



The Composition – Syllabus

Course Description: Once the student has mastered the art of writing paragraphs, he will then move on to combining paragraphs to create simple compositions. In this class, students will learn how to choose topics and develop main ideas for their compositions. Then, students will learn how to plan their compositions, write basic introductions, write the body of the composition and transition between 2-3 body paragraphs, and write basic conclusions. Finally, students will learn about different types of composition organization and have the opportunity to write two complete practice compositions.

Course Outline:

Week One: Review of the Paragraph

Week Two: Choosing Your Topic/Main Idea

Week Three: Composition Planning

Week Four: The Introduction

Week Five: Writing The Body

Week Six: The Conclusion

Week Seven: Composition Organization

Week Eight: Composition Practice

Grading Information: All assignments will be graded using the *The Beginning Writer* grading rubric and averaged to receive a final course grade.



The Composition

Lesson Four: The Introduction

SAMPLE LESSON

At the beginning of a composition, you must write an introduction. The introduction is a paragraph which tells your reader the topic and main idea of your composition, and gives the reader some information about the most important details. Although there are many things to learn about writing a good introduction, we are going to focus on the two most important things right now: **the topic statement** and **the hook**.

THE TOPIC STATEMENT –

Every introduction must contain a topic statement (often known as a thesis). Just like the topic sentence for a paragraph tells the reader the topic and main idea of the paragraph, the topic statement clearly states the topic and main idea of your composition. The topic statement is a complete sentence, **always placed at the end of your introduction**.

Look at two examples –

1. Trains are an amazing kind of vehicle, using different kinds of engines for transportation. The steam engine was invented in 1804, changing the world of transportation. Since then, both the diesel and electric engines have been invented, which have made railway travel easier and faster. **Trains have been a popular way to transport people and goods for hundreds of years.**
2. I began playing soccer five years ago. Even though I have tried many other sports since then, soccer is so much better than any of those. **Soccer is my favorite sport** because I get to learn from great coaches, I get to spend time with my team, and I get to run a lot.

Paragraph 1: The portion in bold is the topic statement. This states the topic (trains) and main idea (trains have been a popular way to transport people and goods). In this case, the writer has created a topic statement that stands alone as an individual sentence.

Paragraph 2: The portion in bold is the topic statement. This states the topic (soccer) and main idea (soccer is my favorite sport). In this case, the writer has decided to join the topic statement with the key information that will be written about in the composition (learning from great coaches, spending time with the team, running).

THE HOOK –

Once you have completed your topic statement, you will create the hook.

Have you ever gone fishing? How do you catch the fish? You put bait on the hook, which draws the fish's attention. Once he grabs at the bait on the hook, he gets stuck and you pull the fish in. When writing, the hook is what draws the reader's attention so that he wants to read your composition. **The hook is usually the first sentence of the introduction, although, sometimes, the hook can be the first and second sentences combined. Regardless, the hook always comes first (before the topic statement!).**

Although there are many ways to hook your reader, let us talk about a few of the more simple ways which you can employ for your beginning compositions.

1. **Make it personal:** does the topic relate to your interest, to a family experience, or to a personal memory? Personal information makes a strong hook because it shows that you really understand the topic you are writing about and that the topic means something to you.
2. **Begin with a problem:** giving a problem at the start can hook your reader easily, because they want to know your solution or want to think about a solution of their own.
3. **Use attention-grabbing facts:** this method is great especially when you are writing a report about a person, an animal, or a place. Think about what fact might grab a reader's attention if you were writing about a topic such as Abraham Lincoln, frogs, or Italy.
4. **Share a recent activity/lesson:** maybe you have learned something really important lately. Or maybe you completed a really fun project. Telling this to the reader can hook them because they want to discover how you learned this information/lesson or how you discovered such a fun thing.

Now, let us look at some examples, to see these forms of hook in action.

MAKE IT PERSONAL: I began playing soccer five years ago. Even though I have tried many other sports since then, soccer is so much better than any of those. Soccer is my favorite sport because I get to learn from great coaches, I get to spend time with my team, and I get to run a lot.

BEGIN WITH A PROBLEM: We just learned that our cousin Elijah was born deaf, which will make it hard to talk with him as he gets older. We are very close with my Aunt Elise and Uncle Joshua and their other children Chloe and Nathan. So my parents, my siblings, and I decided to learn sign language now. That way, we will be able to talk to Elijah when he is older, and we will be able to continue our strong relationship with him and his family. We will take a few steps to learn sign language.

USE ATTENTION-GRABBING FACTS: Grandma Moses was an American painter, who painted folk art. Amazingly, she did not start painting seriously until she was 78 years old! From studying more about Grandma Moses, I have learned that it is never too late to follow a dream.

SHARE A RECENT ACTIVITY/LESSON: I recently made an American flag craft. It was a lot of fun, so I want to teach you how to do it as well. However, the flag is not made of cloth, nor paint, but rice. Following a few steps, you can make this fun American flag craft too!

Please note: there are many ways to hook your reader. We have only shared four of the more simple forms of hook, but you may feel free to be creative and try out different methods. There are many ways to make an introduction interesting!

Remember, your introduction should begin with a hook, then contain a short middle section (called the bridge), and end with your topic statement.

Assignment 4: Using your topic and main idea chosen in Lesson 3, along with the brainstorm list and outline you made, write an introduction for your composition. Aim to write an introductory paragraph of four to five sentences. Remember that the hook comes first, then a middle section (bridge), and then the topic statement.

Ensure that you use appropriate formatting. Please write your name and the date in the upper left-hand corner of the page. Then, for the introduction, write one sentence after the other, indent the first line, and left-align the text. Justified text is optional but not required.

NOTE: If you want additional practice, you may use your other topics and main ideas from Lesson 2 to create extra introductions.