

Guidelines for Writing Tutors
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Tutorial Training

- ✓ View the tutorial training video.
- ✓ View a student model in order to clarify the following criteria.
- ✓ Establish a common vocabulary/set of evaluative criteria.
 - **Thesis statement/central idea** (the opinion/position of the writer) The thesis statement establishes what the writer believes, the position/opinion, he/she hopes the reader will accept, or the action the reader will hopefully take.
 - **Organization/coherence/unity** (the arrangement of ideas at the essay and paragraph levels, the organizational strategies, the consistent connection to the thesis statement and topic sentences)
 - The manner in which the paragraphs are sequenced should reflect a strategy, sometimes in light of the thesis—ascending order, descending order, chronological order, spatial order, ordering old to new information.
 - The sentences within a given paragraph, starting with the topic sentence, should reflect levels of specificity, inter-connectedness, logical “patterning” relative to the topic sentence or to the sentence(s) above them.
 - **Support** (the variety of evidence, the different perspectives the writer provides in the form of examples, details, facts, statistics, arguments, anecdotes)
 - **Voice** (the relationship the writer establishes with the issue and the audience)
 - **Sentence Structure** (the degree to which, and ways in which the writer joins and modifies ideas within the boundaries of a sentence) A variety of structures may include the following:
 - **Coordination (FANBOYS)**
 - For** – effect/cause: I went to my instructor, for I was uncertain how to complete the assignment.
 - And** – addition: The children went to Toro Regional Park, and they enjoyed hiking on the trails.
 - Nor** – addition of negatives: Terry doesn’t eat meat, nor does he drink beverages with caffeine.
 - But** – contrast: Maria praised the movie, but her friend thought it was awful.
 - Or** – alternative: Carlos needs a vacation, or he’ll go crazy.
 - Yet** – contrast: Sarah makes little money, yet she often wears new clothes.
 - So** – Mike was depressed, so he made an appointment with a psychologist.

Note: When two independent clauses are connected with a coordinate conjunction, place the comma before the conjunction.

- **Subordination**

Time: after, before, when, while, as, whenever, until, since

Cause/Effect: because, since, as, now that

Condition: if, unless, provided that

Opposition: even though, although, though, while, whereas

Note: When a sentence begins with a subordinate (dependent) clause, place a comma after the clause. If the subordinate clause comes at the end of the sentence, a comma is usually unnecessary.

Note the following examples:

***Although** the house was new, the plumbing broke the first week they moved in.*

*The plumbing broke the first week they moved in **although** the house was brand new.*

- **Appositives** – a word or phrase that renames a noun before it
Aunt Susan, **a 70-year-old grandmother**, listens to rap music.
Mary wore a mismatched outfit—**polka dot pants, a striped shirt, and a plaid jacket**.

- **Verbals**

Present Participle (-ing) **Hurrying** across the grass, she heard a loud crash.

The driver in the corvette was driving erratically, **honking** his horn and **cutting** drivers off.

Past Participle (-ed) **Frightened** by the sound of her own heartbeat, she tried to calm herself.

Juan and Juanita left the restaurant **satisfied** with their selection.

Infinitive (to + verb) **To grow** good tomatoes, Manny must properly support the vines.

Norman crammed the night before the test **to get** at least a C.

- **Parallelism** – similar grammatical structures

Her job included **checking** the inventory, **initialing** the orders, and **calling** the suppliers.

Chocolate makes me **gain** weight and **lose** my appetite.

- **Sentence focus** – focusing the beginning of a sentence with the sentence's subject

(unfocused) There were two actions that could have been taken by the citizens.

(clear focus) **The citizens** could have taken two actions.

- **Diction** (accurate and appropriate word choice for college writing)

- **Standard conventions** (grammar/punctuation/spelling/MLA)

- ✓ Determine whether the student has essential components of the essay: a purposeful introduction that provides background information and contains a thesis statement; a body which consists of a series of paragraphs, each starting

with a topic sentence; and a conclusion which reiterates the thesis statement, summarizes key ideas, offers a solution.

Session/Systematic Procedures

1. Review the instructor's paper-copy assignment with the student to insure that the student followed the instructor's directions.
2. Encourage the student to formulate questions about what he/she wants responses to what he/she is not satisfied with.
3. Have the student read the essay aloud.
4. Begin discussion by commenting on whether the student has included essential components of a college essay—a purposeful introduction, including a thesis; a number of body paragraphs whose content and organization meet the needs of the assignment; and a conclusion. Using a top-down management approach, prioritize and address specific evaluative criteria mentioned above.
5. Have the student write suggestions for revision that were discussed during the session on his/her draft.
6. Mark the student's essay for fragments, comma splices/run-ons, and other ungrammatical structures by enclosing the error with parentheses or by highlighting it with a marker. Minimize the use of grammar terminology.
7. Provide proofreading tips that can address sources of error. (See handout.)
8. Place an "x" in the margin next to the sentence in which an error can be pinpointed.
9. Encourage Writing Workshop participation, particularly in light of errors.
10. Discuss opportunities for sentence revision (i.e., coordination, subordination, appositives, verbals, parallelism, sentence focus).
11. Recommend a second visit to the Tutorial Center to review the student's revisions, asking him/her to return with both the originally marked draft as well as the revised version.