

Toastmasters International
District 30
Toastmasters Leadership Institute
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The Foundation of Speeches and Stories
Bill Funchion

**True Ease in Writing comes from Art, not Chance,
As those move easiest who have learned to dance.**

Alexander Pope

Writing a Research Paper

In between the choosing of a topic and the final typing of the last revision lie a series of skills which, if learned thoroughly, might well be the most important and most permanent academic possession acquired in four years of college.

Waubonsee Community College

On communication, I want to be so clear that no honest person can misinterpret me and no dishonest person can successfully misrepresent me.

Abraham Lincoln

Write when you are drunk and revise when you are sober.

Paddy Donnelly

**You can be too ambitious, you can be too courageous,
but you cannot be too mindful.** Buddha

WRITING SITUATION

Speakers and writers should consider their subject, audience, purpose, resources, sources, deadlines, and constraints.

“Most communication is either explanation or persuasion.”

THE WRITING PROCESS

“The Writing Process is the series of steps that most experienced writers follow in producing a piece of writing. The five major stages in the writing process are finding a topic and generating ideas (discovering), focusing on a main idea and mapping out an approach (organizing), preparing a rough draft (drafting), reworking and improving the draft (revising), and proofreading and correcting errors (editing).”

All the mistakes are there waiting to happen.
International Chess Grand Master, Tal

“Discovery is the first stage in the writing process. It may include finding a topic, exploring the topic, determining purpose and audience, probing ideas, doing reading and research, and planning and organizing material. Discovery usually involves writing and is aided considerably by putting preliminary thoughts and plans in writing.”

“Organizing is the sequence in which the information or ideas in an essay or speech are presented.” This stage requires strategic thinking and it takes skill, time, and patience. The nine major strategies of organization or communication are narration, description, exemplification, process analysis, comparison and contrast, definition, division and classification, cause and effect, and argument or persuasion.

“Drafting is the stage in the writing process during which the writer puts ideas into complete sentences, connects them, and organizes them into a meaningful sequence.”

“Revising is the stage in the writing process during which the author makes changes in focus, organization, development, style, and mechanics to make the writing more effective.”

James Joyce once worked for nineteen hours on two sentences.

“Editing is the last stage in the writing process, during which the writer focuses on the details of mechanics and correctness.”

If you can't spell kittens, write young cats.
Paddy Donnelly

If you want to communicate effectively, you must have something to say.
Abraham Lincoln

THESIS

“The thesis statement is the main point or proposition that a writer develops and supports in an essay. The thesis is often stated early, normally in the first paragraph, to give the reader a clear indication of the essay’s main idea. The thesis is the controlling idea in a piece of writing.”

You can use an Extended Thesis or an Implied Thesis.

“The thesis must be unified, specific, and restricted.”

The level of your thesis should be appropriate for your audience.

“Supporting Material for the thesis can include facts, figures, statistics, details, examples, reasoning, expert opinion, personal experience, and the like, which are used to develop and explain the general ideas in a piece of writing.”

“The Topic Sentence is the sentence in which the main idea of a paragraph is stated. Writers often state the topic sentence first and develop the rest of the paragraph in support of this main idea. Sometimes a writer will build up to the topic sentence and place it at the end of a paragraph.”

A Search Strategy is a systematic plan for finding supporting material.

Some Common Logical Fallacies are hasty generalization, stereotyping, non sequitur, false analogy, false cause, circular reasoning, bandwagon appeal, argument to the person (Ad Hominem), and red herring.

“Many hasty generalizations contain words like *all*, *ever*, *always*, and *never*, when qualifiers such as *most*, *many*, *usually*, and *seldom* would be more accurate.”

LANGUAGE

Active and Passive

Use active language unless you have a good reason to use passive language.

Appropriate language

Use language that is appropriate for your voice, topic, audience, purpose, and attitude.

The exact word may not be the appropriate word.

Paddy Donnelly

Exact language

The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug.

Mark Twain

Concrete language refers to real objects that can be seen, heard, tasted, touched, or smelled. Words like tree, desk, car, Chicago, Michael, Mary, or jogging are concrete. Concrete examples make abstractions easier to understand, as in “Contentment is a well-fed cat asleep in the sun.”

“Abstract language refers to ideas, conditions, and qualities that cannot be observed directly through the five senses. Words such as beauty, love, joy, wealth, cruelty, power, and justice are abstract.”

Characteristically, literature uses concrete language to animate abstract ideas and principles. When Robert Frost, in “Provide, Provide” describes the pain of impoverished and lonely old age, he doesn’t speak of an old, no longer beautiful female.

He writes: The witch that came (the withered hag)
 To wash the steps with pail and rag,
 Was once the beauty Abishag,

Avoid Sexist language

Avoid Wordy Sentences

“A sentence is wordy if its meaning can be conveyed in fewer words.”

Avoid Clichés and phrases or expressions that have lost their originality or force through overuse. To illustrate, novelist and teacher Janet Burroway writes: “Clichés are *the last word* in bad writing, and it’s *a crying shame* to see all you *bright young things* spoiling your *deathless prose* with phrases *as old as the hills*. You must *keep your nose to the grindstone*, because the *sweet smell of success* only comes to those *who march to the tune of a different drummer*.”

If in doubt, strike it out. Mark Twain

“The Introduction is the beginning or opening of an essay or speech, which usually presents the topic, arouses interest, and prepares the audience for the development of the thesis.”

**The last thing that we find in making a book is to know
what we must put first.**

Blaise Pascal

“The Conclusion is the sentences and paragraphs that bring an essay or a speech to its close. In the conclusion, a writer may restate the thesis, sum up complex and important ideas, emphasize the topic’s significance, make a generalization, offer a solution to a problem, or encourage the reader to take some action. Whatever the strategy, a conclusion should end the essay or speech in a firm and definite way.”

**Welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of
experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience
of my race.**

-James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

FICTION

Fiction is lies skillfully told. Paddy Donnelly

“Fiction is not bound by factual accuracy. It is a work of imagination. The truth of a work of fiction depends not on facts, but on how convincingly the writer creates the world of the story.”

The five parts of plot structure or the arrangement of the action are exposition, rising action, crisis, climax, and resolution but not necessarily in that order.

“Exposition is the first part of plot structure. It sets the scene, introduces and identifies characters, and establishes the situation at the beginning of a story or play. Additional exposition is often scattered throughout the work.”

“Rising Action is the second of the five parts of plot structure, in which events complicate the situation that existed at the beginning of a work, intensifying the conflict or introducing new conflict.”

Crisis
Climax

“Resolution is the fifth part of plot structure. The point at which the situation that was destabilized at the beginning of the story or play becomes stable once more.”

Characters can be dynamic or flat. A dynamic character changes convincingly in the story and can grow, learn, or change.

Flat characters do not change.

Protagonist and Antagonist

Motivation: “The truth is in the motivation.”
Paddy Donnelly

Setting

Plot is a series of events in a story or drama that bear a significant relationship to each other. E. M. Forster illuminates the definition: “*The King died, and then the Queen died,*’ is a story. *‘The King died, and then the Queen died of grief,’* is a plot.”

Point of View

Narrator: Who should tell the story? Some of the choices include:

First-person narrator. This narrator may not know enough.

Omniscient narrator. This narrator may know too much.

Limited omniscience.

Innocent narrator.

Unreliable narrator.

Ironic point of view.

Sentimental

“A usually derogatory description of the quality of a literary work that tries to convey great emotion but fails to give the reader sufficient grounds for sharing it.”

Theme: “(1) a generalized, abstract paraphrase of the inferred central or dominant idea or concern of a work; (2) the statement a poem makes about its subject.”

“Where everything converges.”

When you can state the theme of a story, when you can separate it from the story itself, then you can be sure the story is not a very good one. The meaning of a story has to be embodied in it, has to be made concrete in it. A story is a way to say something that can't be said any other way, and it takes every word in the story to say what the meaning is. You tell a story because a statement would be inadequate.

Flannery O'Connor

Symbol

“A person, place, thing, event, or pattern in a literary work that designates itself and at the same time figuratively represents or stands for something else.”

**Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tip-toe on the misty mountain-tops.**

–Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*

Motif

“A recurrent device, formula, or situation that deliberately connects a poem or story with common patterns of existing thought.”

Figures of speech

“An expression or comparison that relies not on its literal meaning, but rather on its connotations and suggestions.” For example, “*He's stronger than an ox*” is not literally true; it is a figure of speech. Major figures of speech include apostrophe, metaphor, metonymy, simile, and synecdoche.

Apostrophe. A poetic figure of speech in which a personification is addressed:

You sea! I resign myself to you also-I guess what you mean. -Walt Whitman

Metaphor. A figure of speech that makes an imaginative comparison between two literally unlike things: *Sylvia's face was a pale star.*

Metonymy. A figure of speech in which the name of one thing is substituted for that of something else closely associated with it—for example, *the White House* (meaning the president or the whole executive branch), or *the pen is mightier than the sword* (meaning written words are more powerful than military force).

Oxymoron. A single phrase that juxtaposes opposite terms: Irish Christian.

Simile. A verbal comparison in which a similarity is expressed directly, using like or as:

houses leaning together like conspirators.

James Joyce

Synecdoche. A figure of speech in which some prominent feature is used to name the whole, or vice versa-for example, *a sail in the harbor* (meaning a ship), or *call the law* (meaning call the law enforcement officers).

Tone. The attitude a writer conveys toward his or her subject and audience. In poetry this attitude is sometimes called *voice*.

Sound

The most intelligible part of language is not the words, but the tone, force, modulation, tempo, in which a group of words are spoken-that is, the music behind the words, the emotion behind the music, the person behind that emotion: everything that cannot be written. Nietzsche

Rhythm

Economy

Imagery

“Passages or words that stir feelings or memories through an appeal to the senses.”

I never saw a man who looked
With such a wistful eye
Upon that little tent of blue
Which prisoners call the sky,
And at every drifting cloud that went
With sails of silver by.

From *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* by Oscar Wilde

Emotion/mood

“The emotional content of a scene or setting, usually described in terms of feeling: somber, gloomy, joyful, expectant. Also see Tone.”

Writing Emotion

Emotional writing almost guarantees that the reader will not react emotionally. Being excited is not being exciting. A writer with the power to excite emotions coldly examines his own passions to discover what ignited them. If he identifies and assembles the details that stimulated his emotions, they will stimulate the reader's. The writer causes responses. He does not obscure the causes by reporting his own responses. Gertrude Stein said, “Sentences are not emotional and paragraphs are.” Accumulation of details produces emotion. That is the principle of power in writing.

From an article by S. Leonard Rubenstein.

“Tell me and I may forget.
Show me and I may remember.
Involve me and I will understand.”

“Dialogue is the exchange of words between characters in a drama or narrative. It should advance the plot, heighten the tension, and show the character.”

Irony is figurative language in which the intended meaning differs from the literal meaning. Verbal irony includes overstatement (hyperbole), understatement, and opposite statement. The following lines from Robert Burns’s “A Red, Red Rose” embody overstatement: “As fair art thou, my bonnie lass, / So deep in luv am I; / And I will luv thee still, my dear, / Til a’ the seas gang dry.” These lines from Andrew Marvell’s “To His Coy Mistress” understate: “The grave’s a fine and private place, / But none, I think, do there embrace.” W. H. Auden’s ironic conclusion to “The Unknown Citizen” reveals opposite statement: “Was he free? Was he happy? The question is absurd: / Had anything been wrong, we should certainly have heard.”

Word order is the positioning of words in relation to one another.

Syntax is the way words are put together to form phrases, clauses, and sentences.

Diction is an author’s choice of words especially with regard to correctness, clearness, or effectiveness.

Style is a distinctive manner of expression; each author’s style is expressed through his/her diction, rhythm, imagery, and so on.

“Literary theory or literary criticism tries to formulate general principles rather than discuss specific texts. Theory operates at a high level of abstraction and often focuses on understanding basic issues of language, communication, art, interpretation, culture, and ideological content.”

A Rhetorical Question expects no reply, or clearly calls for one desired reply. It is not a genuine inquiry, like who is the president of Toastmasters.

“Satire is a specific form of humor that is usually intended to influence people concerning a particular topic. However, as is often the case with forms of argument like advertising and parody, humor can also contain subtle, politically oriented humor.” Nursery rhymes.

An Epiphany is a moment of insight, discovery, or revelation by which a character’s life is greatly altered. An epiphany generally occurs near the end of a story. The term, which means “showing forth” in Greek, was first used in Christian theology to signify the manifestation of God’s presence in the world. This theological idea was first borrowed by James Joyce to refer to a heightened moment of secular revelation.

LITERATURE

Literature is one of the highest achievements in language.

Things that are true expressed in words that are beautiful.	Dante.
A way of remembering what it would impoverish us to forget.	Robert Frost
A revelation in words by means of the words.	Wallace Stevens
Not the assertion that something is true, but the making of that truth more fully real to us.	T. S. Eliot
The best words in the best order.	Coleridge
Literature is news that stays news.	Ezra Pound
Prose bewitched.	Mina Loy
Life distilled.	Gwendolyn Brooks
Musical thought.	Thomas Carlyle

EVALUATIONS

Suggested reading: Stephanie Ericsson, **The Ways We Lie**

The truth does not take many words. Chief Joseph

Be wary of flattery and words like incredible, unbelievable, fantastic, and phenomenal. Avoid traps like fooling yourself into thinking that you have a winning speech or falling in love with your speech. Old Irish advice

Every hen thinks it lays the best egg. Paddy Donnelly

Competitive and professional speakers should heed the advice of Hagar the Horrible:
**Winning isn't everything, there's also losing,
that's why winning is so important.**

Speakers should expect frank, honest, and truthful evaluations.
Frank Guyer, DTM and co-founder of Kickstarters

Speakers cannot always assume the viewpoint of Oscar Wilde. The playwright arrived at his club one evening after witnessing a first production of a play of his that was a complete failure.

“Oscar, how did your play go tonight?” asked a friend.

“Oh,” was the response, “the play was a great success but the audience was a failure.”

The eye of a friend is a good mirror. Old Irish saying

**One good critic telling you what you are doing wrong is better
than ten thousand people telling you how great you are.**
Abraham Lincoln

A Selection of Published Pieces.

Lucy Grealy, **Mirrors** A writer who was disfigured by cancer as a girl reflects upon her relationship with her appearance.

Alice Walker, **Beauty: When the Other Dancer is the Self**
A novelist and essayist recalls her changing reactions to a painful childhood injury.

Vivian Gornick, **A Narrator Leaps Past Journalism** A journalist and memoirist describes how she developed the persona in her personal writing.

Emily Dickinson, **Because I Could Not Stop For Death-** In one of her most famous works, the celebrated poet imagines what it might be like to die.

Martin Luther King, Jr., **Pilgrimage to Nonviolence** The civil-rights activist and minister reveals what led him to the philosophy of passive resistance.

Martin Luther King, Jr., **The Ways of Meeting Oppression**
In this classic essay, the civil-rights leader makes a case for nonviolent resistance.

Christina Boufis, **Teaching Literature at the County Jail** An English professor describes how the stories they read affect her class at a county jail.

W. H. Auden, **The Unknown Citizen**
A poet records and wonders about the life of a man who met most of the statistical norms.

Richard Selzer, **The Discus Thrower** A general surgeon details the reactions of a blind and legless patient to his helpless condition.

Sylvia Plath, **Metaphors**
A poet explains a crucial moment of her private life by using metaphors.

Antonio R. Damasio, **How the Brain Creates the Mind**
A neuroscientist examines how consciousness comes from the physical brain.

Cynthia Ozick, **The Impious Patience of Job.** A novelist interprets the Biblical text.

Robert Frost, **Mending Wall.** A poet questions the need for barriers.

Randall Jarrell, **The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner**
A poet makes an implicit argument about war and the value of human life.

Gwendolyn Brooks, **We Real Cool.** A poet describes the attitude of seven pool players.

- Philip Levine, **What Work Is.** A poet tries to define the meaning of work.
- Chuang Tzu, **Independence** The Prince of Ch'u asks the philosopher Chuang Tzu to become his advisor and gets a surprising reply in this classic Chinese fable.
- James Baldwin, **Sonny's Blues** Two brothers in Harlem see life differently. The older brother is the sensible family man, but Sonny wants to be a jazz musician.
- Raymond Carver, **Cathedral** He had not expected to find himself trying to describe a cathedral to a blind man. He hadn't even wanted to meet this odd, old friend of his wife.
- Kate Chopin, **The Storm** Even with her husband away, Calixta feels happily, securely married. Why then should she not shelter an old admirer from the rain?
- Chinua Achebe, **Dead Men's Path** The new headmaster of the village school was determined to fight superstition, but the villagers did not agree.
- Elizabeth Tallent, **No one's a Mystery**
A two-page story speaks volumes about an open-hearted girl and her married lover.
- Margaret Atwood, **Happy Endings**
John and Mary meet. This witty experimental story offers five different outcomes.
- Jorge Luis Borges, **The Gospel According to Mark** A young man from Buenos Aires is trapped by a flood on an isolated ranch. To pass the time he reads the Gospel to a family with unforeseen results.
- Zora Neale Hurston, **Sweat** Delia's hard work paid for her small house. Now her drunken husband Sykes has promised it to another woman.
- James Joyce, **Araby** If only he can find her a token, she might love him in return. As night falls, a Dublin boy hurries to make his dream come true and experiences an epiphany.
- Franz Kafka, **Before the Law** A man from the country comes in search of the Law but he is prevented from finding it in this modern parable.
- Joyce Carol Oates, **Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?**
Alone in the house, Connie finds herself helpless before the advances of a spellbinding imitation teenager.
- James Lincoln Collier, **Anxiety: Challenge by Another Name**
Accept anxiety as another name for challenge and you can accomplish wonders.

Carl T. Rowan, **Unforgettable Miss Bessie**

A newspaper columnist remembers an influential teacher in the segregated South.

Steve Brody, **How I Got Smart**

A high school crush led this writer to become addicted to learning.

Russell Baker, **Becoming a Writer** A favorite American author remembers his joy at the discovery that his “words had the power to make people laugh.”

Samuel H. Scudder, **Learning to See**

A repeated task teaches a future scientist an important lesson in observation.

Cherokee Paul McDonald, **A View from the Bridge** An encounter with a young fisherman teaches the author a lesson in what it means to see.

David Raymond, **On Being 17, Bright, and Unable to Read**

A dyslexic high school student describes his disability.

Sarah Vowell, **Pop-A-Shot**

There are benefits to “goofing off,” argues this writer and cultural observer.

Gary Soto, **The Jacket**

A poet and author describes his bitter relationship with an ugly childhood jacket.

Barbara Huttman, **A Crime of Compassion** A nurse pleads for new legislation that would permit terminally ill patients to choose death with dignity.

Helen Keller, **Three Days to See** The blind and deaf author imagines everything she would like to see if she were given three days of sight.

Kate Chopin, **The Story of an Hour**

The skillful author captures the truth of a marriage in the events of an hour.

Thomas L. Friedman, **My Favorite Teacher**

A Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist describes the high school teacher who was the most influential person in his career as a journalist.

Garrison Keillor, **How to Write a Personal Letter**

A teller of homespun tales offers do's and don'ts on the art of letter writing.

Lars Eighner, **On Dumpster Diving** A formerly homeless man reveals the finer points of scavenging and the lessons that can be learned along the way.

Judith Viorst, **Friends, Good Friends-and Such Good Friends**

A magazine writer considers the varieties of friendship.

Mark Twain, **Two Ways of Seeing a River** The famous author makes his classic observation that sometimes knowledge can be blinding.

Stephen King, **Why We Crave Horror Movies** The king of macabre explains the appeal of horror movies and why he thinks “we’re all mentally ill.”

Martin Luther King, Jr., **I Have a Dream** In this revered speech, the celebrated civil-rights leader imparts his vision of freedom and equality.

Isak Dinesen, **The Iguana**

A storyteller shows how she learned about the elusive beauty of exotic things.

Loren Eiseley, **The Bird and the Machine** A naturalist contemplates the gulf between living organisms and their technological counterparts.

William Gass, **Of Speed Readers and Lip-Movers**

A novelist and champion speed reader explains why he came to read more slowly.

Charles Darwin, **The Action of Natural Selection**

The great naturalist illustrates his doctrine of natural selection.

Christopher Clausen, **Dialogues with the Dead** A teacher and essayist explores the complex relations between the living and the dead.

Scott Russell Sanders, **The Most Human Art: Ten Reasons Why We’ll Always Need a Good Story**

Gerald Holton, **“What Precisely, Is Thinking” ... Einstein’s Answer**

A professor of physics considers Einstein’s explanation of thinking processes.

SPEECHES

Barbara Dean, **Memories of Sunshine** A mother plants yellow flowers in memory of her son who was nicknamed Sunshine.

Dana LaMon, **Take a Chance** The 1992 Toastmasters World Champion of Public Speaking tells us to take a chance.

Edward Hearn, **Bouncing Back** The 2006 Toastmasters World Champion of Public Speaking advises us to bounce back.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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“A coaching session with Old Bill is like taking a drink of water from a fireman’s hose. It involves a lot of information coming at you, all at once, but he is thorough and intense. Without a doubt, he helped me become a World Champion!”

Ed Hearn - 2006 Toastmasters World Champion of Public Speaking.

www.edhearninternational.com

“Old Bill is the maestro of speaking. His insights into becoming an effective communicator can make you a speaking superstar. When you are ready to take your communication skills to the next level, call Old Bill.”

Johnny Campbell - “The Transition Man.”

2007 Toastmasters Accredited Speaker. (Only 59 people have received this distinction.)

www.transitionman.com

KICKSTARTERS Toastmasters Club 6921 meets every Wednesday morning at 6:30 am.

Location: Panera Bread, 1400 Butterfield Road, Downers Grove, 60515.

We welcome all speakers: beginning, competitive, and professional, who want frank, honest, and truthful evaluations.

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