

Supplying Reasons

What's your favorite pastime? Why do you enjoy it? Why did you decide on a certain career? Why did a particular historical event happen? People are usually interested in understanding why things happen.

In this chapter, you will write a main idea that raises the question "Why?" in the mind of the reader. You will then write a composition that provides reasons and supporting details that answer the question.

A Read sample compositions

As you read the following compositions, find the three reasons in each composition that explain and support the main idea sentence. In the margin, number each reason 1–3.

Sample 1**The Joy of Reading**

I really enjoy reading whenever I have free time. One reason I love to read is that I can visit other countries by reading about others' travel experiences. My favorite travel book tells about a trip to Africa. In it the author describes his adventures finding fascinating tribes, dense jungles, and the rarest animals in the world. In another travel book, the author writes about visiting interesting places in Europe and describes walking through Renaissance cathedrals in Italy, climbing the Eiffel Tower in Paris, and waking up to foggy mornings in London.

Another reason I love to read is that it puts me in a good mood. When I am disappointed about something, I can read a story about someone who overcame a similar disappointment. When I'm sad, I can read a funny story that makes me laugh. When I am discouraged, I can read about a person who helps others. The people I read about give me strength and hope.

The main reason that I enjoy reading is that it allows me to travel in time and space. I can travel to the Renaissance period and watch Michelangelo sculpt David. I can have dinner with King Louis XIV or Queen Victoria of England. I can move next door to Beethoven and listen to his music as he's composing it. I can also travel to Mars and Jupiter. It's really fun to visualize myself in the past and in the future.

I can't imagine life without the joy of reading.

Adapted from a composition by Heera Lee

Sample 2

The International Bridge

I go online as often as I can for the following reasons. First of all, I can shop on the Internet without leaving my room. On the other hand, if I go shopping in the stores, it takes me all day because I have to drive to several stores to find what I want at a reasonable price. When I shop on the Internet, it takes me only about a half hour to find what I want, compare prices, and order it. I can even shop online to buy things from other countries.

Second, I can send photos to people anywhere in the world in less than five minutes without leaving my home. If I mail photos using the postal service, however, I have to go out to get copies made of the photos. This takes a couple days and two trips. Then I have to take another trip to the post office to buy the right amount of postage. After I put the photos in the mail, it takes several days for them to arrive at their destination.

The most important reason for me to go online is to keep in touch with my friends and family. Calling overseas costs a lot of money. Luckily, I can stay in close contact with the people who are important to me when we communicate by e-mail. The best part of my day is the afternoon when I sit down at my computer to check my e-mail and pick up messages from home. I know, too, that my family really enjoys hearing from me often.

These days going online is an important part of my life. For me, it's an international bridge that connects me to any place I want in the world.

Adapted from a composition by Kamyar Amjadi

Sample 3

Preventing a Worldwide Disaster

The amounts of heat-trapping gases inside the Earth's atmosphere have been increasing since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in the 17th century. The causes are many, but some of the most important include the following. First, methane gas results from several commercial activities, such as coal mining, the production of petroleum products, and the raising of cattle.

Next, the cutting down and burning of forests contributes to the increase of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. When wood burns, carbon dioxide is released. The burning of forests, then, produces billions of tons of carbon dioxide each year. In addition, the cutting down of forests takes away trees that would normally remove carbon dioxide from the air.

Another source of increasing carbon dioxide in the Earth's atmosphere is the burning of fossil fuels. A primary example of fossil fuels is the gasoline we burn in our vehicles. The use of fossil fuels has added enormous amounts of this gas into the atmosphere. In the late 20th century, the burning of fossil fuels released about six tons of carbon dioxide each year. Figures for the 21st century are certain to be much higher. The result of these increasing amounts of heat-trapping gases in our environment is a serious threat to the health of our planet Earth. We must act immediately in order to prevent a worldwide disaster.

Sample 4

Napoleon's Fall from Power

In early 19th century Europe, the French leader Napoleon Bonaparte fell from power for the following reasons. First, he became more and more self-centered. Because of his egotism, he refused to accept valuable suggestions from his advisors. He believed that he was born to rule all of Europe, and that no one could stop him.

Second, Napoleon's Continental System caused more damage to France and its friends than to its enemies. Napoleon tried to prevent British products from entering the continent, but the countries within the continent needed many of these products. France suffered without these products and supplies.

Finally, Napoleon's aggressive military caused the people to turn against him. It became obvious to them that Napoleon's goal was to treat the people unfairly and become a king with total control over all. In addition, too many Frenchmen were dying. This situation led to many personal, military, and economic difficulties. Thus, a man who many believed in at first ended up losing the confidence of the people and falling from power. Lonely and defeated, Napoleon Bonaparte died in 1821.

B Select a topic

Read the following topics to select one for your composition. Choose a topic that brings to mind several reasons. Also, make sure that you can provide plenty of specific, supporting details for the reasons.

- 1 The reasons for an important decision you have made, such as moving to another country or city, getting married, or choosing a particular major or career
- 2 The reasons you enjoy a particular hobby
- 3 The reasons you enjoyed or did not enjoy a specific trip or vacation
- 4 The reasons you made a major purchase, such as a computer or car
- 5 The reasons you like or dislike a particular store, restaurant, or place of entertainment
- 6 The reasons for a specific problem in the 21st century
- 7 The reasons for a specific historical event or situation
- 8 Other topics: _____

C Explore ideas by making a list

LISTING AND ORGANIZING IDEAS

Making a list of your ideas is a good way to explore a topic. When you make a list, allow your mind to explore. Write everything that comes to mind as you did for the freewriting technique in Chapter 3 on page 61. You don't have to write complete sentences. Afterward, you can analyze your list and put related groups of ideas together.

Here are the steps to explore a topic.

- 1 Make a list of ideas about your topic.
- 2 Decide on a main idea that most of the ideas on your list support.
- 3 Cross out ideas that do not relate to your main idea.
- 4 Group relevant ideas together.
- 5 Write a general statement that is true for each group of supporting ideas.

Practice 1

Look at this page from a student's notebook, which shows a student exploring a topic by making and organizing a list. The student has completed the first three steps in the box *Listing and Organizing Ideas* on page 79. Work with a partner and complete steps 4 and 5. Group the ideas together into three reasons and write a general statement for each group of ideas that support that reason. The first general statement is written for you.

Barking all the time, jumping on people, knocking things over
Washing the dog regularly, getting rid of fleas in its fur
Dogs are good company — can play with them and have fun
It costs a lot to feed a dog.
Feeling safe and protected by a large dog at home, in the night
What if the dog bites people, hurts children?
If I go away on vacation, I will have to pay to put the dog somewhere or pay for a dog sitter.
Cleaning up after the dog — Yuck!
Good exercise — taking the dog for a walk
I like sleeping late on the weekends and don't want to have to wake up early to take the dog out.
Can meet other people who have dogs
What about medical bills if the dog gets sick — that can be very expensive.

1 Dogs can be dangerous and difficult to control.

2 _____

3 _____

Your turn

For your topic, brainstorm a list of ideas. Following the steps in the box *Listing and Organizing Ideas* on page 79, organize your ideas and write three reason statements to support the main idea about your topic.

II PREPARING THE FIRST DRAFT

A Make a rough outline

Using notes from the list you brainstormed on the opposite page, make an outline similar to the one on the right. Then complete it, writing key words, phrases, and ideas.

I. MAIN IDEA

II. BODY

REASON 1
Details

REASON 2
Details

REASON 3
Details

III. CONCLUSION

B Compose the main idea

THE MAIN IDEA

A clear main idea sentence includes a topic and a comment. In a composition supplying reasons, the comment gives the writer's opinion about the topic.

Topic: Reading

Comment: I enjoy it whenever I have free time.

Main idea: I enjoy reading whenever I have free time.

Practice 2

In each of the following pairs of sentences, one gives a main idea, and the other gives supporting details or reasons. Circle the letter of the main idea in each pair.

- 1 **a** Soccer gives me a chance to be with my friends.
b My favorite hobby is soccer.
- 2 **a** My decision to leave home was one of the hardest decisions I've ever had to make.
b My little brother cried when he heard I was thinking about moving out on my own.
- 3 **a** I love living in an apartment alone.
b I can keep my apartment as messy as I want.
- 4 **a** Communicating in a second language can cause misunderstandings.
b Living in a foreign country can be difficult.

- 5 a A college education should be every teenager's goal.
b Without a college education, it is hard to find a career that pays a good salary.
- 6 a The Metropolitan Museum in New York is a wonderful place to visit.
b The museum has a large collection of high quality paintings.
- 7 a It costs a lot to own a dog.
b Owning a dog causes many problems.

Your turn

Look back at your rough outline and write your main idea sentence.

C Organize reasons in a logical order

ORGANIZING REASONS

Because the reader usually remembers the last point most clearly, the most common way to organize a composition that contains reasons is to put the most important or most convincing reason last. When you look at your notes before starting to write your first draft, you should think about which reason is the most important and contains the most convincing details. That reason should be the final one in your composition.

Practice 3

Read the following composition, and answer the questions on the next page.

Why I Gave Up Smoking

After three years of trying to quit smoking, I finally gave up the habit six months ago for several good reasons.

To begin with, I got tired of the smell. My hair usually smelled bad, I always had bad breath, and my apartment always smelled like cigarette smoke.

Second, I felt uncomfortable when people reacted negatively to my smoking. Complete strangers would give me unfriendly looks and move away from me. Even my girlfriend began to avoid me.

Next, cigarettes just kept getting more and more expensive. I estimate that smoking cost me over one hundred dollars a month.

The most important reason, though, is that I began to worry about my future health. I do not mind having a little cough, but I am really afraid of health problems when I get older, such as cancer and heart disease. No pleasure is worth that price! Now that I have quit smoking, I can enjoy clean air again, people are friendly toward me, I have more spending money, and my cough is gone. Life is just more enjoyable.

- 1 What are the writer's four reasons for giving up smoking?
- 2 Which one is the most important reason? Why?

Your turn

Organize the points for your composition in logical order. Mark the order in your outline. In most cases, your most important, strongest, or most convincing reason will appear last.

D Use transition signals to introduce reasons

TRANSITION SIGNALS

Transition signals can indicate the introduction of a reason. These expressions help your reader follow your ideas from one reason to the next.

The first reason is that . . .
Another reason is that . . .
The most important reason is that . . .
First of all, . . .
Second, . . .
Finally, . . .

Practice **4**

Write the transition signals used in each of the sample compositions at the beginning of this chapter (pages 76–78).

- 1 Sample 1, "The Joy of Reading"

- 2 Sample 2, "The International Bridge"

- 3 Sample 3, "Preventing a Worldwide Disaster"

- 4 Sample 4, "Napoleon's Fall from Power"

Practice 5

Add transition signals to the following composition.

My Neighbors

Lately, I have been miserable because of the neighbors who moved next to my house in April. _____ (1) they do not control their dogs. I used to have a nice garden with beautiful flowers, and I could not understand why the flowers were disappearing. One day I woke up from the barking of the dogs, looked out the window, and saw the dogs jumping around in my garden.

_____ (2) is that they have wild parties. Almost every evening they have people over. They must have many relatives and friends. They turn the music up so loud that it almost kills my ears. Then they start shouting and dancing.

_____ (3) is that almost every night after midnight they start fighting. A week ago someone called the police because they started yelling and arguing in front of their house. Before these people moved in, my neighborhood was nice and quiet. I hope they move away and leave the neighborhood the way it used to be.

Adapted from a composition by Tiopa Techiryan

Your turn

Decide on transition signals for your composition and note them on your outline.

E Use specific, supporting details

SUPPORTING DETAILS

Specific details and facts can be used to support reasons. Details may relate to the five senses: sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste.

Sight: I used to have a nice garden with beautiful flowers.

Sound: I woke up from the barking of dogs.

Touch: Some dogs have very soft fur.

Smell: My apartment always smelled like cigarette smoke.

Taste: The freshly baked bread was delicious.

Practice 6

In pairs or small groups, use your imagination to write details to support the reasons in the following composition.

Dining Disaster

I'll never eat at Rosco's Steak House again. First of all, the service is terrible.

Another reason I'll never go back is that the atmosphere is unpleasant.

What convinced me more than anything else, though, was the food.

I don't understand how a place like Rosco's can stay in business.

Your turn

Check your outline for specific details, and add more details to support each reason. Then write the body of your composition, using your outline and notes.

F Write a conclusion

THE CONCLUSION

In a composition supplying reasons, the conclusion may restate the main idea to give closure.

... I can't imagine life without the joy of reading.

... These days going online is an important part of my life. For me, it's an international bridge that connects me to any place I want in the world.

... The result of these increasing amounts of heat-trapping gases in our environment is a serious threat to the health of our planet Earth. We must act immediately in order to prevent a worldwide disaster.

Practice 7

Write a conclusion for the following composition.

Paris: My Dream Come True

Ten years ago, after years of dreaming about Paris, I finally got to take the trip of my dreams. There are several reasons why this trip was so memorable. First of all, the hotel location was fantastic. It overlooked the Seine, the famous river I had read about in so many poems. In the morning, my husband and I had delicious café au lait and sweet-smelling, warm croissants for breakfast. We listened to the laughter of children playing nearby and watched the river go by below. It ran by very slowly and gave me the feeling that it was telling me the long story of Paris.

Next, Montmartre was wonderful. This is where many painters gather. When we went up the hill, we saw lots of artists from all over the world painting on their canvases. The air was filled with the sounds of happy people and the smell of paint.

What I enjoyed most, though, were the cafés. One of my dreams was just to have a cup of coffee at a café in Paris. I had seen so many pictures of those

cafés in books, and finally, my dream came true. I really enjoyed watching people walking on the street and listening to them speak French. Some of them wore gorgeous dresses. Some of them were casual. But everyone had a sense of style.

Adapted from a composition by Teruyo Tsuchiya

Your turn

Write a conclusion for your composition.

G Put together the first draft

As you have worked your way through Section II, you have written all the pieces that you need for a short composition: the main idea, the body, and the conclusion. Put these pieces together to create the first draft of your composition. Then add a title.

III REVISING YOUR WRITING

A Practice revising

Practice **8**

Revise and rewrite the following composition. For each reason, make sure there is a transition signal and there are specific, supporting details. Move details from one location to another so that they support the appropriate reason.

No More Big City for Many People

It is no surprise that every year many people move out of the big cities in this country. One reason that they move is that they are unhappy about the air quality.

Next, they get tired of the traffic and crowds. Smog covers most big cities like a large umbrella.

Also, many people are tired of the high crime rate related to drugs, car thefts, murders, and riots. The crime rate keeps going up, and no one feels safe in big cities anymore.

continued

Lots of people move out because they cannot find housing at a reasonable price. Young couples cannot afford to buy their own homes in large cities. Students face the toughest hardships of all because of their limited incomes. Because of this, they often have to live with many roommates or with relatives. It is unfortunate that so many people are forced to leave a city that they may think of as their home.

B Benefit from peer feedback

Exchange drafts with a partner. Read your partner's draft and check it using the *Revision Checklist* below. At this point, do not check grammar. Then give your partner feedback.

REVISION CHECKLIST

- ☐ 1 Does the draft have any places that are unclear?
- ☐ 2 Is the draft organized clearly, according to the outline form on page 81?
- ☐ 3 Does each reason begin with a transition signal?
- ☐ 4 Is each reason supported by plenty of specific details?

C Make revision decisions

Using the *Revision Checklist*, decide on the changes you want to make. Mark the changes in your first draft.

D Write the second draft

Write the second draft of your composition.

IV EDITING YOUR WRITING

A Identify clauses

INDEPENDENT AND DEPENDENT CLAUSES

All sentences must have at least one *independent clause*. An independent clause has at least one subject and one verb. An independent clause expresses a complete thought and can stand alone as a sentence.

^S ^V
Zahib plays the cello.

A *dependent clause* cannot stand alone as a sentence because it does not express a complete thought. It depends on an independent clause to complete its meaning. A subordinating conjunction usually introduces a dependent clause.

Common subordinating conjunctions

Time: before, after, when, while, as soon as, just as, until, whenever

Contrast: although, even though, though

Condition: if, unless

Cause/Effect: because, since

^S ^V
After Zahib gets his undergraduate degree in music, he will get a job.

^S ^V + ^V
Because Zahib studies hard and gets good grades, he won a scholarship.

Practice 9

Label each clause as independent (*I*) or dependent (*D*). If a clause is independent, add a period at the end.

- _____ 1 I go online
- _____ 2 As often as I can
- _____ 3 I can shop on the Internet without leaving my room
- _____ 4 If I go shopping in the stores to buy something
- _____ 5 It takes me all day
- _____ 6 Because I have to drive to several stores to find what I want at a reasonable price
- _____ 7 When I shop on the Internet
- _____ 8 It takes me only about a half hour to find what I want
- _____ 9 Since I can shop online to buy things from other countries
- _____ 10 These days going online is an important part of my life

B Identify sentence types

TYPES OF SENTENCES

There are three basic sentence types: simple, compound, and complex.

- A *simple sentence* consists of one independent clause.
The man looked like a car thief to me.
I ran toward him.
He didn't move away from my car.
- A *compound sentence* contains two independent clauses. It usually has a comma and a coordinating conjunction between the clauses. Common coordinating conjunctions include *and*, *but*, and *so*.
I yelled, and he turned toward me.
I still didn't understand the situation, so I kept yelling.
Finally I saw his guard uniform, and I got embarrassed.
I apologized, but I still felt ridiculous.
- A *complex sentence* contains one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses. The dependent clause is introduced by a subordinating conjunction. If the dependent clause comes first, it is separated from the independent clause with a comma. If the independent clause comes first, no comma is necessary.
Even though I didn't intend to park illegally, I still felt like a criminal.
I was at fault because I reacted without thinking.
When I remember that day, I get embarrassed all over again.
If I see that guard again, I'll hide my face.

Practice 10

Edit the following groups of sentences by combining two of the sentences into a compound or complex sentence. Add coordinating or subordinating conjunctions, if needed. Also, make any necessary changes in punctuation and capitalization.

My Precious Harmonica

- 1 I love to play my harmonica. Whenever I can.
- 2 One reason is that it relaxes me. It is easy to carry. I can take my harmonica to school.
- 3 I can put it in my book bag. I don't have to do homework between classes. I can play it in the car for a few minutes and feel relaxed.

- 4 Next, the harmonica is so easy to play. I hear a new song on the radio. I can pick up my harmonica and play the tune right away.
- 5 The most important reason I like my harmonica so much is that when I see or touch it, I can feel my father's love. He gave me a shiny, new harmonica as a birthday present ten years ago. He often enjoyed my playing.
- 6 Playing my harmonica reminds me of my father. I play it. I can see his face and hear his voice.
- 7 I thank my father for introducing me to this wonderful hobby. It is something I can pass on to my own son some day.

Adapted from a composition by Jee Moon

C Benefit from peer feedback

Exchange drafts with a partner. Read your partner's draft and check for a variety of sentence types: simple, compound, and complex. Make sure one sentence type isn't overused.

D Write the final draft

As you write your final draft, check for a variety of sentence types: simple, compound, and complex. Make improvements, as needed. Also, check for grammar errors.

V FOLLOWING UP

A Share your writing

Before you turn in your final draft, do one of these activities to share your writing.

- 1 Small Group Read-Around (page 35)
- 2 Traveling Compositions (page 55)
- 3 Writing to a Classmate (page 73)

B Check your progress

After you get your composition back from your instructor, complete the *Progress Check* below.

PROGRESS CHECK

Date: _____

Composition title: _____

Things I did well in this composition:

Things I need to work on in my next composition:

Look at your *Progress Checks* in the previous chapters. How did you improve your writing in this composition?
