



Writing & Revising

Advanced Placement Summer Institute

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I N T R O D U C T I O N S

Try beginning your paper with:

1. A straight-forward, matter-of-fact, statement of a subject. This can be rhetorically effective for critical papers, or as understatement for startling events.
2. An enigmatic opening.
3. A question, possibly rhetorical.
4. An anecdote or a startling fact, like those often used as openers for after dinner speeches or assembly talks.
5. A quotation.
6. The creation of a mood or feeling for a locale, a device common to the short story or novel.
7. A statistic.
8. The withholding of key information until late in the paragraph, hence, evoking suspense in the reader.
9. Effective repetition.
10. A figure of speech.
11. The use of sound (onomatopoeia) to attract the reader's attention.
12. A strong contrast.
13. The reversal of a cliché.
14. A historical comparison.
15. An opinion.
16. An immediate physical description of main character-- holding the name till later.
17. An autobiographical account.

from the editors of Time Magazine.

Some sample introductions (not all good, but...)

1. All our important ideas about the rights of individuals in a society grow directly from political writings of the Renaissance.
2. We don't agree on when the Renaissance began, on when it ended, on what brought it about, nor on what snuffed it out. People then didn't even know they were living in it. But it has more impact on our lives to day than any other period of history.
3. How could one person not just succeed but excel in every known area of human activity?
4. Fleas changed the world of the Renaissance more than all the people who lived in it combined.
5. "I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman," Queen Elizabeth I told a critic, "but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too."
6. The last leaves hung yellow on the small trees, and a late morning breeze that chilled lifted off the Thames. People waited in line at the Globe in small groups, men in wide hats and capes and dull white ice-cream cone collars and smelling powerfully of garlic and ale, the few women whispering in pumpkin-shaped skirts.
7. Between 1348 and 1350, the Black Death wiped out exactly half the population of Europe.
9. Love rang in the songs. Love filled the poetry and painting. Love gave theme and form to drama. Love returned to the churches.
10. Trying to distinguish the nature of the Renaissance is like trying to eat walnuts with your bare hands. You might find the tools to get at the meat, but you come away so scarred that you wonder if the work was worth it.
12. At no time in history had people been more free; at no time had they more resembled prisoners.
13. We look first to books to help us find the words and ideas to serve as a cover for the Renaissance. But you can't judge a cover by its book.
14. In the outburst of literature, music, art, philosophy, exploration, and political thought, the Renaissance and fifth century Athens stand nearly as identical twins..

Sentence Combining

The original line from *The Importance of Being Earnest*:

Lady Bracknell: Untruthful! My nephew Algernon? Impossible! He is an Oxonian.

The sentences to combine:

Lady Bracknell says that Algernon cannot be untruthful.

He is her nephew.

She says it is because he is an Oxonian.

Her statement is nonsense.

Absolute Phrases

a group of words that modifies an independent clause as a whole; it has no finite verb

Her statement nonsensical, Lady Bracknell declares that her nephew Algernon cannot be untruthful because he is an Oxonian.

Adjective Clause

any clause which modifies a noun or pronoun

Lady Bracknell says nonsensically that her nephew Algernon, *who is an Oxonian*, cannot be untruthful.

Adverb Clause

any clause which modifies a verb, an adjective, or an adverb

Lady Bracknell again talks nonsense *when she says that her nephew Algernon cannot be untruthful because he is an Oxonian*.

Appositives

a noun, noun phrase, or series of nouns used to rename or identify another noun, noun phrase, or pronoun

An Oxonian, Algernon is incapable of being untruthful, his aunt Lady Bracknell says nonsensically.

Participial Phrases

one built on a past or present participle; it always modifies the subject of the main clause, whether the writer intends it to or not

Lady Bracknell, *lapsing again into nonsense*, says that her nephew Algernon is incapable of being untruthful because he is an Oxonian.

Prepositional phrases

one beginning with a preposition, ending with the preposition's object, and working as an adjective or as an adverb

Lady Bracknell says, *in another example of nonsense*, that her nephew Algernon cannot be untruthful because he is an Oxonian.

Two Resources

Kilgallon, Don. *Sentence Composing for High School*. Boynton/Cook Heinemann, 1998. Print.

Strong, William. *Sentence Combining: A Composing Book*. McGraw-Hill, 1994. Print.

SENTENCE COMBINING #2

Blocking Characters in The Importance of Being Earnest

Combine the following elements into a coherent paragraph that explains the function of *blocking* characters in *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

- 1 The climax of many comedies is the marriage of young lovers.
- 2 A good plot requires this.
- 3 The marriage is delayed.
- 4 This delay or suspense is usually achieved by characters.
- 5 They are called blocking characters.
- 6 They consciously oppose the marriage.
- 7 Their folly somehow stands in the marriage's way.
- 8 Parents are most frequently blocking characters.
- 9 Parents represent practical, puritanical, and antiromantic forces in society.
- 10 The marriage is often blocked.
- 11 It is blocked by some folly or fault.
- 12 The fault or folly is in one or both of the lovers.
- 13 This happens in
- 14 This is the plays' primary plot.
- 15 Jack's plan to marry Gwendolen is initially blocked by the girl's mother.
- 16 The mother is Lady Bracknell.
- 17 Lady Bracknell is concerned with Jack's family background.
- 18 She is more concerned with this than with her daughter's desires.
- 19 Gwendolen herself also threatens to be a block.
- 20 Gwendolen is in love with Jack and willing to marry him.
- 21 She can only love someone named Earnest.
- 22 This is what she says.
- 23 Jack uses the name Earnest when he is with her in London.
- 24 The audience believes this.
- 25 The hero's name is Jack.
- 26 Gwendolen's infatuation with the name of Ernest seems likely to become an obstacle.
- 27 This happens at the end of Act 1.
- 28 The audience is led to expect this.
- 29 Jack will discover a respectable set of parents.
- 30 Jack will get a new name.
- 31 This will satisfy the aristocratic conditions of Lady Bracknell.
- 32 This will satisfy the romantic expectations of Gwendolen.

Revision Guide

Symbol Suggested revision

Style / Stance

<i>ds</i>	Avoid “dead” sentences, those with insufficient reason for being.
<i>echo</i>	Avoid repeating a word or phrase you’ve just used.
<i>gs</i>	Do you want this gender-specific language? It might offend some.
<i>I</i>	Stay in the background; avoid mentioning your paper; imply your outline.
<i>SC</i>	Use sentence-combining techniques to join closely related ideas.
<i>V</i>	Use strong verbs in the active voice.
<i>VV</i>	Work for variety in your diction, especially verbs.
<i>W</i>	Eliminate needless words.
<i>WW</i>	This isn’t the word you want, is it?
<i>[]</i>	Consider dropping this word or phrase.
<i>//</i>	Express parallel ideas in parallel form.
<i>~~~</i>	Reword this unclear, inappropriate, or wordy passage.

Organization

<i>tr</i>	Add a transition to get from one idea or paragraph to the next.
<i>¶</i>	Make the paragraph the unit of composition.

Support

A	Attribute all borrowed words or ideas to their source.
S	Support this idea with specific illustration.

Mechanics

<i>mm</i>	Keep related words together; move a misplaced element.
<i>p</i>	Find and correct the punctuation error.
<i>ref</i>	This pronoun (or adjective or article) has a confusing referent—or none at all.
<i>id</i>	Find and correct the error in idiomatic construction.
<i>SS</i>	Find and correct the error in sentence structure.
<i>SV</i>	Be sure your verbs agree with their subjects.
<i>agr</i>	Be sure your pronouns agree with their antecedents.
<i>X</i>	Is there a word missing here?
<i>!</i>	You’ve violated a rule we’ve worked on in class. Shame.
<i>#</i>	Avoid shifting number, person, or tense.
<i>—</i>	Find and correct the error in spelling or diction.

9/96

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO STRUNK

1. Form the possessive singular of nouns by adding 's.
2. In a series of three or more terms with a single conjunction, use a comma after each term except the last.
3. Enclose parenthetical expressions between commas.
4. Place a comma before a conjunction introducing an independent clause.
5. Do not join independent clauses by a comma.
6. Do not break sentences in two.
7. Use a colon after an independent clause to introduce a list of particulars, an appositive, an amplification, or an illustrative quotation.
8. Use a dash to set off an abrupt break or interruption and to announce a long appositive or summary.
9. The number of the subject determines the number of the verb.
10. Use the proper case of pronoun.
11. A participial phrase at the beginning of a sentence must refer to the grammatical subject.
12. Choose a suitable design and hold to it.
13. Make the paragraph the unit of composition.
14. Use the active voice.
15. Put statements in positive form.
16. Use definite, specific, concrete language.
17. Omit needless words.
18. Avoid a succession of loose sentences.
19. Express co-ordinate ideas in similar form.
20. Keep related words together.
21. In summaries, keep to one tense.
22. Place the emphatic words of a sentence at the end.



Using Peer Response one way to do it

Procedure:

- Students bring in two copies of their draft—copies, not their original
- The teacher collects the copies and redistributes them, giving two different drafts to each student.
- The teacher models the writing of questions for a paragraph of an essay draft.
- As homework, students “work through” each of the two essay drafts.

(Alternatively, the students bring in one copy. The teacher redistributes the copies, one to a student. At the next class meeting, the teacher collects the drafts and the peer responses, then redistributes the drafts to a second student reviewer. The second reviewer should not see the review of the first to avoid being “blinded” by it.)

Student reviewers:

1. write their response questions on separate paper and do not mark the original essay.
2. make no suggestions about ‘cosmetic’ changes, such as style, diction, spelling, syntax, or the like. The questions address content only.
3. write questions only, no comments.
4. make no judgments about the essay or any of its parts.
5. write a minimum of fourteen valid and helpful questions for each essay:
 - Student reviewers write the questions paragraph by paragraph.
 - *Valid* here means questions that help a writer think about making changes.
 - *Helpful* here means that the question is intended to help improve the content.
 - There are no “yes/no” questions.
 - Student reviewers may well *not* know the answer to a question they ask.
 - Questions do not state or imply evaluation, as in ‘Why didn’t you...’ or ‘What the heck is this supposed to mean?’

Assessment:

- Students must comment on the whole essay to get credit.
- Students’ own essay grades are lowered one letter for each peer response not completed.
- Students are penalized for making cosmetic suggestions in writing.

Peer Response Sample Student Essay

The following first draft was written by a ninth-grade student on the following assignment on *Romeo and Juliet*. It is typed as written.

ROMEO AND JULIET	“The Valid and the Helpful”
<p>Juliet is only 14, but by meeting Romeo, she virtually becomes an adult. Her attitude changes dramatically as does her outward appearance.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Who are Juliet and Romeo?2. Why and how does she become an adult by meeting Romeo?3. What was her attitude before? after?4. What was her outward appearance before? after?
<p>Through the start of Shakespeare’s play “Romeo and Juliet” Juliet is constantly being pressured by others to get married and find the right person for herself. She doesn’t know what to do about the unwanted pressure because she hasn’t really found the right man and she doesn’t want to be forced into anything.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Who is pressuring Juliet to get married?2. Why is she being forced to marry?3. Why is she getting married so young?
<p>When she meets Romeo, her attitude shifts toward him. She can never stop thinking of him. This change brought about happiness, because her search for him had ended, yet it also brought about misfortune, because it was apparent that there would be trouble with them being in different families. Juliet eventually becomes so obsessed with his presence, that she is willing to do anything to stay with him, even kill herself. This was the very sad part of her change. She was unable to control it, and her love for Romeo backfired.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How does her attitude shift?2. What examples from the story show she can’t stop thinking of him?3. What is the change that brought about happiness?4. What misfortune happened?5. Why would there be trouble because they were in different families?6. Did they get married or not?7. What wasn’t she able to control?
<p>Juliet’s change was an important one. It gave “Romeo and Juliet,” happiness, theme, and tragedy.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Why was the change an important one?2. What themes did it give <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>?3. What tragedy took place?4. How did the change give people happiness?

Draft of Student Essay for Peer Revision

Just as Edna in The Awakening, Ginny in Thousand Acres sets out on a quest of self discovery and independence. Though Edna is searching for women's rights and Ginny aspires to become a more assertive and strong individual, both share the common struggle of leaving their family and old customs.

Both women wanted to rid themselves of their passive wife roles and gain the freedom to become a respected individual. Edna was bored of her meaningless life as a wife and mother. She felt her days were filled with trivial tasks and yearned to feel useful and important. Her husband who felt women were created to have babies and serve their husbands and didn't support Edna in her search of self-sufficiency. Ginny's husband Ty was quiet and passive, and like Edna's spouse believed women should keep their opinions to themselves. He was angered by Ginny's new aggressive stand she took against her father and didn't think it was appropriate for her to act in such a way. Also like Edna's husband Ty didn't support Ginny in her quest of self discovery and independence. Though both women longed for the freedom to be an individual, neither received any assistance from their husband.

Edna and Ginny each had an affair with a younger man they felt understood them and helped them where their husbands had failed. Joe (??) was the only one who actually treated Edna as a person rather than a mother or wife. He liked to talk with her and respected her opinion, something no one else had ever done. He made her feel important and that her feelings really mattered, leading her to fall in love with him. Her love for Joe however, was not necessarily with him as a person, but rather the idea that someone saw her as an individual and treated her with respect. Ginny had an affair with Jess Clark, an old childhood playmate who left the farm years before and returned an exciting yet mysterious stranger. Jess was daring. He became a vegetarian and wanted to try new methods of farming. Jess was the antithesis of Ty as he didn't hesitate to speak his opinion or do things his own way. Like

Edna, Ginny wasn't truly in love with Jess, but the excitement and change he brought to the life she was tired and bored of. Both Ginny and Edna have an affair with men who seem to fit the change they are yearning for in their unsatisfying lives.

As each succeeds in breaking away from their original unhappy lifestyle, they discover that although they gained freedom, they failed in their attempts of finding a life that would bring them solace. Edna was unhappy because Joe left her, for he knew their love was forbidden, and she was left with no one who understood or supported her individual lifestyle. Her husband and society thought she was going insane and believed her dreams and aspirations were inappropriate and weird. She was a woman ahead of her times trapped in a world that supported old-fashioned beliefs. With no strength or support from other Edna saw no other solution to her dilemma than to commit suicide which admitted her defeat in her efforts to find happiness through independence. Ginny lives her dream of being out on her own and raising Rose's daughters, but like Edna she is not content with her new life. Her nieces don't trust her and there's a strained and uncomfortable feeling in their lives. Although she broke all ties with her family like she had originally wanted to, things still felt unfinished and problems unresolved as the entire family either left or died without making amends. Ginny no longer had Rose to talk to or to understand or support her, all she did was work and sleep. Edna and Ginny both wanted freedom unaware that it would also bring lonely solitude.

Edna and Ginny were both trapped in boring unsatisfying lives. They wanted independence from their husbands who they believed were keeping them from escaping from their miserable lives and preventing them from being free. As each broke away and attained control of their own life, they discovered that complete independence from everyone is not what they needed, but someone who understood that they wanted to be respected as an individual.

Sample Student Questions for Peer Revision

Reviewer: Jane Quickly • Writer: Harry LeRoy

- ¶1 1. What causes their self-realizations?
 2. What are some of the old customs they leave?
 3. Why do they feel they have to leave their family? memories? Do they feel trapped?
- ¶2 4. Why was Edna so bored?
 5. What were the trivial tasks that she did everyday?
 6. What would have made Edna feel useful and important? self-worth, dignity?
 7. What was the relationship between Edna and her husband? Was it love or just convenient?
 8. Did the relationship between Ginny and Ty change? Why? When?
- ¶3 9. What was an example when Robert made Edna feel important?
 10. Did Robert really love Edna? Why did he leave her?
 11. Why wasn't Ginny truly in love with Jess? What is an example to support this?
- ¶4 12. In what ways did Reiz support Edna? What did Edna learn from the wise woman?
 13. Do you think suicide was an act of courage, or a sign that she had given up? Why?
 14. Why did Edna want to break the ties with her family?
 15. What were some of the problems unresolved?
- ¶5 16. What led Edna and Ginny to find themselves trapped in a boring life?
 17. What did Edna and Ginny do in order to break away?
 18. Was their discoveries a positive or negative influence on their lives? Why?

- ¶2 4. What type of "respected individual" did Edna strive to become? What type did Ginny strive for?
 5. What sort of things did Edna do to make herself feel important? Were these the same or different from what Ginny did?
 6. What "trivial tasks" did Edna (and Ginny?) resent so much?
 7. Though their husbands were not supportive of their liberation, was society?
 8. Did either woman resent her husband for his attitude and/or lack of support?
- ¶3 9. What did Joe (real name Robert) do to treat Edna as a person?
 10. What did Jess do for Ginny that Ty no longer did? Did he make her feel beautiful or special again?
 11. What made Jess exciting and mysterious?
 12. Does Ginny "love" Jess because he has all that Ty doesn't?
- ¶4 13. What kind of solace are Edna and Ginny truly searching for? Does it have anything to do with men?
 14. What is Kate Chopin saying about trying to live with no support whatever?
 15. Was Edna's liberation worth death?
 16. Why does total emotional freedom not satisfy Ginny?
 17. What causes the "strained & uncomfortable" feeling? Could it be the way Rose & Ginny's relationship ended?
 18. Is making amends necessary for personal resolution?
 19. Was Rose's "support"
 20. Was Ginny's liberation worth it?

- ¶5 21. What was unsatisfying about the women's lives in the beginning? How about in the end?
 22. Were the husbands truly the root of their problems?
 23. Was there any way Edna or Ginny could find someone who truly would respect them as an individual? Or were they stuck with a choice between degrading husbands vs. lonely solitude? Did they think they saw this person in Robert & Jess?

Reviewer: Jennifer Schaffer • Writer: Harry LeRoy

- ¶1 1. Does either one of the women succeed in this quest?
 2. What is it about Edna's family that binds her? What is it about Ginny's?
 3. What old customs must Edna leave? Which ones must Ginny leave?

Revision of Student Essay after Peer Revision

Just as Edna in *The Awakening*, Ginny in *A Thousand Acres* realizes through the influence of her adulterer that life as a housewife doesn't bring satisfaction or contentment. Each yearning for self-identity and respect as an individual, they set out on a quest of self-discovery and *freedom*. Though Edna is searching for women's rights and Ginny aspires to become a more assertive and strong woman, both share the common struggle of **escaping the grasps of a husband unsympathetic to their feelings or needs who binds them to their dismal life**.

Both women wanted to rid themselves of their passive wife roles and gain the freedom to become a woman respected as an individual **instead of identified as their husband's faithful spouse**. Edna was bored of her meaningless life as a wife and mother. She felt her days were filled with trivial tasks **such as preparing meals and caring for children** and yearned to feel useful and important. **Edna's marriage was one of convenience, not love. The two never really spent time together, her husband would go off and do his own thing, knowing that when he returned home, his obedient wife would be waiting. He thought Edna was insane and stubborn when she expressed she was unhappy with her life and wanted some independence.** Her husband thought women were created to have babies and serve their husbands and didn't support Edna in her search of self-sufficiency. Ginny's husband Ty was quiet and passive, and like Edna's *spouse* believed women should keep their opinions to themselves. **Not one to be an assertive attacker himself**, he was angered by Ginny's new aggressive stand she took against her father and didn't *feel* it was appropriate behavior. Ty's **philosophy of life was not to get involved in disputes and let people do their own thing in attempt to keep peace. He believed in following the rules and not breaking tradition which is why he couldn't empathize with Ginny's plight of being dissatisfied with her role as a farmwife. Because of his own beliefs, he didn't understand why Ginny wanted to break away from the typical farmwife stereotype and didn't support her in her quest of self-discovery and independence.** Though both women longed for the freedom to be an individual, neither received any assistance from their husband.

Edna and Ginny each had an affair with a younger man they felt understood them and helped them where their husbands had failed. *Robert* was the only one who actually treated Edna as a person rather than a mother or wife by really listening to her when she talked and respecting her opinion, something no one else had ever done. He made her feel important **by spending all his free time with her, encouraging conversation and true expression of her feelings**. Her love for Robert however, was not necessarily with him as a person, but rather the idea that someone saw her as an individual and treated her with respect. Ginny had an affair with Jess Clark, an old childhood playmate who left the farm years before and returned an exciting yet mysterious stranger. Jess was **educated and well traveled and seemed to spread jovialness and gaiety whenever he was around**. He was the antithesis of Ty as he didn't hesitate to speak his opinion or do things his own way. **The land was Ty's first love and priority, not Ginny. Jess made Ginny feel beautiful and special again by treating her with respect and making her believe that someone loved her above anything else.** Like Edna, Ginny wasn't truly in love with Jess, but the excitement and

change he brought to the life she was tired and bored of and the idea that someone loved her more than the land. Both Ginny and Edna have an affair with men who seem to fit the change they are yearning for in their unsatisfying lives.

As each succeeds in breaking away from their original unhappy lifestyle, they discover that although they gained freedom, they failed in their attempts of finding a life that would bring them solace. Edna was unhappy because Robert left her, **for he knew their love was forbidden**, and she was left with no one who understood or supported her individual lifestyle. Her husband and society thought she was going insane and believed her dreams and aspirations were inappropriate and weird. She was a woman ahead of her times trapped in a world that supported old-fashioned beliefs. **In those times it was uncommon for a woman to want her own identity or break away from her husband's protective care.** With no strength or support from others **except Mme Reiz who taught Edna to follow her dreams no matter what people thought, Edna only succeeded in secluding herself even more, for the wise Mme Reiz was also an outcast of society.** Edna saw no other solution to her dilemma than to commit suicide **which admitted her defeat in her efforts to find happiness through independence.** Ginny lives her dream of being out on her own **and separated from a husband whose passiveness she had outgrown and was tying her down**, but like Edna she is not content. [—] **Betrayed by both Jess and Rose as Jess left Ginny for her sister, Ginny is hurt that her lover no longer loves or is interested in her and Rose who has been her best friend since childhood traded their special love for the affection of a man. Ginny no longer has someone who cares for her or offers emotional support.** Although she broke all ties with her family like she had originally wanted to, things still felt unfinished and problems unresolved as the entire family either left or died without making amends. **Society looked down on Ginny because of the harsh manner in which she treated her father. It was rumored that she and Rose drove Larry insane and she receives only bitter resentment and hostility from the public. Without a friend in the world**, all Ginny did was work and sleep. **She had nothing to live for or bring joy in her life. Ginny won the battle of escaping her unhappy life as a farmwife but lost the war as she discovers independence also brings discontent.** Edna and Ginny both wanted freedom unaware that it would also bring lonely solitude.

Edna and Ginny were both trapped in boring unsatisfying lives. They wanted independence from their husbands who they believed were the reason they were without their own identity and kept them from escaping from their miserable lives. As each broke away and attained control of their own life, **the one person who they had trusted and depended on for strength and support along the way left them isolated and alone in a world that didn't expect or understand their thirst for freedom.** They discovered that complete independence from everyone is not what they needed, but someone who understood that they wanted to be respected as an individual.

CRISP Method of Style Revision

by Dixie Dellinger, MA

Students work on these steps individually and independently. This is the final edit—before proofreading:	First	CUT WORDS	Cut out every word that can be spared. Remove “due to the fact that” and “in order to” and all other wordy constructions and empty expressions that don’t say anything.
	Next	REDUCE CLAUSES	Almost all clauses can be reduced in some way; to appositives or phrases, etc.
	Then	INTENSIFY VERBS	Circle all verbs and intensify the weak ones. This will take care of excessive use of passive voice.
	After that	SHARPEN DICTION	Find the <i>best</i> words for the audience and the purpose. Diction creates tone.
	Finally	PACK PHRASES	Move them behind the nouns. Instead of “A proposal presented by Derek Bok, the president of Harvard, was defeated,” (12 words) pack it to “Harvard president Derek Bok’s proposal failed.” (6 words)

REVISION STRATEGIES: + X ÷ —

Revision usually works like arithmetic and in this order: Being process, any of these can be — and usually is, with skilled writers — recycled and used again... and again. Students can work on these steps independently or with others.	First	ADD	adding something that is not there: facts, logical argument, details, examples, illustrations, statistics, <i>ad infinitum</i> .
	Next	MULTIPLY	increasing what is already there; twice as many facts, logical arguments, details, examples, illustrations, and so on.
	Then	DIVIDE	“chunking” into paragraphs, moving things around, organizing the parts in a different way, and so on.
	Finally	SUBTRACT	taking out unnecessary words, material, sharpening diction, working on tone and audience consciousness, honing arguments, working on stylistic devices.

Vocabulary Study: A Guide

Use two reference works:

- a dictionary, one that includes etymologies .
- a dictionary of synonyms and antonyms

1. Transitive / Intransitive Verbs:

Note carefully whether a verb is transitive or intransitive. Remember, a transitive verb must be completed by a direct object; an intransitive verb does not take a direct object.

(The verb ‘renounce,’ for instance, is transitive. Someone renounces ‘something’; people don’t just go around ‘renouncing.’)

2. Grammatical Patterns / Related Prepositions:

If your dictionary gives citations as examples, study carefully which prepositions are associated with the word under study. The dictionary will usually give the prepositions, sometimes in parentheses with the word, more often as part of the definition. Most dictionaries of synonyms list the prepositions clearly.

A dictionary of synonyms gives for the word ‘impute’ the following citation from Shaw: ‘how dare you, sir, ‘impute’ such monstrous intentions to me?’ You know from that line that the verb is transitive and that the grammatical pattern is *<to impute something to someone.>*

3. Pronunciation

Know how to say the word. Use the dictionary’s pronunciation key, listen for the word, play the sound file on a computer dictionary, or ask. The word is not yours until you can, and do, say it.

4. Grammatical Patterns / Redundant Prepositions:

Note from the definition which prepositions are built into the word and avoid repeating them when you use the word.

The dictionary defines ‘traverse’ as ‘to pass or move over, along, or through.’ Those prepositions (‘over,’ ‘along,’ and ‘through’) are already included in the meaning of the word ‘traverse,’ so you do not want to repeat them by writing such redundancies as ‘to traverse across.’ (*Remember the prefix trans— ?*)

5. Synonym study

Find the words the dictionary identifies as synonyms for your word. Then find out how the new word is *different* from its synonyms. No two words have identical meanings. You must know the new idea your new word brings to your knowledge store.

6. Words Used In Definitions:

Be wary of words that appear familiar when they appear in a definition. Look them up just as you would the word under study.

The dictionary says that ‘reprimand’ means ‘to reprove,’ and, indeed, it does. But ‘reprove’ does not mean ‘to prove again,’ even though it looks as if it should. ‘Reprove’ means to scold or to chide; so does ‘reprimand.’ Watch out.

7. Etymologies:

Read carefully the etymology of each word you are trying to learn. You will quickly begin to see patterns that tie new words to words you already know. You’ll learn a lot of good stuff, too.



VOCABULARY



<i>word</i>	<i>p.o.s.</i>	<i>in context</i>
1 consular	adj	This is a consular ship. We're on a diplomatic mission.
2 diplomatic	adj	This is a consular ship. We're on a diplomatic mission.
3 restricted	adj	Hey, you're not permitted in there. It's restricted
4 alliance	n	You're a part of the Rebel Affiance
5 desolate	adj	What a desolate place this is.
6 counterpart	n	I am See-Threepio, human-cyborg relations, and this is my counterpart, Artoo-Detoo.
7 score	v	You've got a lot of carbon scoring here
8 malfunction	v	I told him not to go, but he's faulty, malfunctioning.
9 remnant	n	The last remnants of the Old Republic have been swept away.
10 exploit	v	It is possible, however unlikely, that they might find a weakness and exploit it.
11 conjure	v	Your sad devotion to that ancient religion has not helped you conjure up the stolen data tapes...
12 clairvoyance	nor given you clairvoyance enough to find the Rebels' hidden fort...
13 villainy	n	You will never find a more wretched hive of scum and villainy.
14 hokey	adj	Hokey religions and ancient weapons are no match for a good blaster at your side, kid.

Vocabulary study

Some steps that will help:

1. First study the line from *Star Wars* and use the context to help you take a guess at the word's meaning.
2. Look the word up in a college dictionary.
 - Use the pronunciation guide to see how the word is pronounced. Have someone say the word for you. Then say it aloud—twice.
 - Read the definition in the dictionary. Most words will have more than one sense. Decide in which sense the word is used in the line from the movie.
 - Look at the word's etymology. It will probably help you learn the meaning. Then list words you already know that use the same root or prefix or suffix as the new word.
3. Check to see if the word is listed in a dictionary of synonyms. If it is, read carefully how it differs from other words with nearly the same meaning.
4. Use the word in a real conversation within twenty-four hours.
5. Write the word in a real sentence.
6. Work through the questions below.

Some questions on the words: (Be certain to use the word in your response.)

1. What would be the purpose of a **consular** ship? What is the relationship between a **consul** and a consulate? What is the difference between a **consul** and a **consul-general**? The government of another country would send an ambassador to Washington, D.C., but a **consul** to Los Angeles. Why not the other way around?
2. What might be the purpose of a **diplomatic** mission? Under what circumstances might you want to give a diplomatic answer to a question?
3. To what **restricted** areas do you have access? If you could be admitted to one **restricted** area anywhere, what would it be?
4. With what one country do you think the U.S. should maintain its strongest **alliance**? Why? What is the difference between an **alliance** and a confederation?
5. Name one place you consider geographically **desolate** and tell why you think so. Then name one place you consider spiritually, socially, or emotionally, or intellectually **desolate** and tell why you think so.
6. Consider the words **malfunction**, malnourished, malignant, malpractice, malicious, malcontent, and malediction. What does the prefix *mal-* indicate?
7. What do we call the student body's **counterpart** to the president of the U.S.? to the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury?
8. For what purpose might a machine **score** a piece of cardboard?
9. A **remnant** is an object; from what verb does it clearly come?
10. What two special talents or traits might you best **exploit** in your personal life?
11. What symbolic beast could Merlin **conjure** in Malory's *Morte Darthur*?
12. Why might a **clairvoyant** come in handy the day before a lottery drawing?
13. How does the word **villainy** differ from its synonyms iniquity, corruption, and degeneracy?
14. From what material would **hokey** pearls most likely be made?

Adjectival Forms

Knowing the adjective form of a noun will often help you eliminate unnecessary words and write with more economy and directness. For the italicized nouns or nominal phrase in each of the following, decide what you think the adjectival form should be. Then substitute the adjective for the phrase in which the noun appears and combine the two sentences into one. Use a dictionary *only after* you have made your own decisions. There are right answers for the adjective forms, but you will come up with differing changes in the structure of the sentences. No. 0 is done as an example.

0. She is a scholar of *literature*. She has published two books on Pushkin.

A literary scholar, she has published two books on Pushkin.

1. His writing is *like poetry*. It uses many figures of speech.
2. Her life was like a *drama*. It had a happy ending.
3. We are finishing a study of the *theme* of Hamlet. We are studying the madness in the play.
4. The sea here is a *symbol*. It stands for the dangers of the unknown.
5. There are clues in the *context*. They suggest the writer owes a debt to Milton's Paradise Lost.
6. She uses two devices as *transitions*. They are conjunctions and word repetition.
7. King Arthur may have been a person from history or a character from *fiction*. He has inspired many stories.
8. This whole scene has *irony*. It suggests that Kate may have done some taming of her own.
9. This novel is written in the form of *letters*. It follows Kim's life over sixty-five years. (*This one's a trick; you'll have to go back to the Latin word for 'letter.'*)
10. The scenery looks very *real*. It stands in contrast to the events of the plot.
11. This story is an *allegory*. It would speak to people of nearly all cultures.
12. Her speech features many examples of *hyperbole*. As a result, she becomes comical.
13. The situation here contains a *paradox*. It is that inaction becomes a form of action.
14. The poem has a pattern of *rhythm*. The pattern reinforces the theme.
15. The verse is made up of *syllables*. It is not metrical in the traditional English way.
16. Many Victorian novelists used direct comment by the *author* in their novels. The comment seems intrusive to many modern readers.