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Introduction

The Essential Writing & Language Skills workbook will give you a foundation in planning, drafting, and finalizing writing. Your purpose in writing will vary, from passing a standardized test to applying for a job to writing a report or paper. Good writing skills will help you succeed in all types of writing tasks. Through this workbook, you’ll learn to develop what you want to say and to express it clearly. After all, that’s the purpose of writing—to develop and communicate ideas.

One important area of writing is analyzing and evaluating what you read. In the workplace, you will need to not only understand reports but read them with a critical eye. Discerning the best contracting bid or product description is an essential skill. In higher education, you will need to write original papers that reference and evaluate books, research papers, and other works. This workbook will give you practice writing about what you read.

As you practice writing, you will develop a good writing process:

- **Plan:** Read, research, brainstorm, and identify your central idea.
- **Draft:** Outline and write a beginning, middle, and ending.
- **Evaluate:** Throughout the writing process, evaluate your work. As you evaluate, continue to plan, revise, and edit your draft.
- **Submit:** When your writing is done, proofread, format, and publish your work.

A writing process will give you a structure to develop your ideas around a strong central idea, to make decisions about organization and
Essential Writing & Language Skills

language, and to edit and finalize your work. You’ll also learn about what makes good writing, from understanding your audience’s point of view to developing tone and style.

This writing book contains practice problems that involve several levels of knowledge and thinking.

If an exercise has one star, it is testing your ability to recall and use specific skills, such as grammar and language use.

If an exercise has two stars, it asks you to interpret, summarize, or do other tasks that require some analysis. A two-star problem is checking to see if you have acquired a skill or concept.

If an exercise has three stars, it asks you to think strategically to answer a question or respond to a prompt. These exercises will require short or extended responses.

You can use this workbook on its own, by working through each section, to improve your writing skills. The practice in this workbook will reinforce the skills you already have and develop new ones. You’ll learn by applying those skills to many different situations. Practice helps you improve quickly because you’re actively using the skills you’re learning.

This workbook is also a good supplement to classroom learning or online courses, including Essential Education courses such as GED Academy™ and Essential Skills Online. You don’t need to go through the workbook in one particular order. Instead, use whatever section teaches the skills you’re currently learning. If you’re in a class, your teacher can help you choose the best sections to study.

Take your time working through the exercises in this book. They’re meant to enhance your thinking skills and to give you practice with many writing tasks so that you can develop strong writing for any situation. If your writing speed is slow, work to increase your speed as you work through the book. Many Check Your Skills short answers and extended responses include target times to help you prepare for timed exams.

Technology Tip
As your writing improves, practice using a keyboard. Set a goal to type 20 to 50 words per minute.
Consciously following a writing process helps you make deliberate choices to write effectively. Use a four-step writing process to improve your writing.

**Plan:** Examine your task. Who is the audience? What is the purpose? Research your topic, read and examine source materials, brainstorm ideas, and think through what you want to say.

**Draft:** Prewrite and compose your work. You might start with a central idea, some supporting ideas, and evidence or examples. Then, fill in details, connections, transitions, and conclusions.

**Evaluate:** As you work, evaluate your writing. Is it successful? Does it communicate? Continue to plan, revise, and edit your draft.

**Submit:** When your work is ready, make final changes and publish. That might mean posting your work on your blog, submitting a paper to your professor, or mailing a letter to a company.

Use the first three steps together. As you **plan**, prewrite and evaluate. As you **draft**, plan and evaluate. As you **evaluate**, plan, rewrite, and edit.
Plan, Draft, and Evaluate Your Writing

The writing process helps you approach writing thoughtfully so you can improve your skills. You will make conscious decisions as you plan, draft, and evaluate.

Imagine you need to make a recommendation to your boss about which printer to purchase for the office. You work in a busy office that prints up to 1,000 pages per day. Examine the table and write a recommendation, including your reasoning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Speed (Pages per Minute)</th>
<th>Monthly Workload</th>
<th>Ink Cost (Cents per Page)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Printer A</td>
<td>$459</td>
<td>24 ppm</td>
<td>70,000 pages</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printer B</td>
<td>$624</td>
<td>28 ppm</td>
<td>50,000 pages</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Plan

First, examine your task. What is your purpose? Who is your audience? Is this a formal or informal task? What do you need to read and understand? What do you want to say? Strategies that help you think through writing tasks and plan your writing include:

- Defining purpose and audience
- Brainstorming
- Researching

Writing doesn’t occur in a vacuum. Developing good ideas and strong content depends on reading and investigating as well as thinking and prewriting.

1. Determine which printer to recommend. Give two reasons why.

You might recommend Printer B. Although it is more expensive, it will cost 1.9 cents less per page in ink. At 1,000 pages a day, the savings is $20 per day. Printer B is also slightly faster.

Draft

When you start writing, you won’t usually just sit down and begin composing sentences. First, develop a structure or outline, and fill in some important details and ideas. Then, complete your draft. Even a short project will have a beginning, a middle, and an ending.
2. Draft a response with a beginning, middle, and ending to recommend a printer.

You might write:

I recommend Printer B because it will be more cost effective. Printer A costs approximately $175 less than Printer B, but Printer B has an ink cost of 1.9 cents per page less than Printer A. At 1,000 pages per day, the savings in ink will be approximately $20 per day. It will take less than two weeks to recoup the extra cost of Printer B. Workload and print speed are minor factors. Both printers can handle our monthly workload (about 30,000 pages) equally well, but Printer B has a slightly faster print speed. Printer B is clearly the best choice based on the available data.

Notice that this paragraph has a beginning (stating the recommendation), a middle (giving specific evidence), and an ending (summing up the recommendation).

Evaluate
All writing can be improved. During and after writing, evaluate your work and make changes:

- **Read critically**: Approach your text with fresh eyes to improve it.
- **Revise**: Make changes to organization, tone, and content.
- **Edit**: Reorganize, improve language, and clear up confusing passages.

3. Review your paragraph. Make revisions to improve it.

You might clarify ideas, improve the organization, or add details.

Submit
When you are satisfied that your writing is ready, proofread to make any final corrections and format your work in its final form. Then publish your work—send your email or letter, submit your paper, or post your blog entry.

4. Proofread your paragraph and make any final corrections.

Make a note of common errors in your writing to help you catch mistakes when you proofread. In an office, the final step would be to send or give your recommendation to your boss.
Essential Writing & Language Skills

**Practice It!**

*Use your understanding of the writing process to complete the following exercises.*

1. Sharon needs to write a paper about the history of ranching in her state. How can she plan before she begins to write?

2. Andrew has been assigned to write an essay about the U.S. Congress for a civics class. How can he decide on a more specific topic?

3. Ralph is writing a report for work to analyze productivity in his department.
   a. What does Ralph need to think about before he begins writing?
   b. How can Ralph approach writing the report to keep it organized?
   c. How can Ralph evaluate his writing?

4. Mauricio intends to write about nuclear-powered submarines for a science paper. He has made a list of information he knows about submarines and has found three books about how they function.
   a. Where is Mauricio in the writing process?
   b. What advice would you give to Mauricio to proceed?

---

**The Writing Process**

**Plan**

Brainstorm twice for unfamiliar topics. First, brainstorm questions about the topic. Research and then brainstorm again, including ideas and more questions.
Plan, Draft, Evaluate

Use the following passage for exercise 5.

Solar flares have a direct effect on the Earth’s atmosphere. The intense radiation from a solar flare travels to Earth in eight minutes. As a result, the Earth’s upper atmosphere becomes more ionized and expands. Long-distance radio signals can be disrupted by the resulting change in the Earth’s ionosphere. A satellite’s orbit around the Earth can be disturbed by the enhanced drag on the satellite from the expanded atmosphere, and satellites’ electronic components can be damaged.


5. Explain possible advantages of being able to predict solar flares.

a. **Plan:** What is the purpose and audience? What will you write?

b. **Draft:** Draft a paragraph to fulfill this writing task.

c. **Evaluate and Submit:** Evaluate your paragraph to revise and edit it.

6. How does revising your work as you evaluate it differ from proofreading work that you are finalizing?
Use the following letter to the editor for exercise 7.

I strongly disagree with last Sunday’s editorial against the city’s plan to close the Bradley Branch Library. Libraries do have valuable services, but they are being replaced by services available over the Internet. Is the Bradley Library bustling with readers every day? I doubt it, otherwise the city would not choose to close it. It is natural that when people can download unlimited ebooks from the Internet and browse unlimited websites, the city should reduce its number of libraries. Patrons can travel a little further to another branch.

7. Critique the argument in this letter to the editor. Is the reasoning sound? What are possible counterarguments?
   a. Plan: What is the purpose and audience? What will you write?
   b. Draft: Draft a paragraph to fulfill this writing task.
   c. Evaluate and Submit: Evaluate your paragraph and revise it.

8. Imagine that you are planning to write a blog post to share a recipe. How would you use the writing process?
Check Your Skills

Use the writing process to write short responses to the following exercises.

1. Lee is writing a blog post describing how to build a shed. He begins to draft his post. Two paragraphs later, after describing the steps, he runs out of things to say. His post seems too short, and he’s not sure what to do. Describe how Lee can use the writing process to improve his writing and revise his blog post.

Write your answer below or type your response on a computer. Take approximately 25 minutes to respond.

Use the questions on page 329 to evaluate your response.
The following passage is from the book *Are Women People?* by Alice Duer Miller. The book is a collection of short passages and poetry in support of giving women the right to vote.

**Use the following passage for exercise 2.**

The Logic of the Law

In 1875 the Supreme Court of Wisconsin in denying the petition of women to practise before it said: “It would be shocking to man’s reverence for womanhood and faith in woman … that woman should be permitted to mix professionally in all the nastiness which finds its way into courts of justice.”

It then names thirteen subjects as unfit for the attention of women—three of them are crimes committed against women.

Source: From *Are Women People?* by Alice Duer Miller, 1915.

2. Explain and critique this passage as an argument that women should be allowed to argue cases before courts. Write your answer below or type your response on a computer. Take approximately 25 minutes to respond.

Use the questions on page 329 to evaluate your response.
Connections

Have you ever . . .

• Changed a friend’s mind?
• Almost agreed with someone’s argument, until you learned the source of his or her information?
• Heard a rumor that you knew wasn’t true?

Before people will agree with a claim, they will usually look for a reason to do so. “Because I said so,” rarely works to persuade. To convince others to agree with a position, you must include strong support to back up your claim. Developing good support is crucial to creating a successful argument.

An argument includes a claim (the central idea that you want to prove), evidence, and reasoning. Evidence and reasoning is the support for your claim. With strong evidence and clear, logical reasoning, a claim can be convincing and persuasive.

Good evidence has four attributes. It is **Specific**, **Timely**, **Accurate**, and **Relevant**.

Each of these attributes helps create convincing support. Without all four of these attributes, a claim loses credibility, and the argument is not persuasive.

When evaluating your own support or analyzing others’ arguments, test evidence by asking, “Is it STAR Support?”
STAR Support

Specific, timely, accurate, and relevant evidence makes a claim more convincing.

- Look for STAR Support when you read and evaluate arguments.
- Use STAR Support in your own writing.

Ecotourism brings visitors to natural destinations to raise money and awareness to preserve natural environments. However, ecotourism is fundamentally flawed. It grows by 10 to 15 percent worldwide each year. That means more construction, trash, and use of local resources. An article in USA Today states, “one study in a Costa Rican national park found that wild monkeys turned into garbage feeders, becoming familiar with the presence of ecotourists and eating the food and rubbish left behind.” Ecotourism causes more harm than good. It is probably often developed in unsustainable ways, despite its stated goals.


Evaluate What You Read for STAR Support

Are There Specific Facts?

To analyze an argument, find specific facts that the writer uses. If the writer uses no specific facts to support the argument, then the argument is mostly opinion.

? 1. What specific facts does the writer use to support the argument?

The writer gives two specific facts: that ecotourism grows 10 to 15 percent each year and that a study showed wild monkeys began feeding on ecotourists’ trash. The writer also makes two statements that are vague and unspecific: that ecotourism means more construction, trash, and use of resources and that ecotourism is developed in unsustainable ways.

Are the Facts Timely?

The world is constantly changing, and new information is learned every day. Is the information timely? If the writer is talking about the Great Depression, expect facts from the 1930s. If the writer is talking about the current drop-out rates, the facts should be recent.

? 2. Is the evidence presented in the passage timely?
Developing Strong Support

The passage doesn’t give enough information to determine if the facts are timely without additional research. The facts may or may not be current.

Are the Facts Accurate?

If an argument contains inaccurate facts, then the support is invalid. Misreadings, information used out of context, and second-hand knowledge can all lead to support that sounds great but is inaccurate. To spot inaccuracies, ask:

- Is the source credible?
- Does the information make sense?

3. Is the support for the argument accurate?

You can’t always tell if information is accurate without checking other sources. However, you can tell that the author gives no sources for most of the facts. The only source is an article in USA Today that quotes an unnamed study. This source is a newspaper, which lends it credence, but the study itself would be a better source. The information in the passage makes sense, but the sources are vague.

Are the Facts Relevant?

Do the facts actually support the claim? Examine the logical connection that the author makes between the fact and the central idea. Does it make sense?

4. Is the support for the argument relevant?

The statement that ecotourism involves construction, trash, and use of resources gives a reason that growth of 10 to 15 percent is relevant. Causing wildlife to eat garbage is a negative impact of ecotourism, though the author doesn’t specifically state why it is a problem. The quotation is specific. However, facts about overall ecological impact of ecotourism (use of resources, impact of construction, and creation of trash) would be more relevant. The author’s statement that ecotourism is developed in unsustainable ways is relevant, but it lacks any specific factual support.
Use STAR Support in Your Writing

When you write:

- Use Specific facts, including details, to support your argument.
- Use Timely facts when you are researching. Look at when an article or book was written.
- Use Accurate facts and check quotations. Do not misrepresent the author.
- Use Relevant facts. Explain how your facts support your claim.

5. Write a paragraph evaluating the strength of the author’s argument. Use specific facts from the passage and include logical connections that show how the facts are relevant to your central idea.

You might write:

The author’s argument is not well supported, since it relies on vague statements. The author states that ecotourism grows 10 to 15 percent annually, but the passage lacks clear reasons why this growth is negative. It is logical that ecotourism results in construction, trash, and resource use, but what is the impact of construction? How much trash is generated? How many resources are used? How does this compare to the benefits of ecotourism? The author quotes one study that found wild monkeys in Costa Rica began eating trash from ecotourism. This is not a beneficial result. However, there are unanswered questions. How prevalent is this result in areas where there is ecotourism? Are there other studies with similar findings? The author states that ecotourism is “probably often developed in unsustainable ways,” but gives no evidence for this statement. The use of the words “probably often” shows that the author is merely speculating. Ecotourism may be harmful, but the author does not provide specific evidence for a convincing case.

Specific evidence includes an indirect quote (“ecotourism grows 10 to 15 percent annually”) and a direct quote (“‘probably often developed in unsustainable ways’”). The indirect and direct quotes are accurate, and the response includes explanations of why the quotations show that the argument is not well supported. You can use direct quotes in your writing, but do not use too many. Restate ideas to show that you understand them.
Developing Strong Support

Use the following prompt to complete exercises 1 through 3.

Imagine your city council is hearing arguments for and against reopening an abandoned drive-in movie theater. The developer is requesting taxpayer money to contribute to the renovation and in return pledges to have a free family movie night every other month for the first two years.

1. Which of the following is irrelevant to the developer’s argument?
   a. The movie theater would increase business in an otherwise unsightly area.
   b. The theater would draw visitors from out of town and support other businesses.
   c. The movie theater used to show a double feature every Saturday night.
   d. People who remember the theater support its renovation.

2. Which specific information would help the developer make his case stronger?
   a. How renovating drive-in theaters has spurred economic growth in similar towns
   b. Why the theater closed down
   c. What movies would show there over the next three years
   d. Information about the current movie theater that shows movies indoors

3. A local citizen argues, “It is unfair for taxpayers to pay for business development. A drive-in theater would just encourage young people to drink in their cars. When the theater was open in the 1980s, it caused a lot of traffic. This theater is a bad idea.”

   a. Does the argument provide specific facts? How does this affect the argument?

   b. Does the argument provide timely facts? How does this affect the argument?

   c. Does the argument provide accurate facts? How does this affect the argument?

   d. Does the argument provide relevant facts? How does this affect the argument?
Use the following passage for exercises 4 and 5.

Our city should install sidewalks along all our paved streets. Currently, only 50% of our streets have sidewalks beside them. This puts our children and all pedestrians in danger as they walk to school, stores, and neighbors’ homes. Our citizens should not be afraid to walk to the park or the grocery store. Last year, two people were injured because they were hit by cars as they walked along the shoulder of a street. One is paralyzed and confined to a wheelchair. The benefits of installing sidewalks surely outweigh the cost. We require bicyclists to wear helmets; we should have roads with sidewalks. It is a matter of our safety.

4. Examine the passage for STAR Support.

a. What is the best example of specific evidence in the passage? Why?

b. What one sentence is an example of irrelevant support? Why?

c. What statement in the passage has questionable accuracy? Why?

5. Using STAR Support, write a paragraph evaluating the argument in the passage.

Build Your Writing Skills

When you see vague support, always ask how it could be made more specific.
Developing Strong Support

Check Your Skills

Use the following passages for exercise 1.

**National Parks Are Best Preserved by Government**

Despite the claim that privatizing the National Park Service would create a stronger and more accessible collection of travel destinations, the best protector of national parks is the national government. As a non-profit institution, the function of government is to preserve democracy—and therefore the symbols of democracy—for citizens. Once public lands leave public control, they may be lost forever. Preservation is far from certain once a private corporation controls the land.

In the past, private industry has attempted to purchase state parks. In most cases, this has resulted in less public access at a greater cost to each visitor. The government created the parks; the government should keep control of them. The government may not be a perfect steward. However, for the people’s land, the people’s government is still the most appropriate regulator.

**Privatizing Can Better Preserve and Maintain**

National parks should be turned over to private corporations to run. As seen in other resources once regulated as monopolies, such as telephone services and some utilities, private corporations can manage large projects more efficiently, sometimes so efficiently that profit is possible. The 20th century has seen truly hideous mismanagement of national forests and parks, with amenities and roads in disrepair, parks understaffed, and the safety of campers and hikers left to suffer. The 21st would only see the continuation of shutdowns and poorly staffed parks. Our treasured wilderness areas and monuments deserve better.

The United States has long stood as an example of how private industry can revolutionize industries. National parks should be seen as tourist destinations as well as national legacies. Private industry has outperformed government in creating destinations of choice and should be permitted to apply its models of efficiency to national parks to ensure that our treasures remain standing and accessible through the 21st century.
1. Analyze the two arguments to determine which position is best supported. Use relevant and specific evidence from both passages to support your response.

Write your answer below or type your response on a computer. Take approximately 45 minutes to respond.

Remember the Concept

STAR Support
- Specific
- Timely
- Accurate
- Relevant

Use the questions on page 329 to evaluate your response.
Evaluating Arguments

Connections

Have you ever…

• Watched an infomercial for a new product?
• Listened to a talk radio show about a political topic?
• Read an editorial in a newspaper or online?

Commercials, talk radio, TV shows, and editorials all present arguments. A commercial tries to convince you to buy a product. A talk show or editorial presents an opinion. How do you know who to believe or what evidence you can trust? How do you explain why one argument is more believable than another?

Arguments can be crafted to make you respond emotionally or to seem logical, even if they are not. Many arguments sound perfectly reasonable the first time you read or hear them. On further examination, you may begin to see weaknesses.

A successful argument proves its claim using relevant evidence and sound reasoning. To evaluate whether an argument is credible and sound, describe the elements of the argument:

• Is its claim clear?
• Is the evidence credible?
• Is the speaker reliable?

After you describe the claim, evidence, and speaker, use this information to write an evaluation of the argument.
Describe the Claim, Evidence, and Speaker

When you evaluate an argument, you aren’t giving your own opinion of the topic. Your goal is to objectively analyze the author’s argument. This skill will help you write about arguments and make decisions about controversial topics.

When you describe the claim, evidence, and speaker, you assign value. For example, if you describe a claim as unreasonable and unclear, then it is not a strong claim. If you describe evidence as specific, credible, and from a trusted source, it is strong evidence.

Examine the following argument.

Two years of college education should be available free to all qualified U.S. students. By 2018, over 60 percent of jobs will require workers with at least some college education, but public support of education is down in 48 states. At the same time, employers are cutting back (or at least not expanding) their training programs. They are, in essence, expecting candidates to show up fully qualified, according to an article in the Las Vegas Review-Journal.¹

Two years of free postsecondary education would address the problem of filling jobs with qualified workers. Government investment in free higher education would stimulate the economy by allowing college graduates more spending capacity. More people would attend college if finances weren’t a barrier. Other countries who make this investment see a payoff in the quality of their work forces and lifestyles.

The benefits of this policy are obvious. Students would be more motivated to graduate high school, knowing that they have options after they graduate. Under this policy, students would decide immediately on a major or training program best suited to them and would be more likely to finish quickly and begin working.

Currently, a college degree is out of reach to many students, limiting their potential. A lack of college education prevents young adults from being financially stable enough to support a family, buy a home, or start a business. Even those who graduate college aren’t assured of financial security. Those who leave college owing thousands in student loans and still can’t find work are in grave financial situations. A free two-year degree would help many young people get started in careers. This would benefit individuals and also the society to which they contribute.

Evaluating Arguments

Describe the Claim
First, identify the claim, which is the idea that the writer is attempting to prove. Summarize the claim in one sentence. Then, describe the claim. You can use the following words to describe the claim. Identify reasons for your description.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Claim</th>
<th>Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unreasonable</td>
<td>Reasonable</td>
<td>Clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Somewhat clear</td>
<td>Reasonable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

? 1. Identify and describe the claim of the argument, giving reasons for your description.

The claim is clear: that two years of college education should be free to U.S. students. It is stated at the beginning of the argument. The claim is somewhat reasonable. The government provides many services and could expand public education by two years. However, this would incur significant costs and changes in the educational system.

Describe the Evidence
Use STAR Support criteria to examine the evidence. Is it Specific, Timely, Accurate, and Relevant? Be sure to evaluate the source. Is the source untrustworthy or unknown? Is the source an expert?

Evidence must also be sufficient. There must be enough evidence to prove the claim. Use the following words to describe evidence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient/vague</td>
<td>Some evidence</td>
<td>Specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-date</td>
<td>Unknown date</td>
<td>Timely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inaccurate</td>
<td>Unknown source</td>
<td>Accurate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrelevant</td>
<td>Somewhat relevant</td>
<td>Relevant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

? 2. Describe the evidence in the argument, giving reasons for your description.

One piece of evidence that is specific, timely, accurate, and relevant is that over 60% of jobs will require degrees by 2018. This fact comes from a newspaper article. Other statements are vague, such as the idea that students would quickly decide on majors. This idea isn’t supported by specifics and seems mainly to be speculation. It has no source. Overall, the evidence seems insufficient, especially since it does not address the costs of the proposal.
Describe the Speaker

The speaker is the author of an argument. Some speakers are biased, such as a company trying to sell a product. Others are reliable experts. Many speakers are unknown, except through their arguments. A speaker who makes contradictory statements or uses emotional pleas to distract from the argument is not trustworthy. Also examine how the speaker addresses arguments from the opposition. Does the author ignore opponents?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Untrustworthy/biased</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignores or misrepresents opponents</td>
<td>Acknowledges opponents</td>
<td>Addresses legitimate counterarguments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Describe the speaker, giving reasons for your description.

The speaker’s expertise or bias is unknown. He or she acknowledges that the opposition exists but does not address any counterarguments. The speaker is also somewhat contradictory. The statement that college graduates often cannot find jobs undermines the idea that two years of free college is a solution.

Write an Evaluation

Combine your descriptions of the claim, speaker, and evidence to write an evaluation. Start with a central idea that states the overall strength or weakness of the argument and use specific details to explain your descriptions of the claim, speaker, and evidence. Your evaluation should have a beginning, middle, and ending.

4. Write a paragraph evaluating the argument.

See the Answers and Explanations section on page 384 for a sample response.
Holiday parades are a waste of public resources. They are admittedly festive and happy occasions, but they serve no civic purpose that couldn’t be otherwise served by a concert, fireworks show, or fair. Marching bands can be heard at football games, and balloons and floats are simply unnecessary diversions.

At famous parades, such as the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade or Mardi Gras, viewers, who are often inebriated, gather in the streets only to watch other people walk at various speeds. These parades block traffic and create trash. They require police and emergency responder overtime. This cost would be better spent funding environmental programs, shelters, education, and other public services.

1. Describe the claim in the passage, giving reasons for your description.

2. Describe the evidence in the passage, giving reasons for your description.

3. Describe the speaker in the passage, giving reasons for your description.

4. Write a well-organized paragraph evaluating the argument. Include suggestions to improve the argument.
Driverless cars are our future, and we should encourage their development by passing laws allowing driverless cars on roads throughout the country. Nevada, Florida, and California already have laws allowing driverless cars. These software-controlled cars have successfully navigated San Francisco’s steep and twisting Lombard Street and driven over 300,000 miles of tests. Only one accident has happened during testing: a human driver rear-ended a driverless car. With their incredible record of safety, driverless cars will reduce drunk driving, make commutes more productive, and reduce insurance costs. In a March 2012 video posted by Google, a legally blind man goes through a drive-through in a self-driving Toyota Prius. This video highlights the benefits of driverless car technology to disabled people. Why not allow this safe and beneficial technology to flourish?

5. Describe the claim in the passage, giving reasons for your description.

6. Describe the evidence in the passage, giving reasons for your description.

7. Describe the speaker in the passage, giving reasons for your description.

8. Write a well-organized paragraph evaluating the argument. Include suggestions to improve the argument.
Evaluating Arguments

Check Your Skills

Use the following passages for exercise 1.

The presence of royalty gives a nation a sense of pride and history that should be cherished and honored. Great Britain is an excellent example of what a royal family can add to the culture. The constitutional monarchy allows Britain to experience the best of both worlds: the continuity of tradition and the progressive possibilities of a democracy.

Around the world, people celebrate royal weddings and births. When Prince Charles and Lady Diana married, it was an international sensation. An estimated 750 million people watched. The birth of Prince George of Cambridge in 2013 spurred composer Paul Mealor to write a new lullaby, “Sleep On.” Shared events like this bring a nation together, forming cultural milestones.

In Great Britain and other nations with historic monarchies, the royal family is a link to the past. Although royal roles may be ceremonial, a royal family allows the average citizen to celebrate a shared history and national pride.

Royalty devalues the average citizen. A monarchy flies in the face of the idea that “all men are created equal.” If royalty were eliminated, any loss of tradition would be more than replaced by a thirst for innovation, improvement, and individuality.

Through its monarchy, Great Britain makes a silent statement that some people are inherently better than others. Members of the royal family have special treatment because of an accident of birth. In an article on CNN, Graham Smith details the problems with British monarchy. He states, “It is secretive, having recently lobbied successfully to have itself removed entirely from the reaches of our Freedom of Information laws; it lobbies government ministers for improvements to its financial benefits and for its own private agenda; it is hugely costly—an estimated £202 million a year.” The British monarchy is outdated, undemocratic, and costly. On the other hand, the U.S. system of democracy, where anyone might earn the presidency, encourages self-improvement because birth is not destiny.

1Source: “Why UK should abolish its ‘failed’ monarchy” by Graham Smith on CNN.com
http://www.cnn.com/2012/05/30/world/europe/uk-jubilee-republicans/index.html
1. Analyze the two arguments to determine which position is best supported. Use relevant and specific evidence from both passages to support your response. Write your answer below or type your response on a computer. Take approximately 45 minutes to respond.

Remember the Concept

Describe the claim, evidence, and speaker to evaluate an argument.

Use the questions on page 329 to evaluate your response.