

# GETTING YOUR POINT ACROSS IN WRITING

## HOW TO WRITE ESSAYS THAT HAVE IMPACT

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### PURPOSE

Improve your ability to get a point across to others in writing.

HOW TO DO THIS COURSE: Do the steps in order. Initial and date each when done. Where there are two sign-off lines, get the step checked and initialed on the second line by another student or, if stated, by your supervisor. Have them initial the second line. All written work is turned in to the supervisor.

ESTIMATED TIME: 30 hours.

### MATERIALS:

*Getting Your Point Across in Writing*, Heron Books

### A. HAVING A POINT

1. READ: *Getting Your Point Across in Writing*, Introduction and Chapter 1  
The Essay. \_\_\_\_\_

2. ACTIVITY: Think of and write down three ways you might use  
nonfiction writing in life. Discuss this with your supervisor.

**Supervisor pass.** \_\_\_\_\_

3. READ: Chapter 2 “What Is Your Point?” \_\_\_\_\_

4. ACTIVITY: Find two short, easy-to-read nonfiction books. Read  
enough of each book to notice what the point is. Write it down.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Book title)

Point: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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(Book title)

Point: \_\_\_\_\_

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5. READ: Chapter 3 Developing Your Ideas.

6. ACTIVITY: Choose a subject you know little or nothing about. Find out something about the subject by researching it for ten or fifteen minutes.

Briefly write down what you know about the subject now.

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Ask yourself:

- What do I think about this subject?
- What's important to me about this?
- What would I like to tell someone else about this subject?

If needed, research a bit more to answer your questions.

Continue until you know what you want to say about this subject.

Note it here.

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7. READ: Chapter 4 The Subject.

8. ACTIVITY: You are going to start building a descriptive essay, one part at a time, as you study this book.

Work out the subject and a point that you want to write about.

Here are two suggestions you could use:

- Describe your favorite place.
- Describe how something works.

Write down the subject and point and label your paper *Practice Essay 1*. Save this for later steps.

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9. ACTIVITY: You are going to start building an expository essay, one part at a time, as you study this book.

Work out the subject and a point that you want to write about.

Here are some suggestions you could use:

- Write a news story about something that has happened.
- Explain how you do something. It can be how you cook something, do a hobby or sport, or build something.

Write down the subject and point and label your paper *Practice Essay 2*. Your supervisor will check that your point is what *you* want to say about the subject. Save this for later steps.

**Supervisor pass.**

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## B. GIVING SUPPORTING DETAILS

1. READ: Chapter 5 Summarizing.
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2. READ: Chapter 6 Details!
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3. ACTIVITY: Choose an article from a newspaper or news magazine, online or in print. Show another student the point of the article and five details used to support it.
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4. ACTIVITY: This is the next step to building your first practice essay.

Make a list of supporting details you could use to back up your point in *Practice Essay 1*. Save for later.

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5. ACTIVITY: This is the next step to building your second practice essay.

Make a list of supporting details you could use to back up your point in *Practice Essay 2*. Your supervisor will check that your details support your point adequately. Save for later. **Supervisor pass.**

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## C. PLANNING THE WRITING

1. READ: Chapter 7 Outlines? Aargh! \_\_\_\_\_

2. READ: Chapter 8 The Basic Outline. \_\_\_\_\_

3. ACTIVITY: Here's the next step to writing your first practice essay.

Write an outline for *Practice Essay 1*. You can use these questions if you wish.

- What's the overall point?
- Will it answer the question or assignment?
- What are the supporting details that will help my reader understand my point?
- How is the essay best started?
- How is it best ended?
- What's the best way to organize all these ideas?

Save for later. \_\_\_\_\_

4. ACTIVITY: Here's the next step to writing your second practice essay.

Write an outline for *Practice Essay 2*. You can use these questions if you wish.

- What's the overall point?
- Will it answer the question or assignment?
- What are the supporting details that will help my reader understand my point?
- How is the essay best started?
- How is it best ended?
- What's the best way to organize all these ideas?

Your supervisor will check that your outline organizes your ideas. Save for later. **Supervisor pass.** \_\_\_\_\_

## D. HAVING AN INTRODUCTION, BODY AND CONCLUSION

1. READ: Chapter 9 The Intro or “Lead.”

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2. ACTIVITY: Choose three history, biography, or nonfiction books.

Read the first page or two of each one. Notice if the beginning interests you enough to keep reading the book.

Work out why the intro was or wasn’t interesting to you.

Decide which intro was the most interesting.

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3. READ: Chapter 10 The Body or “Story.”

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4. ACTIVITY: Read three short newspaper or magazine articles, online or in print. Pay attention to the body of the articles.

What did you notice?

Which was most effective in getting its point across to you?

Did it follow any of the tips in chapter 10 or was it written differently?

Choose the body that best communicated the message of the article.

What did you like about it?

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5. READ: Chapter 11 The Conclusion or “Close.”

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6. ACTIVITY: Using the same articles from the previous activity, read the concluding paragraphs.

Do they conclude or close the articles well?

Choose the conclusion you feel ended its article best. What did you like about it?

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7. ACTIVITY: Here’s the next step to writing your first practice essay.

Using the point, supporting details and outline you prepared for *Practice Essay 1*, write your full essay with an introduction, body and conclusion. Save it for later.

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8. ACTIVITY: This is the next step to writing your second practice essay.

Using the point, supporting details and outline you prepared for *Practice Essay 2*, write your full essay with an introduction, body and conclusion. This is the first draft. Your supervisor will check that the intro, body, and conclusion serve their purposes. Save it for later.

**Supervisor pass.**

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9. READ: Chapter 12 Connecting Ideas.

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10. ACTIVITY: Get an easy-to-read nonfiction book. Read a few pages and notice if there are transition words or phrases. For each transition, tell someone how these words or phrases connect one idea to the next.

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11. ACTIVITY: This is the next step to writing your first practice essay.

Read your *Practice Essay 1* and locate any sentences or paragraphs that don't seem to connect very well or jump too quickly from one idea to the next. Improve the flow from one idea to the next using transition words or phrases. Save your essay for later.

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12. ACTIVITY: Here's the next step to writing your second practice essay.

Read your *Practice Essay 2* and locate any sentences or paragraphs that don't seem to connect very well or jump too quickly from one idea to the next. Improve the flow from one idea to the next using transition words, phrases, or sentences. Your supervisor will check that your sentences and paragraphs flow smoothly from one idea to the next. Save your essay for later. **Supervisor pass.**

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## E. WRITING DIFFERENT TYPES OF ESSAYS

1. READ: Chapter 13 "But How Do I Write an Essay?"

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2. READ: Chapter 14 The Narrative Essay.

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3. ACTIVITY: Choose a subject and a point for a narrative essay. Decide whether you will tell the story from your viewpoint or someone else's.

Here are some suggestions:

- write about a time you (or they) enjoyed doing something
- write a narrative of a funny, but true story
- write a play-by-play narrative of a game

Write a narrative essay about anything you choose. Make sure you get your point across.

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4. READ: Chapter 15 The Descriptive Essay.

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5. ACTIVITY: Write a detailed description of a well-known character in a book or movie without stating that person's name. Give it to someone to read and ask them to guess the name of the character you are writing about.

If your reader can't guess who the character is, read your writing and add or delete details to make your description clearer. Ask someone to read it now and guess the name of the character you are writing about.

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6. READ: Chapter 16 The Expository Essay.

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7. ACTIVITY: In writing, explain how something works. Some suggestions you could use are:

- How a bicycle works or how to change a bike tire
- How a computer works or how any machine works
- What causes the seasons

Your supervisor will check that your explanation is logical and easy to understand.

**Supervisor pass.**

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8. READ: Chapter 17 The Persuasive Essay.

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9. READ: Chapter 18 Outside the Box.

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10. ACTIVITY: Choose a viewpoint or opinion you have and write a persuasive essay on it.

When you are satisfied with it, have someone else read it. Then ask them if your essay persuaded them to agree with your viewpoint.

If they were not persuaded or convinced, find out why and read your essay to see what you could add or delete to make it more persuasive.

Then ask the same person to read it again and tell you if the writing persuaded them.

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## F. REVISING AND PROOFREADING

1. READ: Chapter 19 Getting It Right. \_\_\_\_\_
2. READ: Chapter 20 Feedback. \_\_\_\_\_
3. ACTIVITY: This is the next step to writing your first practice essay.
  - a) Read your *Practice Essay 1* and mark any points you can improve. Then revise the paper and make a new draft. \_\_\_\_
  - b) Continue to revise and rewrite your essay until you are satisfied it effectively gets your point across. \_\_\_\_
  - c) Ask someone else to read it and give you feedback. Make further revisions if needed. \_\_\_\_
  - d) Correct any errors in spelling, punctuation, and so on. \_\_\_\_
  - e) Turn in your final essay.

**Supervisor pass.** \_\_\_\_\_

4. ACTIVITY: Here's the next step to writing your second practice essay.
  - a) Read your *Practice Essay 2* and mark any points you can improve. Then revise the paper accordingly and make a new draft. \_\_\_\_
  - b) Continue to revise and rewrite your essay until you are satisfied it effectively gets your point across. \_\_\_\_
  - c) Ask someone else to read it and give you feedback. Make further revisions if needed. \_\_\_\_
  - d) Correct any errors in spelling, punctuation, and so on. \_\_\_\_
  - e) Turn in your final essay.

**Supervisor pass.** \_\_\_\_\_

## G. AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

1. READ: Chapter 21 "Whose Ideas Are These?" \_\_\_\_\_
2. ACTIVITY: Write a short essay that explains and gives examples when you would need to note where you got words or ideas that weren't yours. Also explain how you could show that, and why you would show it. \_\_\_\_\_



## H. FINAL ACTIVITIES

1. READ: Chapter 22 Putting It All Together. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. (Optional) READ: Chapter 23 Final Tips (for aspiring professionals). \_\_\_\_\_
  3. ACTIVITY: Write anything you wish. This is some writing you can do without anyone else correcting it. You can write nonfiction or fiction. Just write several paragraphs as clearly as you can about anything that interests you. \_\_\_\_\_
  4. ACTIVITY: Decide on a subject and a point for a persuasive essay. Keep in mind the specific type of person or group you want to persuade with your essay. Then using what you learned in this book and the points in “Putting It All Together,” revise and rewrite it until you are satisfied it gets your point across and it has no errors. \_\_\_\_\_
  5. ACTIVITY: Choose a new subject for a longer essay. Using what you learned in this book and the points in “Putting It All Together,” make sure your writing clearly gets your point across and has no errors. \_\_\_\_\_
- Supervisor pass.** \_\_\_\_\_

I have completed the steps of this course. I understand what I studied and can use it.

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

The student has completed the steps of this course and knows and can apply what was studied.

Academic supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

The student has passed the exam for this course.

Examiner \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## FOR FACULTY

### NOTE

This course assumes a student has the knowledge and abilities obtained from *Writing Paragraphs* and *Working with Essays* (able to write sentences and paragraphs well, capitalization and punctuation).

### MATERIALS NEEDED FOR THIS COURSE

Access to a newspaper or news magazine, and several history, biography or nonfiction books.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AT [HERONBOOKS.COM](http://HERONBOOKS.COM)

Exam and answers