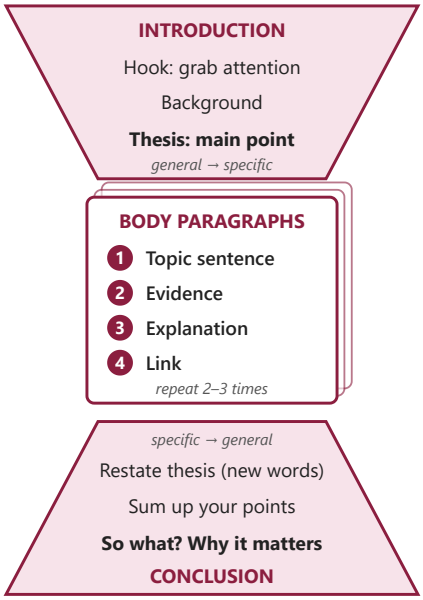
Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Write It Better

The parts of strong writing, and how to make yours stronger



Explore · The Parts of Writing

Essays, lab reports, speeches: all strong writing is built from the same parts.

Hook	The opening line or two. It grabs attention with a question, a surprising fact, a short scene, or a bold statement.
Thesis	One sentence that states your main point. A strong thesis is **specific** and **arguable**: someone could disagree with it.
Topic sentence	Opens a body paragraph and states its one main idea.
Evidence	Facts, examples, quotations, or details that support the point.
Explanation	Your thinking: *how* the evidence proves your point.
Link	Ties the paragraph back to the thesis.
Conclusion	Restates the thesis in new words and answers "So what?"

The "So what?" test: After each piece of evidence, ask "So what?" Your answer is the explanation, the part that turns okay writing into strong writing.

Part A · Spot the Parts

1. Read the paragraph. Label each numbered sentence **T** (topic sentence), **E** (evidence), **X** (explanation), or **L** (link).

> [1] Starting high school later in the morning would help students learn more. [2] The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that middle and high schools start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. [3] Doctors explain that during the teen years the body's internal clock shifts later, so many teenagers do not feel sleepy until about 11 p.m. [4] In other words, a 7:30 bell forces students to begin learning before their brains are fully awake. [5] A student who is fighting to stay awake cannot focus on a lab or remember new vocabulary, so early start times quietly chip away at learning every day. [6] Because sleep affects every class, a later start time is one of the simplest ways a school can help students succeed.

1 ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ 5 ____ 6 ____

2. What is one more piece of evidence the writer could add to make this paragraph even stronger?

_____

Part B · Strong Thesis or Weak?

3. Write **S** (strong) or **W** (weak) next to each thesis.

____ **a.** This essay will be about social media.

____ **b.** Many teenagers have a cell phone.

____ **c.** Schools should teach every student to cook because it builds independence and healthier habits.

____ **d.** Video games are bad.

____ **e.** Although homework can feel pointless, a little daily practice helps students remember what they learn.

4. Choose one weak thesis and rewrite it so it is strong.

_____

_____

Part C · Hook 'Em

Thesis: *"Students should be allowed to listen to music while they work in class."* Write two hooks for this essay, each a different type.

Types: question · surprising fact · short scene · bold statement · quotation

5. Type: _____

_____

_____

6. Type: _____

_____

_____

Part D · Five Moves That Make Writing Better

1 · Show, don't tell

TELL Marcus was nervous before his speech.

SHOW Marcus wiped his palms and reread his first line.

Your turn: Show (don't tell) that "The cafeteria was loud."

2 · Strong verbs, specific nouns

BEFORE The dog went quickly across the yard.

AFTER The beagle bolted across the yard.

Your turn: Improve "The car went down the road fast."

3 · Cut the clutter

BEFORE In my opinion, I think people like summer due to the fact that there is no school.

AFTER People love summer because there is no school.

Your turn: Cut "It is really important that students make sure they get enough sleep."

4 · Combine choppy sentences

BEFORE The bus was late. It was raining. We waited.

AFTER When the bus ran late in the rain, we waited.

Your turn: Combine "I have a dog. She is a husky. She loves snow."

5 · Connect ideas with transitions

ADD	CONTRAST	CAUSE & EFFECT	EXAMPLE	WRAP UP
also, in addition	however, although	as a result, so	for example	ultimately, in the end

Your turn: Phones help students look things up quickly. _____, they can also pull attention away from class. _____, some schools collect phones at the start of the day.

Part E · Fix It

Each sentence has one error. Rewrite it correctly.

a. Their going to the library.

b. The team lost it's final game.

c. I was tired, I went to bed early.

d. Because the power went out.

e. Me and Jordan finished early.

f. Each of the students have a locker.

Writing Challenge · Exactly 100 Words

Choose **one** prompt. Write a paragraph of **exactly 100 words**: not 99, not 101. Make every word count.

A · Argue. Should students be allowed to use phones at lunch? Pick a side.

B · Describe. A place that matters to you, so the reader can see and hear it.

C · Explain. How to do something you are good at, for a total beginner.

- ☐ A hook that pulls the reader in
- ☐ A clear, specific main idea
- ☐ Two specific details, explained
- ☐ At least two transitions
- ☐ Strong verbs, no extra words
- ☐ Read aloud; errors fixed

Level up: Don't use *very, really, thing, stuff, a lot,* or *good*. Then have a partner find your hook and main idea.

Word count (must be 100): _____

Nice work!