

Name:

Date:

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Directions:

Read through the following worksheet and complete the tasks as directed. Attach all writing to the worksheet before handing it in for assessment.

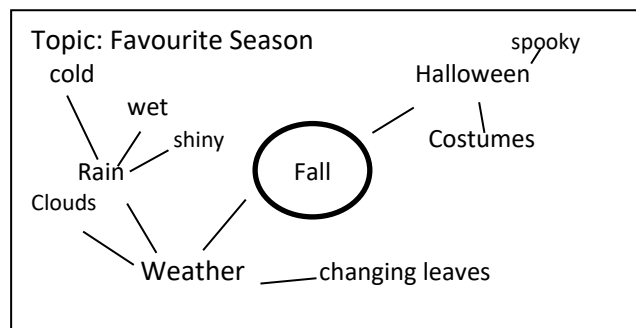
SKILL-BUILDING TASKS

The hardest part of writing is getting started. This will get easier the more you do it. In the next unit, you will start a journaling project that will give you plenty of opportunity to practice putting your thoughts onto paper. First, however, you should review some basic writing strategies using the tasks below.

Brainstorming/idea generating

Coming up with ideas is the first challenge. When you have a writing task to do, in school, at work, or in your personal life, you should start with brainstorming and collecting ideas rather than jumping right into your first sentence. Complete the tasks below to learn four different brainstorming techniques.

Word-association: identify a word that is central to a topic you have to write about or your answer to a question, put that word in the centre of your page, and then brainstorm any words that come to mind in association with those words. THEN look at the new words and do the same thing (see sample)

**TASK #1**

1. In the space on the next page, create a word association brainstorm for each of the below topics. You will be marked using the following checklist:

- Did you follow the structure outlined? (1 mark)
- Did your word-associations make sense? (1 mark)
- Did you fill up your whole page? (1 mark)

My favourite animal.

Healthy eating.

Talk and jot: when you have a topic, pick a friend or teacher and have a conversation about that topic. As you ask each other questions and respond, new ideas will emerge. While chatting, write down everything you think is interesting or relevant. It can be helpful to record your conversation and then play it back to pause and take notes.

TASK #2

2. Have a Talk-And-Jot conversation on each of the topics below and attach your notes to the worksheet before handing it in. You will be marked using the following checklist:

- Did you have a conversation about your topic and take notes while talking/while listening back? (1 mark)
- Do your notes make sense and have relevance to the topic? (2 marks)
- Do you have enough notes to turn into a complete written task (full description, opinion, etc)? (2 marks)

A holiday you remember.

School uniforms.

Free writing: set a timer for fifteen minutes. With your topic in mind, start writing when the timer starts. Write down every thought that comes into your mind, even if it doesn't seem relevant, and do not stop writing until the timer goes off. Afterwards, review what you wrote and highlight/underline anything that might be useful to a writing task.

TASK #3

3. Free write on each of the topics below in the space provided, or use a separate sheet of paper and attach your writing to this worksheet before handing it in. You will be marked using the following checklist:

- Did you write for the whole fifteen minutes? (1 mark)
- Did you write things relevant to the topic? (2 marks)
- Did you review your writing and highlight/underline useful words/sentences? (2 marks)

Something you're proud of.

Voting age.

SWOTing: SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. It is a great way to evaluate things you need to form opinions about or consider multiple perspectives. Consider your topics and complete a 4-square like the one in the example, putting each term in one quadrant.

Topic: Learning a new language	
Strengths Communicate with more people, good brain exercise, travel, understand foreign media	Weaknesses May alienate friends who don't speak the new language, may cause confusion
Obstacles Expense? Remembering new words Finding resources	Threats Racist people Saying something wrong could cause arguments

TASK #4

4. On a separate sheet of paper, create a SWOT table for each of the topics below and attach your notes to the worksheet before handing it in. You will be marked using the following checklist:

- Did you fully complete the table as directed? (2 marks)
- Are your SWOTs related to your topic? (2 marks)
- Did you write at least three things in each quadrant? (3 marks)

Going to college.

Flying instead of driving.

Planning

Once you have an idea of what you are going to write about, you can start thinking about HOW. Unless you're just writing for practice or your own records/notes, it's a good idea to have a simple plan for your writing. Everything else will be easier if you do.

Plans should be in point form, and you don't need to worry about spelling, grammar, or neatness. They just need to make sense to you. No matter what you are writing, your plan can follow the below format:

Beginning: Introduces your topic.
Middle: Provides details or supporting points.
End: Reminds of your topic and leaves with a final thought.

Example:

Topic: Favourite Season

Beginning

I prefer Fall

The weather is nice

Halloween is the best holiday

Middle

Weather = rainy, cold but not too cold, foggy, dark

Atmosphere = shiny, colourful, smells like dirt and leaves,

Things to do = apple picking, hay rides, hiking

Halloween = spooky, fun, costumes

End

Fall is the best

Other seasons are too hot or cold, boring

TASK #5

5. Take **any four** of your brainstormers from above and create a writing plan using the outlined format. Attach your plans to the worksheet when you hand it in. You will be assessed using the following checklist.

- Did you complete a three-part plan? (2 marks)
- Did you use ideas from your brainstormers? (2 marks)
- Does your beginning clearly introduce the topic to someone who would not otherwise know? (2 marks)
- Does your middle include detailed supporting points or description? (2 marks)
- Does your ending recall your main point AND include a final thought? (2 marks)

Getting Started

Now you know what you're going to write about, it's time to actually get started! There are several ways you can start a paragraph (specific beginnings for specific forms of writing will be looked at later, but for now you will practice general starter sentences).

TASK #6

6. Complete the practice below to learn 5 different starting sentences. Choose ONE of the topics from your plans to use for **ALL** of the practice sentences, so you can see how there are different ways to say the same thing. Attach your sentences to the worksheet before you hand it in.
- Traditional statement of topic (ie: Fall is better than Summer). (2 marks)
 - Starting with "ing" action words (ie: Choosing a favourite season is not hard, or Changing leaves and cool weather are the best). (2 marks)
 - Starting with "ly" adjectives (ie: Slowly, the leaves turn and fall to the ground). (2 marks)
 - Starting with time and or place (ie: At the end of September, the best season starts). (2 marks)
 - Rhetorical questions (ie: What is the most wonderful time of year? Fall!) (2 marks)

TYPES OF WRITING and PARAGRAPHS

You could make a paragraph, an essay, a story, or something even longer out of the plans you've made with a basic "beginning," "middle," and "end" foundations, but we are going to stick with single paragraphs for now.

Types of writing you most commonly do in life are:

Writing to describe: In which you use all of your senses to give details of an event, item, or scene.

Writing to inform/explain: In which you provide information, show your understanding, summarize in your own words, or give instructions.

Writing to persuade/convince: In which you make an argument and support it with reasons and evidence.

Look at the writing frames below for each of these types of writing for a basic five sentence paragraph (note: each section does not strictly need to be a single sentence, but it must be AT LEAST one full sentence). Do you notice the beginning/middle/end pattern and how there are slight differences in each?

Describe:

Topic sentence
Detail sentence 1
Detail sentence 2
Detail sentence 3
Concluding sentence

Inform/Explain:

Topic sentence
Detail sentence OR step 1
Detail sentence OR step 2
Detail sentence OR step 3
Concluding sentence

Persuade/Convince:

Topic sentence
Evidence/example 1
Evidence/example 2
Evidence/example 3
Concluding sentence

Can you identify the five parts in the following example?

Example (persuasive paragraph)

At the end of September, the best season starts: Fall. The weather at this time of year is perfectly chilled with pretty, crisp leaves decorating the ground. The atmosphere is spooky and cozy, perfect for exploring the changing forests or curling up inside by a fire. Best of all, Halloween happens in the middle of the Fall – bringing decorations, candy, and an excuse for dressing up and going outside at night. The other three seasons are either too cold, too hot, or long and boring. Nothing holds a candle to Fall!

TASK #7

7. Using your planning from the previous section, and your learning about types of writing and paragraphs, to compose **four different paragraphs**. Attach your writing to this worksheet before handing it in.

Each paragraph will be marked using the following checklist:

- Did you use the five-sentence structure (even if you used more than five sentences)? (2 marks)
- Did you choose the appropriate type of paragraph for your topic? (2 marks)
- Did you use a type of opening sentence different from those you used in your other three paragraphs? (2 marks)
- Does your opening sentence clearly tell your reader what your paragraph is about? (2 marks)
- Does each of your supporting points relate directly to your opening sentence? (3 marks)
- Does your writing clearly and fluidly communicate your meaning (reading out loud will help you figure this out)? (2 marks)
- Did you use proper spelling and grammar throughout? (2 marks)