West Central High School

Style Guide

The purpose of this document is to provide helpful information to students and faculty of West Central High School for the various writing projects students will encounter in their high school education. The suggestions included herein will help students improve their writing performance, and the model paper will be a guide students can use for research writing assignments.

Plagiarism

Students are expected to know what plagiarism is and understand the serious nature of this offense. In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. Student writers are encouraged to seek a teacher's assistance if there are questions or concerns about their writing.

Good Listening Skills

Listening is more than just hearing. To hear, you need only your ears. But to listen, you need your **ears** and your **mind.** Listening means thinking about what you hear. Here are some tips to help become a better listener:

- Pay attention.
- Look at the speaker. (remember where your eyes go, your mind will follow)
- Take notes.
- Listen for facts or key points.
- **Be attentive.** Focus on what is being said. Don't let your mind wander.
- **Accept the Challenge.** Don't give up and stop listening when you find the information being presented difficult to understand. Listen even more carefully.
- **Triumph over the environment.** The classroom may be too noisy, too hot, too cold, too dark, or too bright. Don't give in to these inconveniences. Stay focused.

Preparing for a Test

I. Preparing for a test should include these daily routines:

pay attention in class take neat, detailed notes review your notes daily complete your assignments

II. Ask

what you can do to improve what to expect on the test (what type of questions: true/false, essay, mult. choice) what you should study (notes, text, other materials) date of the test

III. Review and study for the test

look over your last test organize your notes and assignments review every day until the test quiz yourself and study with a partner notice areas where you need to spend extra time study multiple times, not just once

IV. Study difficult material carefully

rewrite information: make lists, flash cards, graphic organizers say material out loud explain material to someone else make up test questions and answer them

V. Get a good night's sleep before the test.

VI. Have a healthy breakfast, stay calm and do your best

Test-Taking Tips

I. Listen carefully

to directions and information. Do not start while the teacher is still talking. You may miss important directions.

II. Put your name on your test first.

III. Take a quick look at the entire test.

Notice what type of questions and how many there are.

IV. Begin the test

Read the directions carefully before answering each set of questions.

V. Answer all the questions you are sure of first.

Then go back to the other questions and do your best to answer each one.

VI. Check over your answers when you finish the test.

If you skipped any questions, try to answer them now.

Some Basic Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage Guidelines

"Grammar" can be defined as the study of how words and their component parts combine to form sentences.

"Mechanics" includes punctuation and capitalization; the technical aspects of putting words together so that they make sense.

"Style" is the way that a writer puts his/her thoughts into words.

• A sentence fragment is an incomplete sentence. It lacks a subject or verb and is an incomplete thought.

Example of a fragment: Ran to the store.

Example of a complete sentence: *Marge ran to the store.*

• A **run-on sentence** is two or more sentences written as though they were one sentence.

A run-on should be separated into two or more sentences to be correct. Adding a comma does NOT correct a run-on sentence. There are several possible ways to correct a run-on.

Example of a run-on: *Meteorology is fascinating to me I watch the Weather Channel every day.*

Example of a corrected run-on: Meteorology is fascinating to me. I watch the Weather Channel every day. **OR** Meteorology is fascinating to me; I watch the Weather Channel every day. **OR** Meteorology is fascinating to me, and I watch the Weather Channel every day.

• A **comma splice** is an error made when you join two sentences with a comma instead of a period or semicolon.

Example of a comma splice: Justin and I love movies, we watch them often. **Example of correct sentences:** Justin and I love movies. We watch them often.

• **Pronoun/Antecedent Agreement** is important if your sentences are to be clear and easy to understand. **Antecedents** are the words replaced by the pronouns.

Example of incorrect agreement: Many of the students gave his or her speech before the elections. (Since the pronoun *many* is plural, the singular pronouns *his* or *her* are not correct.)

Example of correct agreement: Each of the students gave his or her speech before the elections. (Since the pronoun each is singular, it agrees in number with the singular pronouns his or her.)

• Subject/Verb Agreement refers to agreement between the subject of a sentence and its verb. If the sentence has a singular subject, use a singular verb. If it has a plural subject, use a plural verb.

Example of incorrect agreement: The authors writes. **Example of correct agreement:** The author writes.

Example of incorrect agreement: Carmen go to San Francisco every summer. **Example of correct agreement:** Carmen goes to San Francisco every summer.

Example of incorrect agreement: The students sings beautifully. **Example of correct agreement:** The students sing beautifully.

Example of incorrect agreement: Todd and Sue travels to Germany. **Example of correct agreement:** Todd and Sue travel to Germany.

• A **double negative** occurs when two negative words are used together in a sentence.

Example of a double negative: I never told no one the secret. **Example of a correct sentence:** I never told anyone the secret.

• Of and have are frequently confused. Do not use of in a sentence when you really mean have.

Example of incorrect usage: *I could of used the money for lunch.* **Example of correct usage:** *I could have used the money for lunch.*

- Commas can be tricky to use correctly. Keep in mind that commas separate equal elements, and to set off an element means to put a comma before and after it. Some general guidelines include:
 - Use commas to separate three or more words, phrases, or clauses in a series.

I like oil and vinegar, salt and pepper, and croutons on my salad.

• Place a comma between coordinate adjectives (adjectives that modify a noun equally and can be reversed) that precede a noun.

Lisa is a happy, intelligent, graceful child.

• Use a comma between the main clauses in a compound sentence.

The grocery list is on the table, but you may need to purchase other items.

• Use commas to set off participles, infinitives, and their phrases if they are not essential to the meaning of the sentence.

The children, exhilarated, ripped open their presents.

Mary made her way to school, happily calling out to her friends.

I have no idea, to tell the truth, what happened to that lamp.

• Use commas to set off nonessential clauses and appositives as well as introductory elements.

My cousin Ken, who lives in California, works as a film editor.

Finally, the lights dimmed and the movie started.

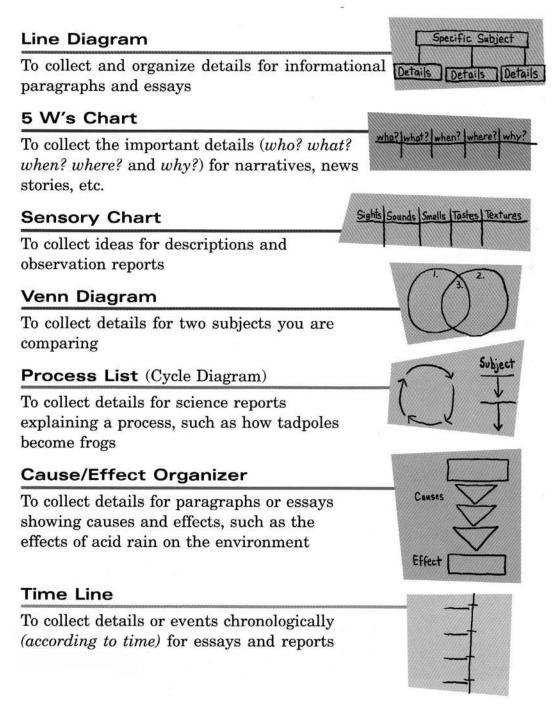
Although the usher tried to hush the noisy children, I could not hear the dialogue.

Mrs. Hayes, before she became a teacher, worked as a bank teller.

In 1862, Victor Hugo published one of his most famous works.

Get Organized!

Using graphic organizing techniques can help you gather information for your essay. Being able to see the relationship between key ideas can help you to be more logical and more persuasive.



Source: Adapted from Dave Kemper, Patrick Sebranek, and Verne Meyer. *All Write: A Student Handbook for Writing and Learning*. Wilmington, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1998.

Commonly Confused Words

Topic	Guideline
	Accept means "to receive"
accept, except	Except means "other than"
	Access means "admittance"
access, excess	Excess means "a surplus"
	Advice means "an opinion offered as guidance"
advice, advise	Advise means "to give advice or to counsel"
,	Affect means "to cause a change in"
affect, effect	Effect means "result" or "to bring about or accomplish"
	Allusion means "an indirect reference"
allusion, illusion	Illusion means "a false idea or appearance"
unusion, musion	Alot is not a word.
alot, a lot, allot	A lot means "a large number or amount"
aiot, a iot, anot	Allot means "to assign or set aside"
	Capital means "a city that is the seat of the government" or "money or property"
capital, capitol	Capitol refers only to a building in which a legislature meets
	Cite means "to quote or refer to" or "to summon to appear in a court of law"
cite, sight, site	Sight means "vision" or "to see"
	Site means "a place or a location" or "to place or locate"
	Complement means "something that completes" or "to complete"
complement, compliment	Compliment means "a flattering remark" or "to praise"
	Council means "a group of people gathered for the purpose of giving advice"
council, counsel	Counsel means "advice" or "an attorney" or "to give advice"
	Farther refers to physical distance
farther, further	Further means "more" or "additional"
	Good is an adjective used before nouns and after linking verbs to modify the subject
good, well	Well is an adverb used to modify action verbs
	Well may also be an adjective meaning "in good health"
	Its shows possession or ownership.
its, it's	It's is a contraction of "it is"
,	Lay means "to put" or "to place"
lay, lie	Lie means "to rest or recline" or "to be positioned"
	Loose means "free" or "not firmly attached"
loose, lose	Lose means "to misplace" or "to fail to win"
10050, 1000	Moral means "what is right and wrong"
moral, morale	Morale means "an emotional condition or attitude"
morai, moraic	Principal means "school administrator" or "sum of money" or "main or chief"
principal, principle	Principle means "basic truth or belief" or "rule of conduct"
principal, principic	Tructiple ineans basic truth of benefit of Tule of conduct
	Quiet means "silent" or "motionless"
quiet, quite	Quite means "very" or "completely"
	Stationary means "fixed or unmoving"
stationary, stationery	Stationery refers to writing paper
·	Than is used in a comparison
than, then	Then tells when
<u> </u>	There means "in or at that place"
there their they?ve	Their is a possessive form of "they"
there, their, they're	They're is a contraction of "they are"
	To means "in the direction of"
40, 400, 400	
to, too, two	Too means "very" or "also"
	Two is the number after one
	Who's is a contraction of "who is"
who's, whose	Whose shows or asks about possession
	Your is the possessive form of you
your, you're	You're is a contraction of "you are"

The Parts of a Paragraph

The topic sentence tells what a paragraph is going to be about. A good topic sentence names the subject and states your feelings about it.

The sentences in the body of a paragraph must give readers all of the information they need to understand the topic.

- Use specific details to make your paragraph interesting.
- Organize your sentences into the best possible order. There are three main ways to organize your sentences: chronological (time) order, order of location, and order of importance.

The closing sentence comes after all of the details have been included in the body. This sentence should remind readers about the paragraph topic.

The Basic Shape of an Essay

Introduction

- ▶ starts with general information and then names the specific subject
- ▶ begins in an interesting or creative way
 - **▶** Questions
 - ▶ Quotations that relate to the topic of the essay
 - **▶** ► Statistics
 - ► ► Startling statements about the subject
 - ► Scenario share a brief story about the subject

Body

- ▶ presents the main points supporting or explaining the subject
- ▶ each main point and the details and support that go with it should be in a separate paragraph
- ▶ the body of the essay is where the real information is found give ample details, support, and examples

Conclusion

- ▶ brings writing to a close
- ▶ should remind readers about the subject
- ► summarizes the main points
- ▶ say something that will keep readers thinking about the subject

Revising Checklist

Once the first draft of the essay is written, it is time to revise and edit. *To revise* is to add or delete words, phrases, or sentences in a piece of writing. *To edit* is to correct punctuation, capitalization, grammar, and usage errors.

□ Does my writing focus on an interesting part of my subject or on a certain feeling I have about it?
□ Does the information in my writing follow a method of organization?
□ Do I need to add any information?
□ Do I need to delete any information?
□ Do I need to rewrite any parts of the essay?

Transitions

Transitions are words and phrases that connect sentences and paragraphs. Using transitions will make your writing more coherent and logical.

Words used to show location

above	around between	inside	outside
across	behind by	into	over
against	below	down	near
throughout	along	beneath	in back of
next to	to the right of	among	beside
in front of	on top of	under	

Words used to show time

about	during yesterday	until	finally
after	first	meanwhile	next
then	at	second	today
soon	as soon as	before	to begin
tomorrow	later	in the end	eventually
to conclude	when	now	immediately
aftamyyand			_

afterward

Words used to compare things

likewise	as	in the same way	one way
like	also	similarly	both
41			

another way

Words to contrast (show differences)

but	still	although	on the other hand
however	yet	otherwise	even though

nevertheless

Words used to emphasize a point				
again	truly	especially	for this reason	
to repeat	in fact	to emphasize		

Words used to conclude or summarize

finally	as a result	to sum it up	in conclusion
lastly	therefore	all in all	because

Words used to add information for instance for example

again	another	for instance	for example	as well
also	and	moreover	additionally	besides
along with	other	next	finally	in addition

Words used to clarify

1 1	C • 4	41 4	C 1	11
in other words	for instance	that is	for example	equally important
III OIIIEI WOIGS	101 111814116	11141 18	TOTEXALITIE	ECHAILY HILLOCHAIL

COMMON PROOFREADING SYMBOLS

Symbol	Meaning	Example
A or T or T	delete	take it out
c	close up	print as one word
B	delete and close up	closse up
n or > or h	caret	insert here something
#	insert a space	put onehere
tr	transpose; switch around	change order the
41	begin a new paragraph	
9	spell out	set 5 lbs. as five pounds
сар	set in CAPITALS	set <u>nato</u> as NATO
lc	set in lowercase	set South as south
ital	set in italic	set <u>oeuvre</u> as <i>oeuvre</i>
bf	set in boldface	set important as important
<u> </u>	insert comma	
ঽ	insert apostrophe	
0	insert period	
; or j/	insert semicolon	
: or (3)	insert colon	
& D or ? ?	Insert quotation marks	
(/)	Parentheses	
다/그	Brackets	_
conf. 1	wrong font	wrong siZe or stylg

The Strong and The Weak

Below are two examples of the first paragraph of a student essay on the subject of how schools should spend part of their library budget. One issue on this topic is whether schools should purchase popular magazines for student pleasure reading (such as *Hot Rod* or *People*) if these magazines have little educational use in the school. The examples are reproduced here just as the students turned them in to be graded.

A Weak Paragraph

Popular magazines would be a good thing, it would pull students into the library and encourage them to read. Some articles in magazines have nothing to do with school, but it still encourages students to read more. Reading is education, no matter if its talking about academics or not.

A Strong Paragraph

High schools nowdays are struggling to draw the line between what is "educational" and what is not. School programs are cut based on how much educational content they're perceived to have. Now the administration is trying to purge the libraries of popular magazines because they contain non academic subjects. It's important that the library buy dictionaries and encyclopedias, but education purists need to be reminded that if you separate "academic" from "non-academic" too strictly, you separate school from the real world it's supposed to prepare us for.

Things to notice about this "weak" paragraph:

- 1. It's short. Three short sentences is not usually enough writing to make a good argument.
- 2. Word choice is basic. The writer of this paragraph clearly does not have good skill with word selection and vocabulary usage.
- 3. Sentence sense. What does the writer mean by the first sentence? Is the issue whether all articles in all magazines should have something to do with school? Is reading really education? The writer of this paragraphs seems to have difficulty making his or her ideas clear.
- 4. Errors hinder understanding. Problems such as run-on sentences, subject-verb disagreement, and misspelling make it harder to figure out what the writer is really trying to say.
- 5. How does this writing "sound" when you read it out loud?

Things to notice about this "better" paragraph:

- 1. The student wrote a "bigger" paragraph with more sentences and more words. Writing more often gives you an opportunity to say more meaningful information about your topic.
- 2. Words are important. Essays and sentences are built with words. This writer uses more specific words like "purge" and "purists" that help to identify his or her opinion more clearly.
- 3. The writer anticipates that some readers might not agree. Admitting the need to purchase basic reference books like dictionaries and encyclopedias shows that the writer is aware of "the big picture" in library budgeting.
- 4. This paragraph "sounds good." If you read this paragraph aloud, you notice that the sentences all make sense, the meaning is clear, and ideas flow smoothly one to another. That's always good in writing!

Sample Persuasiv	ve Essay Evaluation Rubric		
Student Name:		Class	Date
T			

opic:	

	6	5	4	3	Score
Category	Above Standards	Meets Standards	Approaching Standards	Below Standards	
Interesting Opening/ Thesis Statement	The thesis statement names the topic of the essay and outlines the main points to be discussed. Opening is creative, interesting, and exciting.	The thesis statement names the topic of the essay. Opening is interesting but not exciting.	The thesis statement outlines some or all of the main points to be discussed but does not name the topic. No interesting opening.	The thesis statement does not name the topic AND does not preview what will be discussed. Essay begins with "I think, I feel, I believe, or My"	
Focus	Focus is clear and strong throughout essay.	Focus is clear but there are occasional sentences that are off the topic.	Focus is somewhat clear; numerous statements that are not on the topic.	Focus is completely lost; reader can not comprehend point of essay.	
Support for Position	Includes 3 or more pieces of evidence (facts, statistics, examples, reallife experiences) that support the position statement. Evidence is thoroughly explained, including implications/complications.	Includes 3 or more pieces of evidence (facts, statistics, examples, real-life experiences) that support the position statement. Explanation and elaboration are weak.	Includes 2 pieces of evidence (facts, statistics, examples, real-life experiences) that support the position statement. Very little explanation and elaboration.	Include 1 or fewer pieces of evidence (facts, statistics, examples, real-life experiences). No explanation or elaboration.	
Organization	Essay is well organized, with introduction, body, and conclusion paragraphs. Organization of each paragraph is also orderly.	Essay is organized into introduction, body, and conclusion, but some sentences and/or paragraphs out of place.	Organization is weak, with order of sentences or paragraphs not logical or sequential	Essay is very disorganized; difficult to follow the train of thought of the reader	
Audience	Demonstrates clear understanding of potential reader; appropriate vocabulary and arguments. Anticipates reader's questions and provides answers.	Demonstrates a general understanding of the potential reader and uses vocabulary and arguments appropriate for that audience.	Demonstrates some understanding of the potential reader and uses arguments appropriate for that audience.	It is not clear who the writer is writing for. Argument and support are illogical for the audience.	
Sentence Structure	All sentences are well-constructed with varied structure; variety of compound, complex, and compound-complex structures.	Most sentences are well-constructed and there is some varied sentence structure in the essay.	Most sentences are well constructed, but there is no variation in structure.	Most sentences are not well-constructed or varied.	
Transitions	A variety of thoughtful transitions are used. They clearly show how ideas are connected.	Transitions show how ideas are connected, but there is little variety.	Some transitions work well, but some connections between ideas are fuzzy.	The transitions between ideas are unclear OR nonexistent.	
Grammar and Spelling	Author makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes 1-2 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes 3-4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes more than 4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	
Capitalization and Punctuation	Author makes no errors in capitalization or punctuation, so the essay is exceptionally easy to read.	Author makes 1-2 errors in capitalization or punctuation, but the essay is still easy to read.	Author makes a few errors in capitalization and/or punctuation that catch the reader's attention and interrupt the flow.	Author makes several errors in capitalization and/or punctuation that catch the reader's attention and interrupt the flow.	

Firstname Lastname

English 2

September 14, 2007

Essay #2

Washington: A Leader of Leaders

Thesis statement: Though many great people were living during the American Revolution,
George Washington became the United States' first president and a leader of leaders because of
his primary character qualities.

- I. The leadership of character
 - A. A man who can be trusted
 - 1. Before the war
 - 2. After the war
 - B. A man who keeps his word
- II. The leadership of a visionary
 - A. His plan for personal growth
 - B. His plan for the new nation
- III. The leadership of friendship
 - A. Among revolutionary leaders
 - B. Among international leaders
 - 1. Lafayette and the revolutionary cause
 - 2. Ben Franklin and France
 - 3. The United States and other nations

Firstname Lastname

English 2

September 14, 2007

Essay #2

Washington: A Leader of Leaders

The years of the American Revolution formed the basis of the United States as the nation it would someday become. Of all of the great thinkers, wise politicians, and international statesmen who organized the new country, George Washington had the respect of everyone. No accident led him to be selected as the first president. Though many great people were living during the American Revolution, George Washington became the United States' first president and a leader of leaders because of his primary character traits.

One factor that contributed to Washington's popularity and to his leadership was the character of the man himself. Washington had the reputation as a man who could be trusted. As a wealthy man, he "presumably would be less tempted to corruption" (Stazesky). Before the war he had acquired great wealth as a result of his farming operations and a diverse variety of investments and businesses. As a wealthy gentleman, he had time and opportunity to write widely, and he amassed a huge volume of correspondence to virtually all of the leading founding fathers of the nation. So his ideas were widely known and supported by many revolutionary leaders. Later on, his war conduct distinguished him as a trustworthy individual. Presidential scholar Philip Schoenberg has noted, for example, that "Washington led the troops instead of issuing orders from the safety of the rear lines" ("Washington on Leadership"). Through his military conduct during the war and his success as a gentleman farmer before the war, Washington established himself as a man to be trusted for keeping his word.

Great leadership requires great vision, and Washington had the visionary qualities necessary to lead the new nation. Scholars attribute Washington's personal growth to his main personality traits of "driving ambition, love of detail, patience, determination, [and] sense of responsibility" (Stazesky). As the President of the new nation, he knew what he had to do as its leader; Washington himself wrote "We have now a National character to establish, and it is of the most importance to stamp favorable

impressions upon it" ("Quotations and Observations"). As the first President, he realized that the vision he had for the country – and his performance as its leader – would significantly influence the future of the new nation.

Of all the leadership qualities Washington displayed, none was more important than the importance he place on friendship. In his own words Washington stated, "True friendship is a plant of slow growth, and must undergo and withstand the shocks of adversity" ("Quotes"). Washington perhaps was thinking of his long friendship with the Marquis de Lafayette which grew over decades. Washington and Lafayette had corresponded and visited on many occasions during and after the Revolutionary War. In discussing their long-time friendship, scholar Harlow Unger noted that Washington as an older man sent Lafayette a sizable sum to help with some legal expenses. Washington "pretended that it was a payment of some personal debt Lafayette had when he had visited America" (294). To Washington, money is a small matter between friends, even from different nations. Washington also supported the ambassador Ben Franklin in Franklin's efforts to win aid for the American Revolution to supporters in France. Many years later, President Ronald Regan would mention America's strong sense of friendship with France when he attended the 40th Anniversary of the Normandy Invasion. Regan noted that the "shared commitment of human freedom that has formed the bedrock on which our fast friendship has been built" ("Text"). That international friendship began, in large part, between George Washington and General Lafayette as an expression of Washington's personal commitment to developing deep and lasting friendships.

Americans ask themselves every four years what qualities they seek in the next President of the United States. After nearly 150 years, the qualities that George Washington brought to the Presidency still represent values that most Americans desire in a leader. In an election year the nation searches for a person who can be trusted, a person with visionary leadership, and a person who is a genuine friend of the country. Washington's values can still lead leaders today.

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Reminders for this last page:

- 1. The sources you use for your paper are always listed on one additional page at the end of your paper, and that page is numbered in sequence with the other pages of the report.
- 2. Papers are always double spaced, not single spaced; and no extra blank lines appear anywhere in the document.
- 3. Sources are listed in alphabetical order by the author's last name <u>or</u> the first main word of the article/web page title.
- 4. Book and magazine names are <u>underlined</u>; other titles including web page titles are in "quotation marks."
- 5. The formatting of the paper should have one-inch margins all the way around. Font size should be 10 or 12 (this report is in 12-point Times, an easy font to read.)

How to do the "hanging indentation" of this page: First, type all the source information, then select all the source text. In Microsoft Word, on the margin ruler move the bottom box right 1/2 inch, then move the top indent triangle back to the left margin 1/2 inch. When you've done this the author names will "hang" out on the left side ... and the computer did all the hard work for you!