

# ENGLISH

## STARVIEW

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### WRITING FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE TEST

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## Dedication

Dedicated to Bill McCabe and Sister Grace Florian McInerney, each of whom taught me English and showed me how to teach effectively.

## Special Credits

Thanks to my many colleagues who have contributed their knowledge, skills, and years of experience to making education vibrant.

Sincere thanks to these educators  
for their assistance in the preparation of this manuscript:

Kathleen Corbett  
Siobhan McCabe  
William McCabe  
Mary Joyce Michael  
Barbara Searle

## Reference

Top-rate references are most important to consistency in word use. We are grateful to the authors, editors, contributors, and publishers of this excellent resource: **The American Heritage Dictionary**® for fundamental definitions and appropriate word usage [available on CD-ROM through SoftKey Multimedia Inc, Cambridge, MA].

The grammatical conventions used in this *STARreview* are representative of those used on state Comprehensive Tests in English, specifically NYS.

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# INTRODUCTION

This is a book about writing in its many facets. Although reading, writing, speaking, and listening are all forms of communication, writing is special. Writing is a skill which will provide constant enjoyment as does reading. Writing requires you to be more precise than speech, and writing has a permanence which speech and listening lack. Finally, writing provides you with the opportunity to craft your product in a way speech rarely does.


The aspects of writing which this book will explore will take you from the basic tools of language, through the steps of the writing process, to the honing of the writing piece as art, to the obligations which writing places upon the writer, and finally to the execution of writing in such a skilled manner that writing on this level will ensure your certification as a competent practitioner of the medium.


Writing is another way to activate the self. As such, it will always have elements of challenge in the task, frustration in the attempt at execution, and remarkable joy at success. Value writing as a way to enhance your understanding of others and yourself. Use this book to help you write better. The first section of the book involves the tedium of rules. However, these rules are necessary if all the speakers of the language are to increase the probability of clear communication. The second section provides the emerging writer with a process that will increase focus and ease the burden of seeking a path from task to product. The third section stresses the unique style of each writer and suggests ways of perfecting this style. The fourth section stresses the implicit agreement that all writers must respect: the need to truthfully address and incorporate the ideas of others. Finally, the book puts you in the driver's seat and steers you toward the completion of state certification as a competent writer.

Read, write, listen, speak, enjoy the language and the chance to communicate. Enjoy this book and make it work for you. May all the goodness and joy of life that writing may help you secure be yours.



## MEANING OF THE

Stars  are reminders of important material, identifiers of special procedures or methods, or perhaps “hints” to help put you on the “right path.”

Stars  also give the student additional information making total understanding better.

# UNIT TWO WRITING AS A PROCESS AND AN ART

## CHAPTER ONE: TASK-AUDIENCE

How do you begin a writing response? The answer is closely connected to how you begin a speaking response: you think. Since you are dealing with written words which will be fixed in place long after the time you spent writing them, you need to be precise. Also, since you cannot use your body language, facial expression, or other words to keep explaining what you said to your audience, you need to be clear.



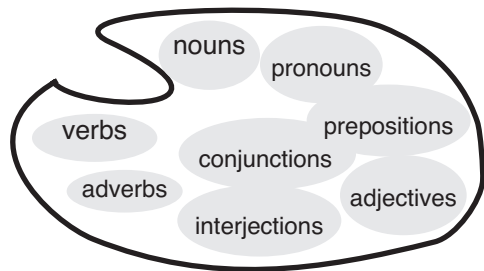
A **process** is a method, a way in which you proceed to attack a task. Using a process ensures that you focus on your task. Using a writing process to complete a writing task provides the probability that the writer will be as precise and clear as possible when completing the task. A process takes you from the understanding of the task through to the time when the writing is for all time permanent: published, delivered, shared, or handed in for a grade. In this text, **TASK** is an **acronym** (a word formed by using the initial letters of various other words) used to remember the steps to the writing process.

**Task** – the first step in the process requires an understanding of the job or assignment. The writer is responsible for this. You must understand what is required. If the task is unclear, and it is assigned by a person, you

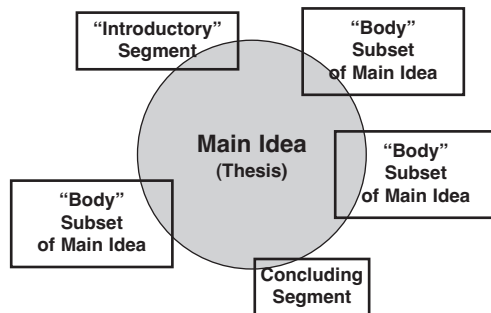
must ask that person questions: when is it due, who will read it, how long must it be, whether it requires research, etc. If the task is only written for you (as on a test), you must analyze the written task as carefully as possible, breaking it into its commands, requirements, and constraints. Underlining, highlighting, circling, or color-coding a task is often helpful if such a thing is permitted on the test.

**Audience** – the second step in the process requires an understanding of the spectators or listeners. Who is the intended reader? For most classroom work, the intended reader is a person who can be expected to have a full knowledge of standard English vocabulary and usage, a complete understanding of standard English grammar, and an understanding of a reasonable argument, complete with a knowledge of what constitutes worthy evidence.

**Selecting** – the third step in the process requires choosing the best details that you can, and based on these details beginning to decide the attitude you have about the subject. To do this, writers often brainstorm in one of a variety of ways. Writers may also find it helpful to assemble a **palette** (a range of colors an artist uses to create a picture) made of words rather than hues. This is the stage at which the writer may also have to do research in order to supply more details and acquire persuasive evidence.



**Keeping** – the fourth step in the process is holding your ideas together, getting them organized, first loosely, then according to some obvious logic. Finally, the organization provides a precise idea of form with clear transition among all of the parts. This is a step which has many segments. Writers often begin by relying on **webbing** (linking) ideas loosely along the natural divisions evident in their brainstorming. Then writers try to group some of those ideas and to add or delete others. At this point, writers often use a general outline consisting of introductory, body, and conclusion segments. Next, the rough draft is assembled by using clear transitions.



Once the rough draft is put together, writers often begin to **revise**, see the writing again, using some guidelines to craft a better piece of writing. The revision process for most classroom writing that is not narrative can be remembered by the acronym **AUDIENCE**.

**Avoid** contractions. The exception to this rule is any speech within quotation marks.

**Use** an introduction which includes a **motivating segment** (an attention grabber), a **bridge** (a link from the attention grabber to the thesis), and the **thesis** (a statement which expresses both your attitude and your topic).

**Develop** the body of the writing by explaining and validating the main points of the thesis. Here the writer must be aware of some basic logical errors to avoid, some essential aspects of valid evidence, and some criteria for worthy sources of support.

**Involve** the reader by offering proof as simple statements of fact, quotations and/or paraphrasing of authorities, statistics, and **anecdotes** (short narratives of one's own experience or the experience of other people).

**Every** paragraph must have a topic sentence.

**Never** jump from idea to idea. The reader is not in the mind of the writer, so the writer must supply clear **transitions** (connections from one idea to another).

**Choose** words which are specific, alive, and appropriate to the task, tone, and audience.

**End** the essay with a conclusion. If possible try to connect the conclusion to the motivating segment of the introduction.

Try to learn the TASK-AUDIENCE acronym as an easy way to remember the writing process.

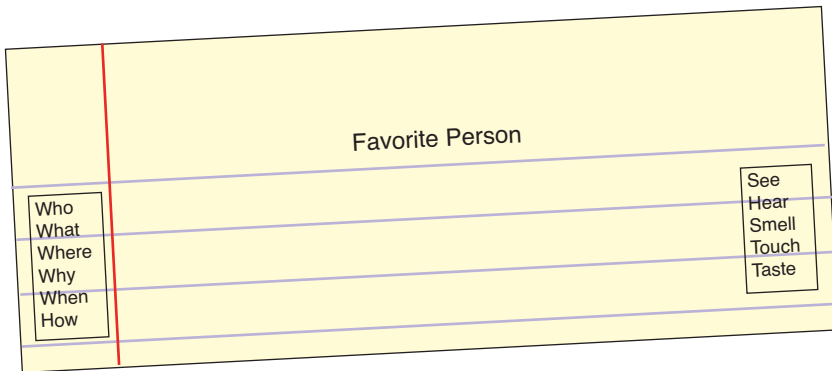
## CHAPTER TWO: TASK TO TEST

If the writing process is worthy of your attention, it should work with any task. So, follow a writer now in creating a piece of writing in response to a task.

Certainly every writer has a favorite relative, living or dead. To write about such a person, one must try to see through the **mind's eye** (the images stored in one's brain), and as clearly as possible imagine such a person. Through the magic of writing, one can then paint that person with words for others to see and know.

The **task** (job) is to **describe** (clearly portray) a favorite relative by using a multi-paragraph essay. The **audience** (the reader for whom the writer writes) will be the classroom teacher.

The writer now needs to start **selecting** by brainstorming some ideas about whom he will write. He sets up a piece of notebook paper putting the phrase "Favorite Person" right in the middle of the top line. Then in the left margin, he writes: "Who, What, Where, Why, When," and "How." In the right margin, he writes "See, Hear, Smell, Touch," and "Taste."



Now, in shopping list format, using only single words and phrases – no sentences if possible – the writer writes for three minutes without stopping. (Use a kitchen timer or watch.) He agrees to write whatever comes into his head with the understanding that he is the only reader of this list. If he strays off topic for four or more lines, he will refocus on the question list in the left margin or the sensory word list on the right.

Selecting well requires a wide range of choices, so he does not edit himself at this point. Later he will decide what to **keep**. For now, he just allows the ideas in his brain to fall softly on the brainstorm page. Some ideas will be gems, some ideas will be worthless, but for now, he just wants to get the ideas on the paper.

## INITIAL BRAINSTORMING FOR THIS TASK

|       |                        | Favorite Person  |  |
|-------|------------------------|--|--|
|       | Uncle Ed               | tough memory   |  |
| Who   | too long ago           | Pop  | See<br>Hear<br>Smell<br>Touch<br>Taste |
| What  | can't see Ed's face    | makes me laugh still   |  |
| Where | can't think            | played blocks  |  |
| Why   | still can't think      | read paper while I sat on his foot                             |  |
| When  | Who?--Kevin            | always looked at me when he talked to me                       |  |
| How   | too much like me       | taught me to find the words in his paper                       |  |
|       | dumb assignment        | danced with me and did the "big finish" dip                    |  |
|       | I like a lot of people | thought "Pop" invented soda pop bubbles                        |  |
|       | little kid in me       | nice voice--on key   |  |
|       | bratty kid             | cooked "our" noodles every day                                 |  |
|       | loved Ma and Pop       | believed in this country                                       |  |
|       | Ma--not cool in class  | Pop spoke up   |  |
|       | Pop-Pop                | burned the pot of macaroni-smoke alarm                         |  |
|       | miss him               | laughing eyes with little star bursts of wrinkles on the edges |  |
|       | Pop                    | white, wavy, thick hair  |  |
|       | "vote early and often" | joke but serious about voting                                  |  |

Next, the writer begins the grouping process – deciding what to **delete** (get rid of) and what to keep. The writer can use any symbols he wants (see chart at right) but he chooses not to use numbers or letters because they imply a sequence, and he isn't sure of what he wants to keep yet.

Each person's brainstorming and use of symbols has to be unique. Remember the process is the same, but each person's product will be different. For example, this writer links the first three entries with a "+," because he feels they are closely related. But nothing else he writes seems to be in that exact group, so he creates new symbols for other groups. The first of the new symbols is a ">." He puts these next to how difficult he thinks the assignment is. Look at the sample brainstorming sheet and see how he assigns the rest of his symbols.

| One Writer's Classifications |                              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Symbol                       | Meaning                      |
| +                            | Ideas about Uncle Ed         |
| >                            | Difficulty of the assignment |
| ~                            | Kevin                        |
| #                            | sentimental memories         |
| *                            | Pop's playfulness            |
| %                            | Pop's patriotism             |
| {}                           | Pop's cooking                |
| **                           | Pop's singing                |
| //                           | Pop's physical description   |

## BRAINSTORMING WITH GROUPING SYMBOLS

|       |   | Favorite Person        |   |
|-------|---|------------------------|---|
|       | + | Uncle Ed               | # tough memory  |
| Who   | + | too long ago           | # Pop makes me laugh still  |
| What  | + | can't see Ed's face    | # played blocks   |
| Where | > | can't think            | * read paper while I sat on his foot                              |
| Why   | > | still can't think      | * always looked at me when he talked to me                        |
| When  | ~ | Who?--Kevin            | * taught me to find the words in his paper                        |
| How   | ~ | too much like me       | * danced with me and did the "big finish" dip                     |
|       | > | dumb assignment        | * thought "Pop" invented soda pop bubbles                         |
|       | > | I like a lot of people | ** nice voice--on key   |
|       | # | little kid in me       | { } cooked our noodles every day                                  |
|       | # | bratty kid             | % believed in this country  |
|       | # | loved Ma and Pop       | * Pop spoke up  |
|       | # | Ma--not cool in class  | { } burned the pot of macaroni-smoke alarm                        |
|       | # | Pop-Pop                | // laughing eyes with little star bursts of wrinkles on the edges |
|       | # | miss him               | // white, wavy, thick hair  |
|       | * | Pop                    | % joke but serious about voting                                   |
|       | % | "vote early and often" |   |

See  
Hear  
Smell  
Touch  
Taste

The idea behind every brainstorming is to empty the mind of all possible ideas and then group those ideas into as many closely related groups as necessary. When you identify the elements of each different group with its own symbol, you begin to focus your ideas.

The writer was lucky with this brainstorm; he seems to have found the subject of his writing with this first attempt. Writers are not often so lucky; often writers need to brainstorm several times before finding a subject. Don't give up. Remember that the idea will come if you continue to brainstorm. Sometimes waiting for an hour or two between brainstorming exercises can yield success.

Another excellent way to unlock ideas is to talk to and listen to other writers. It is true that this approach cannot work in most testing situations, but for almost every other writing task, a writing group can help to focus your ideas. The combination of a writing group and your own brainstorming usually proves very effective. The optimum size for a writing group is four. All that is required of each member is a willingness to work to help each member do the best job he or she can on each writing piece.

For this task, the writer has created nine groups so far. However, he is not finished yet. **Keeping**, the last part of TASK, means making decisions about what to use and what not to use. Three of the groups in the brainstorm are of no value to this writer for this task. These groups are

## EDITING AND ADDING TO BRAINSTORMING

|       |  | Favorite Person |  |
|-------|--|-----------------|--|
|       | <del>+ Uncle Ed</del>                  | #               | tough memory   |
| Who   | <del>+ too long ago</del>              | #               | makes me laugh still   |
| What  | <del>+ can't see Ed's face</del>       | #               | played blocks  |
| Where | <del>&gt; can't think</del>            | *               | read paper while I sat on his foot                             |
| Why   | <del>&gt; still can't think</del>      | *               | always looked at me when he talked to me                       |
| When  | <del>Who? - Kevin</del>                | *               | taught me to find the words in his paper                       |
| How   | <del>too much like me</del>            | *               | danced with me and did the "big finish" dip                    |
|       | <del>&gt; dumb assignment</del>        | *               | thought "Pop" invented soda pop bubbles                        |
|       | <del>&gt; I like a lot of people</del> | **              | nice voice--on key   |
|       | # little kid in me                     | { }             | cooked our noodles every day                                   |
|       | # bratty kid                           | %               | believed in this country                                       |
|       | # loved Ma and Pop                     | *               | Pop spoke up   |
|       | # Ma--not cool in class                | { }             | burnt the pot of macaroni-smoke alarm                          |
|       | # Pop-Pop                              | //              | laughing eyes with little star bursts of wrinkles on the edges |
|       | # miss him                             | //              | white, wavy, thick hair  |
|       | * Pop                                  | %               | joke but serious about voting                                  |
|       | % vote early and often                 | #               | my first baby sitter   |
|       | # died when I was eight                | #               | father figure when my dad left when I was three                |
|       |  | #               | lived in his house on Long Island                              |

the "+" group, the "~" group, and the ">" group. So the writer deletes them.

Before leaving this brainstorming, the writer goes back and consciously looks at the question and sensory words. These motivate the writer to add phrases such as "died when I was eight," "father figure when my dad left when I was three," "lived in his house on Long Island," and "my first baby sitter." These ideas the writer adds to the "#" group.

The **Selecting** and **Keeping** aspects of the TASK acronym reveal that the most important job a writer does is to make choices: to choose what to put into the picture and what to leave out. As the writer decides his or her attitude about that subject, the writer must make more choices. The attitude of the author about his or her writing is called the **tone** of the writing. There are three basic tones: **positive** (I like), **negative** (I don't like), and **objective** (I have no feelings one way or the other). Within the positive and negative tones, there are a lot of slight differences which allow for many, many different tones. The writer must be very aware of exactly what attitude he has about the subject.

When you read over this author’s brainstorming, you can see a definite attitude emerging. The author chose his grandfather as his subject. This grandfather was well-loved, but also you can see that the author wanted to keep a bit “cool,” so humorous fondness is the tone he selected. This tone will be built by choosing just the right details and by picking just the right words. Here is where the process of writing becomes the art of writing.

### CHAPTER THREE: ASSEMBLING A PALETTE

It is time for our writer to build his word palette. Visual artists use **palettes** (thin boards which are often curved with a hole for the thumb), as places to keep their assortment of colors. A rich palette provides the artist with many color choices. For the word artist (the writer), the palette is his or her vocabulary. So after completing his brainstorming and grouping of ideas, our writer compiles a rich vocabulary list working from dynamic verbs and specific nouns. The author paints with words a picture of a grandfather he knew and would like others to see. When our author thinks of his grandfather’s activities, our author comes up with these actions:

#### Actions

- |           |           |              |
|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| 1 reads   | 6 plays   | 11 baby sits |
| 2 talks   | 7 votes   | 12 jokes     |
| 3 phones  | 8 teaches | 13 listens   |
| 4 shows   | 9 walks   | 14 laughs    |
| 5 watches | 10 asks   | 15 tells     |

Some of these actions are inside the grandfather, such as “listens” and “watches.” Some actions are outside and easy for all to see, such as “talks” and “jokes.” Yet, they are all actions. Notice that our author has not chosen any of the linking verbs. Instead, he chooses action verbs, which are usually more lively than verbs that link.

If the writer had had trouble finding fifteen actions, he would have checked his brainstorming list again to see the other ideas it suggested. The mind’s eye approach works well if one focuses and takes time to see the pictures in one’s own head.

Here are five actions the writer chose from the list of fifteen above: “reads,” “plays,” “baby sits,” “phones,” and “laughs.” These are apparently chosen because the writer intends to use these actions as key strokes in painting the descriptions of the grandfather. The next step the writer takes is to acquire **synonyms** (words which have meanings very similar to each other) for each of these five words. These synonyms may allow the writer to become more focused in tone or more precise in image, or both. By the final

draft, the writer may not have used all of these synonyms, but just finding those synonyms enabled the writer to make better choices.

If one has access to other writers, this would be the perfect time to work with them and ask them for at least two synonyms for any words selected for a piece of writing. While selecting synonyms, one must keep in mind what Billy Collins (Poet Laureate of the United States in 2001) has the speaker say in his poem, *Thesaurus*: “I know there is no such thing as a synonym.” The speaker is correct; there are no absolutely true synonyms because each word – like each person – has a unique identity and personality. However, there are words which are like the words used, and these are the words for which the writer is searching. Choosing among these words, the writer selects exactly the tone and meaning he wants.

If, for some reason, you are working on a piece of writing and cannot or may not use a writing group, you can often use a **thesaurus** (a book in which you find lists of words which often mean nearly the same thing). Remember that the thesaurus is only a tool. Use it to select those words you know well enough to use accurately. The words which are suggested as synonyms and with which you are unfamiliar are words that you must look up in a dictionary and discuss with your writing groups and English teachers.



These identical twins look very much alike, but each is a discrete individual with ideas and a style all her own.

The first verb the writer has found synonyms for is “read.” Synonyms include “contemplate, study, examine, plunge into.” These are listed on the prewriting sheet at the right. The circled words are part of the palette. The author may decide to use one or more of them when painting the humorous and loving picture of his grandfather.

The entry for “plays” turns up these promising

| VERBS             |           |
|-------------------|-----------|
| read:             |           |
| contemplate       | interpret |
| study             | diagnose  |
| examine           | construe  |
| plunge into       | peruse    |
| regard studiously | con       |

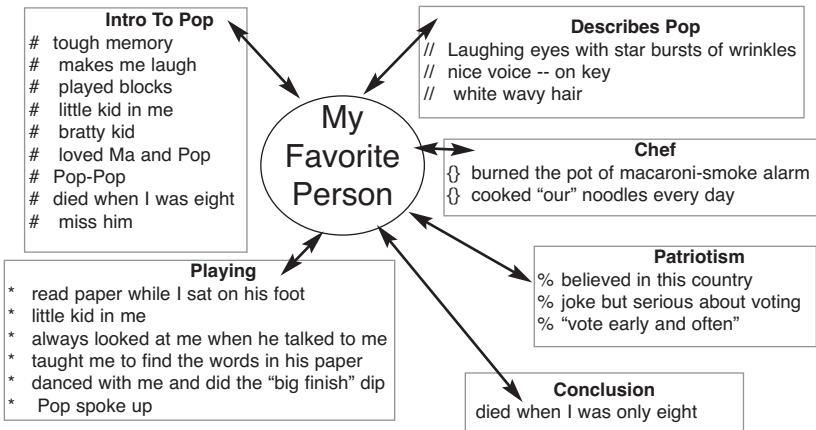


| NOUNS       |                      |                     |                  |
|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| <u>man:</u> | <u>baby sitting:</u> | <u>grandfather:</u> | <u>children:</u> |
| human       | watch                | geezer              | posterity        |
| person      | shelter              | patriarch           | youth            |
| personality | custody              | sexagenarian        | progeny          |
| soul        | shield               | grownup             | brood            |
|             | under the aegis of   | adult               | heirs            |

## CHAPTER FOUR: ORGANIZING

At this point, the author begins a process of artistic decision-making which will shape his writing. The author links his remaining brainstorming groups into a webbing (or a graphic organizer).

Since this task is multi-paragraphed, the author has to make introductory and concluding paragraphs. The author chooses “Intro to Pop” as an introductory paragraph. The author makes another figure, labeling it “Conclusion,” and adds to the conclusion the phrase, “died when I was eight.”



At this point, the author has to write a **thesis sentence** – the control sentence for the entire essay. There are many ways to do this, but the easiest is to begin with a simple statement using the verb “to be” as a simple predicate. This statement should identify the topic of your essay and indicate the attitude or tone about the topic. Here is an example of such a statement:

“My grandfather **was** one of the most influential people in my life.”

Now although the verb “to be” (used here in the form “was”) is a very important verb, it is not dynamic. “To be” shows existence. The author needs a little **tension** (unsettling aspect) in the thesis, so he takes the ideas stated after the “was” and uses those ideas as the beginning of a new, dynamic thesis. To do this, the author has to change the words slightly while keeping the ideas intact.

“One of the most influential people in my life **exemplified** manhood at its best: my grandfather.”

Notice that the author replaces the “to be” verb (“was”) in his thesis with a livelier verb, “exemplified.” Choosing this livelier verb causes the author to think about his attitude toward his grandfather as well as the content of what he wants to say in this description. “Exemplified” gives a stronger focus. After all, the author is not describing his grandfather to the police. The grandfather’s height, weight, skin tone, eye color, and facial hair are not what the author is trying to emphasize. The description is about the grandfather’s influence and the author’s love and appreciation of the old man.

Choosing just the right verb for the thesis makes the focus sharper and the subsequent writing easier. Using a writing group to suggest words for a thesis is ideal; using a dictionary, thesaurus, or just one’s own brain is a bit more challenging, but it is still possible. Just take the time to think! The more focused the thesis, the easier the writing becomes.

Try this exercise on the statement-to-thesis process just to make sure you understand how it works.

### EXERCISE 3A – THESIS FORMING

*Directions:* Read the content and tone of the subject required by the task. Then write a simple statement using the verb “to be.” Next revise that statement into a dynamic thesis. There are many correct responses to these tasks. This book merely gives suggestion of how this might be done.

*Example:* Content of writing and tone: a positive attitude about having driver’s education offered in your high school.

– Simple Statement Using Verb “to be.”

My high school should be offering driver education courses.

– Dynamic thesis:

Offering driver education courses in my high school would ensure a safe and responsible group of young drivers on our local roads.

- 1 Content of writing and tone: a negative tone about raising the voting age to twenty-one.  
– Simple Statement Using Verb “to be.”

---

– Dynamic Thesis:

---

---

- 2 Content of writing and tone: a positive attitude about keeping work places free of smoke.  
– Simple Statement Using Verb “to be.”

---

– Dynamic Thesis:

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Now that the author has a thesis, he can begin to outline his writing in a more formal manner. He will place the thesis at the beginning of his outline just to remind himself of his focus.

**THESIS:** One of the most influential people in my life exemplified manhood at its best – my grandfather.

- I. Introduction segment
  - A. Motivator
  - B. Bridge
  - C. Thesis
  
- II. Body
  - A. Interaction
  - B. Chef
  - C. Physical description
  - D. Patriotism
  
- III. Conclusion

★ : The author took these topics from his webbing.

Notice that there are three elements in the introduction segment: a motivator (attention-grabbing part of the introduction), a bridge (connection between the motivator and the thesis), and the thesis (control statement of the entire essay).

A good motivator should be more general than the thesis but somehow connected to it. For instance, this thesis is about a grandfather's positive influence on a little boy, so the author might find a motivator about influences in general or grandfathers in general or little boys in general. Here are three possible motivators.

*Example:* One never sees the wind, but its influence on the direction of things is always present in nature. (influences in general)

OR

*Example:* Grandfathers' influences have been the subject of literature from Heidi's grandfather in the Alps to Charlie's Grandpa Joe of Roald Dahl's chocolate factory fame. (grandfathers in general)

OR

*Example:* The negative image of little boys as being composed of "twigs, and snails, and puppy dogs tails" in the anonymous nursery rhyme may capture some of the challenging aspects of caring for little boys. (little boys in general)

The motivator about the wind seems most appealing to this writer. Next, the author has to be sure that the motivator has the proper tone (positive, but humorous) and that it can be connected with the thesis (grandfather's influence is like the wind). The author's choices appear in his **rough draft** (first full writing attempt at responding to the task).

## WRITING THE ROUGH DRAFT

Here is a rough draft by this writer:

*One never sees the wind, but its influence on the direction of things is always seen in nature. When I was three, I was dumped by a fierce wind and then guided by a gentle one. When I was three, my father's problems got the better of him, and he abandoned my mother and me. So my mother and I went to Long Island to live with her father in his two-story white house with its circular red brick front stoop and its long, sloping gravel driveway. Pop was a widower, and when he took us in, he had been retired for five years. I loved my mother and father, and I was angry about the move, so although I was his progeny, Pop was heir to the temper tantrums of a little brat. Officially, he was my baby sitter; unofficially, he was my guiding light. One of the most influential people in my life exemplified manhood at its best – my grandfather.*

(Following the outline, the next step is writing the body of the essay. As you write, keep an eye on your palette. Notice that two words were taken from the palette for the introductory paragraph – "progeny" and "heir.")

*Nurturing was what Pop did best although he had been a mailman by profession. It makes me laugh still to think of Pop's lesson in driveway safety. Every morning before I would be able to play on the driveway, Pop would set up my stuffed bear and rabbit in my wagon and give them a strong push with his foot. They would clatter over the gravel until they bounced out on the stones near the bottom of the slope.*

These crash test dummies were my reminder to be slow and safe in my wagon. They were far more effective than a lecture. Though a tall man, he would sit on the floor and play blocks with me, always looking at me when I talked, always chuckling at my stories about pirates and dinosaurs. When he read his paper, he would either let me play horse and sit on his foot as he bounced his leg or put me in his lap and let me pick out the words “and” and “the.” Sometimes we entertained my mom when she looked particularly sad. We would dance across the linoleum while he sang with his lovely, low voice and end with a “big finish” at which point I would fly on to her lap. He taught me to put the feelings of others ahead of my own and keep an eye out for my mom. By the time we were finished with our dance or burping contests (Pop told me he had invented soda pop bubbles), my mom was smiling again and we were once more a family that could cope with whatever happened.

Pop’s exploits as a chef were his most famous. He could not cook – no matter how hard he tried. His best dish was chicken soup from a can; he would always tell my laughing mom how hard he had to work cooking the noodles for that soup. The only time he tried to make dinner from scratch, he set off the fire alarm.

Pop’s face is still in my mind: mostly I see his smile; which starts with his laughing green eyes. At the edges of these eyes, there were star bursts of wrinkles that got deeper and deeper as he smiled. His white, wavy hair added to his “Santa” charm. Often as I tried to fight sleep, he would rock me on his shoulder and I would pat that silken hair. He was my personal shelter; his image was one of warmth and security.

Even as young as I was, I was aware of Pop’s love for this country. He had a joke on election day, a time when he and I went to the polls to vote. “Vote early and often,” he would say with a chortle. When I was old enough to ask why he only voted once, he took the opportunity to explain that each adult got only one vote and had an obligation to use it in every election. He believed in the *United States Constitution* and in the country which it fashioned.

**(In the concluding paragraph, notice how the author tries to connect to the introductory paragraph. A two sentence conclusion is fine. The conclusion should remind the reader of the topic and the tone, and then end with a powerful statement.)**

So, my maternal grandfather will always be one of my favorite people. I consider myself blessed to have been related to such a wind of positive change.

## REVISING

Now the writer must proofread the writing with an eye to **revising** (seeing the work again with all of the possibilities that changing the text might offer).

To change the text for the better, the writer probably bears in mind some rules which British author George Orwell suggested:

- Never use a figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.
- Never use jargon or foreign words when an English word will do.
- Never use a long word when a shorter word will do as well.
- If you can cut out a word, cut it out.
- Never use the passive voice when the active will do.
- Break any of these rules rather than say something very awkward.

In the introductory paragraph, the author could have the sentence, “One never sees the wind, but its influence on the direction of things is always seen in nature” to “One never sees the wind, but in nature its influence on the direction of things is always seen.” (This change tightens the sentence.) Also, the author might change the second use of “wind” to “gentle breeze.”

The author also revised the sentence, “When I was three, my father’s problems got the better of him, and he abandoned my mother and me.” A tighter form would be “My father’s problems overwhelmed him.”

The author must have noticed the overused metaphor, “*guiding light*,” in the sentence, “He was my baby sitter, officially, but unofficially he was my *guiding light*.” He revised it to read, “He was my baby sitter, officially, but unofficially he was my inspiration.”

In sentence two of paragraph two, the author moved the word “still” to “still makes me laugh.” He also made three shorter paragraphs from this long one because the focus switched. Notice how this improves the flow.

Nurturing was what Pop did best although by profession he had been a mailman. It still makes me laugh to think of Pop’s lesson in driveway safety. Every morning before I would be able to play on the driveway, Pop would set up my stuffed bear and rabbit in my wagon and give them a strong push with his foot. They would clatter over the gravel until they bounced out on the stones near the bottom of the slope. These crash test dummies were my reminder to be slow and safe in my wagon. They were far more effective than a lecture.

Though a tall man, Pop would sit on the floor and play blocks with me, always looking at me when I talked, always chuckling at my stories about pirates and dinosaurs. When he read his paper, he would either let me play horse and sit on his foot as he bounced his leg or put me in his lap and let me pick out the words “and” and “the.”

Sometimes Pop and I entertained my mom when she looked particularly sad. We would dance across the linoleum while he sang with his lovely, low voice and end with a “big finish” at which point I would fly on to her lap. He taught me to put the feelings of others ahead of my own and keep an eye out for my mom. By the time we were finished with our dance or burping contests (Pop told me he had invented soda pop bubbles), my mom was smiling again, and we were once more a family that could cope with whatever happened.

So here is the author’s second (final) draft composed after he revised his rough draft:

## FINAL DRAFT

One never sees the wind, but in nature its influence on the direction of things is always seen. When I was three, I was dumped by a fierce wind and then guided by a gentle breeze. When I was three, my father’s problems overwhelmed him, and he abandoned my mother and me. So my mother and I went to Long Island to live with her father in his two story white house with the circular red brick front stoop and the long, sloping gravel driveway. Pop-Pop was a widower, and when he took us in, he had been retired for five years. I loved my mother and father, and I was angry about the move, so although I was his progeny, Pop was heir to the temper tantrums of a little brat. He was my baby sitter, officially, but unofficially he was my inspiration. One of the most influential people in my life exemplified manhood at its best – my grandfather.

Nurturing was what Pop did best although by profession he had been a mailman. It still makes me laugh to think of Pop’s lesson in driveway safety. Every morning before I would be able to play on the driveway, Pop would set up my stuffed bear and rabbit in my wagon and give them a strong push with his foot. They would clatter over the gravel until they bounced out on the stones near the bottom of the slope. These crash test dummies were my reminder to be slow and safe in my wagon. They were far more effective than a lecture.

Though a tall man, Pop would sit on the floor and play blocks with me, always looking at me when I talked, always chuckling at my stories about pirates and dinosaurs. When he read his paper, he would either let me play horse and sit on his foot as he bounced his leg or put me in his lap and let me pick out the words “and” and “the.”

Sometimes Pop and I entertained my mom when she looked particularly sad. We would dance across the linoleum while he sang with his lovely, low voice and end with a “big finish” at which point I would fly onto her lap. He taught me to put the feelings of others ahead of my own and keep an eye out for my mom. By the time we were finished with our dance or burping contests (Pop told me he had invented soda pop bubbles), my mom was smiling again, and we were once more a family that could cope with whatever happened.



Pop's exploits as a chef were his most famous. He could not cook no matter how hard he tried. His best dish was chicken soup from a can; he would always tell my laughing mom how hard he had to work cooking the noodles for that soup. The only time he tried to make dinner from scratch, he set off the fire alarm.

Pop's face is still in my mind. Mostly I see his smile which starts with his laughing green eyes. At the edges of these eyes, there were star burst of wrinkles that got deeper and deeper as he smiled. His white, wavy hair added to his “Santa” charm. Often as I tried to fight sleep, he would rock me on his shoulder and I would pat that silken hair. He was my personal shelter; his image was one of warmth and security.

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So, my maternal grandfather will always be one of my favorite people. I consider myself blessed to have been related to such a wind of positive change.

**This is the author's final draft which he handed in for a grade. What grade would you have given him and what advice would you have given him? You might discuss the answers to these questions with your writing group.**

