **implied meaning**. Based on the information the writer gives, you can understand implied meaning. When you do this, you are **making inferences**. This is an important reading skill. After your careful reading, your understanding should be greater, and you will be able to make inferences about the writer's feelings and attitudes.

Do you think the writer of Reading 1 would agree or disagree with these statements? Return to the reading to discover the writer's opinion, and then circle A for agree or D for disagree. Prepare to give reasons for your answers. Remember to think about the writer's opinion, not your own opinion.

Example

Sometimes it's acceptable for people to use words that aren't in the dictionary.

(A)

D

The answer is A for agree.

In the sentences that follow, the writer gives an example of a word that is not in the dictionary. The writer explains that *disambiguate* was made up and used by the U.S. government.

Disambiguate is a verb, but it's not in the dictionary. It means to make something clear. It was formed from the adjective, *ambiguous*, which describes something that is unclear or confusing. *Disambiguate* was coined (made up) by the Pentagon, the military department of the U.S. government.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Word collectors make good ESL teachers. | A | D |
| 2. There are many ways to practice L2 vocabulary words. | A | D |
| 3. ESL students often learn new vocabulary without classroom instruction. | A | D |
| 4. A good ESL teacher knows the best way to teach vocabulary. | A | D |
| 5. It's hard for a teacher to know which activities will help students. | A | D |

Step 5: Respond to the Reading

About Step 5: Respond to the Reading

Now it is time for you to join the discussion. Think about the information the writer has presented and your understanding of his or her attitude or opinion about the topic. Before answering these questions, think about your ideas and opinions about the topic. Express your own thoughts and opinions about the topic when you answer the questions in this step.

Reflect on your own knowledge and experience, and answer the questions. Remember to think about your own opinions. Be ready to discuss your answers.

1. The writer does not solve the problem of how to teach vocabulary. List some suggestions for teaching new vocabulary.

2. Would you expect to have a successful learning experience in this teacher's class? Why or why not?

Return to Your Writing Journal

Return to your writing journal, and review your response to the opening question for Reading 1. What new ideas and opinions do you have now? Have your teachers asked you to do some of the activities mentioned in the reading selection? Did these activities help you? Have you ever earned an A on a vocabulary test and then forgotten the meanings of the words on the test? Why do you think this happens? What do you think teachers can do to help students learn vocabulary? Add your new thoughts to your response. Write as much as you can.

Reading 2: Reading Well

In Your Writing Journal

Write this question at the top of a new page in your writing journal. Then write an answer based on your own knowledge and experience. Write as much as you can. Save your writing journal so you can add to it later.

How did you learn to read and write in your first language?

Before You Read...

Discuss with Your Classmates

- Why is it important for children to learn to read?
- Why do you think young children pretend to read and write?
- How is academic reading different from pleasure reading?
- Make a guess about the meaning of this quote from W. S. Landor, a British author: “What is reading but silent conversation.”
- Think of all the different things other than books, newspapers, and magazines that you read in a day. Which are necessary? Which are for pleasure?
- How would your life be different if you could not read even a single word?

Consider This Background Information

- Most children learn to read when they are six or seven years old.
- Children as young as three can distinguish writing in their native language from writing of other languages.
- Adults who are better-than-average readers are also more likely to have higher-paying jobs.
- UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) reports that there are an estimated 862 million illiterate adults in the world, about two-thirds of whom are women.
- The most literate (percentage of the population that is able to read and write) country in the world is not the United States. According to the *CIA World Factbook* for 2005, Vatican City, Norway, Australia, Liechtenstein, Luxemburg, Denmark, Finland, and Georgia all have a literacy rate of 100 percent.

- Arthur Krystal, a *New York Times* writer, reported that if you were to read 135 books a day every day, for a year, you wouldn't finish all of the books published in one year in the United States.

Visit Your Writing Journal

What new ideas from your discussion can you add to your writing journal?

Step 1: Read for the Main Idea

First, read the selection quickly. Read it from beginning to end, and try to understand the writer's main idea and a few supporting ideas. Notice that some AWL words for vocabulary study are underlined. Underline any other words that are unfamiliar to you. Don't stop reading to look them up. Complete the outline at the end of the selection.

Reading Well

marginalia

To read well, readers must be active—never passive. Reading may seem like a passive activity, but it requires serious attention in order to understand a writer's message. The same kind of interaction that connects speaker and listener must occur between writer and reader, but with one big difference—the writer has only one chance to offer his or her ideas and thoughts. However, the reader has many chances to understand them. The reader can return to a reading selection again and again. *Active reading requires revision* or changes in the same way that writing requires revision. Like the first copy or draft of a composition, the first reading is only a starting place.

As an academic reader, you must find ways to understand the writer's message. After your first quick non-stop reading, it's time to dig deeper into the reading selection.

This is where the action starts. Throw away your favorite yellow highlighter. (I know this sounds a little crazy.) It is a passive learning tool. It's too easy to read and mark and mark and mark and mark. Before long, you've got a page that's

marginalia

mostly yellow, right? To read with real understanding, you must become involved with the writer. Successful academic readers read with a pencil in hand. They are ready to respond and question the writer. They write notes in the margins of their reading selections. Such notes are called *margin annotations* or *marginalia*. These are brief comments, questions, reactions, drawings, stars, or anything that is helpful. Schoolteachers know this habit as “book abuse” because it shouldn’t be done in books you don’t own. Librarians think of themselves as the “book police” and fine people who write margin notes for their “crimes.” Good students (who have their own books) know this as a valuable learning strategy.

Marginalia are personalized tools, so you do not have to write in a way that others can read and understand. You are creating a personal learning tool.

The margins are a good place for:

- questioning the writer’s views and sources
- agreeing or disagreeing with the writer
- marking key concepts to remember
- marking key concepts to clarify
- marking ideas to use in writing or discussion
- making connections to other information you have or other things you’ve read

Look at the examples of marginalia in Appendix B. What kinds of things are marked in these student examples?

Steps 3–5 of the reading selections require careful reading and rereading. Add marginalia as you do your careful reading. Continue to go through the reading selection, trying to understand more each time you read it. Your annotated text will be useful for class discussions, so mark any parts that you need to ask about during class discussions.

This is the way successful academic readers read after they have discovered the main idea. Remember: The more involved you are with the writer and the writing, the more you will understand and remember. Then you will have more to say in your writing.

Based on your first reading, complete this outline:

The topic: _____
Write a word or phrase.

The main idea: _____
Write a sentence. Choose from a, b, or c.

Choose the sentence that best states the main idea, and write it down. Remember to think about the entire reading selection.

- a. Good readers write notes in their textbooks.
- b. Good readers should use the same kinds of marginalia so it is easy for others to understand.
- c. Good readers become involved with the writer and the reading selection.

Some supporting ideas: read again to revise understanding
Write a different phrase or sentence on each line.
add my own marginalia

Do the supporting ideas help prove the main idea?

Step 2: Read for New Words

Return to Appendix A to review vocabulary-building strategies.

AWL Words to Know

These AWL words are underlined in order of appearance in the reading selection. Add them to your vocabulary journal.

passive	occur	draft	respond	sources
interaction	revision	involved	strategy	concepts

Next, add any unfamiliar words that you underlined in Reading 2.

Follow these steps to complete your vocabulary journal:

1. Write the word and the sentence in the reading containing the word.
2. Note what part of speech the word should be based on its place in the sentence.
3. Guess the meaning of the word based on the sentence's meaning and the main idea of the reading selection.
4. Discuss your guess with your instructor and classmates, and confirm your guess by looking up the word in the dictionary. Add any notes that will help you remember the meaning of the word.
5. Use the word in your own original sentence.
6. Gloss the reading selection before reading it a second time.

Step 3: Read for Answers

Reread Reading 2, and add marginalia in the wide right-hand margin. Then return to the reading to find the information that you need to complete this exercise. Prepare to discuss your answers.

1. What are some characteristics of a good reader?
2. What strategy is suggested for becoming engaged in a reading assignment?
3. What are margin annotations or *marginalia*?
4. List three different kinds of marginalia.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
5. Why does the writer recommend not using a highlighter?
6. What does this statement mean: "Reading requires revision"?

Step 4: Read between the Lines

Do you think the writer of Reading 2 would agree or disagree with these statements? Return to the reading to discover the writer's opinion, and then circle A for agree or D for disagree. Prepare to give reasons for your answers. Remember to think about the writer's opinion, not your own opinion.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Receiving information is less work than giving information. | A | D |
| 2. If you own your textbooks, it's a good idea to write in them. | A | D |
| 3. Instructors should tell students how to mark in their books. | A | D |
| 4. College students should keep their books clean so they can resell them for more money. | A | D |

Step 5: Respond to the Reading

Reflect on your own knowledge and experience, and answer the questions. Remember to think about your own opinions. Be ready to discuss your answers.

1. In the early stages of writing this book, "Reading Well" was entitled "How to Adopt a Book." What is your opinion of the second title? If you were naming Reading 2, which title would you select? Why? Can you think of any other titles that might be appropriate?
2. How could marginalia be used in nonacademic reading material? Give some examples.
3. Many people disagree with the author's statement, "Throw away your favorite yellow highlighter." The authors seem to be afraid that students will *get carried away* with highlighting. What is your opinion?
4. Apply the writer's suggestions by adding glosses and marginalia to this paragraph.

marginalia

Good students have always known the value of marginalia. In fact, Erasmus, a Dutch writer and teacher who lived from 1466 to 1536, told his students to write in their books; otherwise, they would never learn. Medieval students trying to read Latin texts added notes as they read.

marginalia

In the early 1900s, British school children learned how to write “good margin annotations.” Pierre de Fermat, a great seventeenth century mathematician, wrote in a margin: “I have discovered a truly remarkable proof (solution to a math problem) but this margin is too small to contain it.” To this day, no one has found his proof or determined whether this was only a scholarly joke. Today, successful academic readers continue to depend on marginalia to increase their reading comprehension.

Return to Your Writing Journal

Return to your writing journal, and review your response to the opening question for Reading 2. What new ideas and opinions do you have now? Has reading this selection helped you remember some other ideas about your early experiences with reading and writing? Do you have some new ideas about reading? Add your new thoughts to your response. Write as much as you can.

Reading 3: Writing in Circles

In Your Writing Journal

Write this question at the top of a new page in your writing journal. Then write an answer based on your own knowledge and experience. Write as much as you can. Save your writing journal so you can add to it later.

How do you go about writing a composition in English?

Before You Read...

Discuss with Classmates

- What kinds of writing have you done in your first language? In English?
- What steps do you follow when you write?
- What are the characteristics of a good writer?
- Are there any special things you do to get started on a writing assignment?
- Do you wait until the last minute to do a writing assignment?
- Speculate about the meaning of the title of the reading selection, “Writing in Circles.”

Consider This Background Information

Here is what some published writers have said about their writing:

- “Once you can express yourself, you can tell the world what you want from it. . . . All changes in the world, for good or for evil, were brought about by words.”
Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis
- “Writing is hard work. A clear sentence is no accident. Very few sentences come out right the first time. Remember this in moments of despair. If you find that writing is hard, it’s because it *is* hard.” William Zinsser
- “You write in order to read what you’ve written and see if it’s O.K. and, since of course it never is, to rewrite it—once, twice, as many times as it takes to get it to be something you can bear to reread.” Susan Sontag
- “Then comes the warm part: when you already have something to work with, upgrade, edit.” Susan Sontag
- “My method is one of continuous revision. While writing a long novel, every day I loop back to earlier sections to rewrite. . . .” Joyce Carol Oates
- “I know you believe you understand what you think I said [wrote] but I am not sure you realize that what you heard [read] is not what I meant.” Anonymous

Visit Your Writing Journal

What new ideas from your discussion can you add to your writing journal?

Step 1: Read for the Main Ideas

First, read the selection quickly. Read it from beginning to end, and try to understand the writer's main idea and a few supporting ideas. Notice that some AWL words for vocabulary study are underlined. Underline any other words that are unfamiliar to you. Don't stop reading to look them up. Complete the outline at the end of the selection.

Writing in Circles

marginalia

As a college student, you will have to show your understanding of various subjects by writing. The writing work in this book will help prepare you for this task.

Many first and second language writing teachers teach writing as a process that can be divided into separate steps: pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing. Each step has a purpose.

<i>Step</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
pre-writing	to choose a topic, gather and sort ideas, and decide the treatment of the topic
<u>drafting</u>	to write your ideas
<u>revising</u>	to <u>evaluate</u> your written ideas and improve them
<u>editing</u>	to correct mechanical <u>errors</u> (usage, grammar, spelling, etc.)

Some writers move from one step to the next. They complete each step before moving to the next step. This is referred to as a *linear writing process*. Many writers like the feeling of organization that comes from working through the steps.

Other writers switch back and forth between the steps. This is referred to as a *recursive writing process*. This style of writing is more like the way many people think. There are always thoughts entering our minds.

In recursive writing, the same steps of writing are used, but they are *not always used in linear order*. The writing process is considered nonlinear. In other words, you don't have to

complete one step before moving on to the next, and you can return to any step at any time. You might do some revising or editing while you are still drafting. You might add an idea that was not in your prewriting. You might even return to a reading selection or your writing journal. It's even OK to change your topic sentence.

Many writers are more comfortable with recursive writing. Lots of writers use a recursive writing method without even knowing it. Recursive writers know that revising is the key to saying what they mean. Remember Susan Sontag's quote? "Then comes the warm part: when you already have something to work with, upgrade, edit." As a novice second language writer, practice the recursive method of writing. Go back and forth between writing steps; do all of those *re-* activities—*reread, revise, rewrite, return to a classmate for discussion, and resubmit* your drafts to your teacher. The writing tasks in this text will help you discover the rewards of the recursive writing process. Remember, a better process yields a better product.

Based on your first reading of the selection, complete this outline:

The topic:

Write a word or phrase.

The main idea:

Linear and recursive writing are

Complete the sentence.

Some supporting ideas:

same activities for both

Write a different phrase or sentence on each line.

Do the supporting ideas help prove the main idea?

Step 2: Read for New Words

Return to Appendix A to review vocabulary-building strategies.

AWL Words to Know

These AWL words in order of appearance are underlined in the reading selection. Add them to your vocabulary journal.

task	evaluate	style
drafting	editing	quote
revising	errors	drafts

Next, add any unfamiliar words that you have underlined in Reading 3.

Follow these steps to complete your vocabulary journal:

1. Write the word and the sentence in the reading containing the word.
2. Note what part of speech the word should be based on its place in the sentence.
3. Guess the meaning of the word based on the sentence's meaning and the main idea of the reading selection.
4. Discuss your guess with your instructor and classmates, and confirm your guess by looking up the word in the dictionary. Add any notes that will help you remember the meaning of the word.
5. Use the word in your own original sentence.
6. Gloss the reading selection before reading it a second time.

Step 3: Read for Answers

Reread Reading 3, and add marginalia in the wide right-hand margin. Then return to the reading to find the information that you need to complete this exercise. Prepare to discuss your answers.

1. What are the steps of writing processes?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
2. How are writing as a linear process and writing as a recursive process different?
3. What is the difference between revising and editing?

Step 4: Read between the Lines

*Some statements and questions that writing instructors might say follow. If you think the instructor is teaching writing as a **linear** process, write **L**. If you think the instructor is teaching writing as a **recursive** process, write **R**. Prepare to give reasons for your answers.*

- _____ 1. “Your writing shows that you have included all of the details that were listed in your pre-writing activities.”
- _____ 2. “I see that you have included some interesting ideas that you hadn’t thought of when you did your pre-writing.”
- _____ 3. “Your paragraph would be a lot better if you knew exactly what you wanted to say before you started writing.”
- _____ 4. “Now that you have finished revising, please start editing your paragraph.”
- _____ 5. “All the rereading you did really helped you choose some great details.”
- _____ 6. “I’m having a hard time following all of your lines and arrows, but I think you really know what you want to say to the reader.”

Step 5: Respond to the Reading

Reflect on your own knowledge and experience, and answer the questions. Remember to think about your own opinions. Be ready to discuss your answers.

1. How long does it take to write a good paragraph? Explain your answer.
2. Doing a writing assignment the night before it is due can cause problems—especially for recursive writers. What kinds of problems?
3. After reading the selection, what does the title “Writing in Circles” mean to you?

Return to Your Writing Journal

Return to your writing journal, and review your response to the opening question for Reading 3. What new ideas and opinions do you have now? Which writing method have you used in the past? Which writing method do you prefer after reading this selection? Add your new thoughts to your response. Write as much as you can.

About Writing Workshop

Each chapter ends with a **Writing Workshop**. You will learn and practice specific writing skills. You will review and sort through all of your journal writing and write a composition. During the writing sessions you will have time to interact with classmates and your instructor. You will need your journals and reading materials so you can refer to them often for ideas.

Writing Workshop: The Narrative Paragraph

A **narrative paragraph** describes an event, feeling, or experience of the writer. It is often written in story form with details about events.

Look at the excerpt from “Confessions of an ESL Teacher.” Who is speaking in this writing? How does the writer refer to herself? What is the topic?

I confess. I am a logophile. That means I am a word lover. The words above are from my word collection. I am a compulsive word collector. With all my hundreds of words, I must be a terrific ESL teacher.

Now look at the first few sentences of this piece of student writing. Who is speaking in this writing? What does he or she call himself or herself? What experience is the writer describing?

My family didn’t take me to school until I was ten years old. When I went to my class, all the students could already read. Some students laughed at me because I didn’t read or talk at school and I was old. I didn’t want to go back to school because I felt very bad.

In narrative paragraphs, writers usually refer to themselves as *I*. The journal questions in this chapter ask *you* about your language learning. This means you will write a narrative paragraph telling about a feeling of yours about language learning or an event or experience in your life related to language learning.

Getting Started

Getting started is often the hardest part of a writing assignment for many students. In this chapter, your goal is to learn about selecting your topic.

There are many different kinds of pre-writing activities to help you get started. Brainstorming, freewriting, and keeping a journal are a few of the pre-writing strategies writers use. They are all about collecting and selecting ideas. For your writing assignments in this book, you will use your writing journals as a starting point. Your writing journal responses are a collection of ideas from your own knowledge and experiences, your reading, and your discussions.

Finding Your Topic

Return to your writing journal, and reread your responses to the opening journal questions for Readings 1, 2, and 3. Choose one of the journal questions and your response to it as your starting point. Choose the question and response with which you will be most comfortable. Here are some questions that will help you choose:

- For which question did I write the most?
- Which question was the most interesting to me?
- Which question was the easiest for me to write about?
- Which question did I like and enjoy the most?

Think about the outlines you completed after each reading selection. Identify the topic and main idea of the paragraph you are going to write.

The topic:

Write a word or phrase.

The main idea:

Write a sentence.

Write your topic and main idea at the top of a piece of paper. Reread your journal response for the question you chose. Consider which ideas to use and which to eliminate. You can circle or highlight the ideas that you want to include. After your main idea sentence, list several ideas you want to include in your paragraph. These ideas are the support for your main idea.

Ideas to include:

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

Work with a classmate, and describe what you want to say in your writing. Together, look at the ideas you have selected from your journal. Are there ideas that you should eliminate? Are there some ideas to add? Switch roles and help your partner.

Time to Write

When you are satisfied with your topic and the list of ideas, write a first draft without worrying about mechanics or correctness. Simply try to get your ideas on paper. Return to your journal and your list of ideas anytime you need to. Exchange paragraphs with a classmate. Read your classmate's paragraph and respond to it. Think about what the paragraph says rather than the mechanics. Does the paragraph give the meaning your classmate intended? Help each other by checking for meaning and making suggestions. Consider your classmate's response, and make any changes that you think will improve the reader's understanding. Make a final copy to turn in to your instructor.