

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING YOUR WRITING SKILLS

1. Remember that if you complete all three stages of writing (prewriting, writing, revising), you have the best chance of improving your expository writing skills.
2. Write a first paragraph that provides an interesting introduction to your topic and that includes a **clear** thesis statement, usually at the end of the paragraph. This paragraph not only should tell the reader what your paper will cover but also should arouse his or her interest.
3. Construct each paragraph around a topic sentence that states the main idea and is usually the first sentence in the paper. The other sentences in the paragraph **must** be related to the topic sentence—they usually develop it with concrete illustrations.
4. Use appropriate connecting words and transitional phrases in your writing so that the reader has **no** trouble following the progression of your thoughts. Some common connecting words and phrases follow: nevertheless, nonetheless, therefore, thus, moreover, however, indeed, hence, furthermore, consequently, besides, accordingly, likewise, otherwise, and then.
5. Do not try to accomplish too much in one overloaded sentence. Two or three readable sentences are preferable to one that is so complicated that the reader becomes confused.
6. On the other hand, use **subordination** sometimes when it will help you combine two simple sentences into one well-connected sentence. The point here is that you should vary your sentence structure to avoid monotony in your prose. Some useful subordinating words and phrases follow: although, because, before, until, after, while, whenever, since, why, only though, where, unless, as, if, as if, so that, so far as, and whereas.
7. Use strong verbs to supply your writing with vigor and movement. In particular, avoid overusing forms of "to be"—they often remove the vitality from your sentences.
8. Do not pad your writing by repeating yourself or by finding lengthy phrases to say what can be said more concisely. On the other hand, you should always **fully support** your points. If, for example, you discover that your paper is running a bit short, go back and introduce more specific examples and particular descriptions into the essay.
9. Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and manuscript form in your paper. If you have questions on grammar, consult your handbook; if you are unsure of the spelling of words, refer to a dictionary (you should, by the way, **own** an adequate dictionary.)

You are **strongly** encouraged to type all out-of-class papers.