

ENGL000: Pre-College English Study Guides

Note: This study guide is intended to help reinforce key concepts in each unit in preparation for the final exam. Each unit study guide aligns with course outcomes and provides a summary of the core competencies and a list of vocabulary terms. This study guide is not meant to replace the readings and videos that make up the course.

The vocabulary lists include (1) some terms that might help you answer some of the review items and (2) some terms you should be familiar with to be successful in completing the final exam for the course.

Unit 1: Active Reading

1a: Take effective notes while reading a text or listening to a video or lecture

1a.1. When you take notes while reading, you are reading actively. Active reading is an important college-level study skill. Effectively implementing active reading strategies will help you understand and remember course material. You should have practiced active reading strategies as you moved through this course.

- A. Describe the difference between active reading and passive reading.
- B. What are the benefits of reading actively versus reading passively?

To review active reading, including strategies for reading actively, the difference between active and passive reading, and the benefits of active reading, review Saylor Academy's "[Active Reading](#)" article and the "[Active Reading](#)" video by YouTube user Literacy4DS.

1a.2. The Cornell Note-Taking System is one method for implementing active reading strategies to take effective notes while you read or listen to a lecture. There are five steps in the Cornell Note-Taking System that help you identify, understand, and remember key points. Can you name the five steps of the Cornell Note-Taking System in order and describe them.

If you find it difficult to answer this study question, consider reviewing the Essential Study Skills Wikispace reading "[The Cornell NoteTaking System.](#)"

1a.3. Online reading environments differ from the printed page. For example, online materials often include hyperlinks, videos, advertisements, or other interactive elements. Active reading strategies tailored to online environments can help you understand and remember material you read online. Describe some strategies for effectively reading material online.

The California Community Colleges reading "[Online Reading Strategies](#)" explains the similarities and differences between reading in print and reading online and offers tips for active reading in online environments.

1b: Identify themes, main ideas, and topic sentences

1b.1. The topic or theme of a paragraph and the main idea of a paragraph tell us what a paragraph is about. The difference is that the topic or theme of a paragraph is often fairly broad. In contrast, the main idea of a paragraph is more specific. It narrowly defines the subject of the paragraph.

Read the following paragraph from Boundless: *Writing*: [“Topic Sentences.”](#)

“By dedicating each paragraph to only one part of your argument, you will give the reader time to fully evaluate and understand each claim before going on to the next one. Think of paragraphs as a way of guiding your reader's attention—by giving them a single topic, you force them to focus on it. When you direct their focus, they will have a much easier time following your argument.”

- A. In your own words, what is the topic of the paragraph?
- B. In your own words, what is the main idea of the paragraph?

To review the concept of the main idea, read [“Finding the Main Idea.”](#) For more practice identifying the main idea in a paragraph, take Saylor Academy's [“Main Idea Paragraph Quiz.”](#)

1b.2. A topic sentence expresses the main idea of a paragraph. It tells the reader what the paragraph will be about, and it may express the author's point of view or opinion about the main idea. Most often the topic sentence will be the first sentence in a paragraph, but this may not always be the case. Re-read the example paragraph in 1b.1 above. In that paragraph, which is the topic sentence?

The reading [“Topic Sentences”](#) gives a detailed explanation of the topic sentence and its role in a paragraph and an essay.

1b.3. The main idea of a paragraph is supported by major details and minor details that explain the main idea and give examples.

- A. Describe the role of major details within a paragraph.
- B. Describe the role of minor details within a paragraph.

If you have trouble distinguishing between major and minor details or do not remember the roles of these two types of supporting details within a paragraph, you should revisit the reading [“Main Idea and Supporting Sentences”](#) prior to attempting the final exam.

1c: Write complete sentences with a clear focus, including topic sentences

1c.1. A complete sentence has a subject and an agreeing verb. A verb expresses the action of a clause; verbs express the physical or mental action or the condition of the subject. A subject is a noun (a person, place, thing, or idea) that completes the action.

A. There are different types of verbs. Describe the difference between an action verb and a linking verb. Give an example of each.

B. A clause is any sentence or part of a sentence that has a subject and a verb. Describe the difference between a dependent clause and an independent clause.

To review the elements of a sentence, you should revisit the Saylor Academy reading [“The Sentence.”](#) You may want to complete the first practice exercise, “Subjects/Verbs” on page 6. Check your work against [this answer key](#).

1c.2. A complete sentence must end with an appropriate punctuation mark.

Name the three types of punctuation that indicate the end of a sentence.

If you can’t remember the three punctuation marks that can be used at the end of a sentence, you should revisit [“The Sentence”](#) from subunit 1.3.1. You may want to complete the third practice exercise, “Punctuation” on page 7. Check your work against [this answer key](#).

1c.3. A sentence must also express a complete thought. Moreover, effective sentences clearly express a specific idea.

Which type of clause expresses a complete thought?

To review this concept, you may want to complete the first practice exercise, “Complete Thought” on page 7 of [“The Sentence.”](#) Then, check your work against the [Answer Key](#).

1d: Identify and employ a variety of sentence patterns to improve coherence

1d.1. All complete sentences have a subject and agreeing verb, express a complete thought, and conclude with appropriate punctuation. There are different types of complete sentences. Sentences types can be differentiated by their purpose and by their structure.

A. Declarative, exclamatory, imperative, and interrogative sentences each have a different purpose. Describe the purpose of each type of sentence and give an example.

B. Simple, complex, compound, and complex-compound sentences each have a different structure. Describe the structure of each type of sentence and give an example.

If you have trouble distinguishing between different sentence types based on purpose and structure, you should read Boundless: *Writing*: [“Introduction to English Grammar and Mechanics: Structure of a Sentence.”](#) You can also test your knowledge of sentence types

(as well as main ideas and supporting sentences!) by re-taking Saylor Academy's ["Main Idea and Supporting Sentences Quiz."](#)

1d.2. Effective paragraphs make use of a variety of sentence types, as well as sentences of varying lengths. Effective writers also vary the language they use to begin and end sentences. Sentence variation can be used strategically to engage readers, highlight important information, and indicate relationships between ideas.

[Chapter 16, Section 1 of *Handbook for Writers*](#) discusses the purpose of sentence variation, as well as strategies for varying sentences in your writing. For additional practice, complete the exercises at the bottom of the reading.

1e: Apply prewriting strategies to narrow a topic and develop a piece of writing

1e.1. Writing is a process with multiple steps. The first step in the process is pre-writing. During the pre-writing stage, you explore ideas for your essay, choose a topic, and ultimately narrow your topic to fit the audience and purpose of the assignment. After you complete one or more pre-writing exercises to define the scope of your topic, then you can move on to the remaining stages of the writing process: outlining, drafting, revising, and editing.

To review some common pre-writing strategies and complete practice pre-writing activities, see Washington State Board for Community and Technical College's ["Pre-Writing Activities,"](#) assigned in Sub-subunit 1.4.1.

1e.2. There are a wide variety of pre-writing strategies available to you as a writer. Some pre-writing strategies are useful when you still need to identify a topic for your essay, while others are more beneficial for helping you narrow your topic.

- A. Name and describe two pre-writing strategies that can help you identify a topic.
- B. Name and describe two pre-writing strategies that can help you narrow your topic.

The assigned reading for Sub-subunit 1.4.2, [Chapter 8, Section 1 of *Writing for Success, v1.0*](#) offers an extensive discussion of what pre-writing is, how it fits into the writing process, and pre-writing strategies that are appropriate for different contexts.

1f: Organize paragraphs effectively by using appropriate topic sentences and supporting sentences

1f.1. Writing an effective paragraph is more than stringing together a series of sentences. Effective writing has purpose, structure, and a sense of voice or style that engages the reader.

- A. Well-organized paragraphs are composed of grammatically correct sentences, each of which clearly expresses a complete thought. To review the elements of a complete sentence, see 1c above.

- B. Well-organized paragraphs have a main idea that is clearly expressed in a topic sentence. To review main ideas and topic sentences, see 1b.1 and 1b.2 above.
- C. Well-organized paragraphs support the main idea with major and minor details that explain the main idea and give examples. To review supporting details, see 1b.3 above.
- D. Well-organized paragraphs use a variety of sentence patterns to engage the reader and provide clues about the relationships between ideas in the paragraph. To review types of sentences and strategies for using sentence variety in your writing, see 1d above.

To practice writing your own well-organized paragraphs using topic sentences and supporting sentences, you can revisit the [“Main Idea Paragraph Assessment.”](#) Be sure to look closely at [this rubric](#) for detailed information about evaluating the organization of your paragraph.

Unit 1 Vocabulary List

This vocabulary list includes terms that might help you answer some of the review items above and some terms you should be familiar with to be successful in completing the final exam for the course.

Complex sentence
Complex-compound sentence
Compound sentence
Cornell Note-Taking System
Declarative sentence
Dependent clause
Exclamatory sentence
Imperative sentence
Independent clause
Interrogative sentence
Main idea
Major detail
Minor detail
Passive reading
Pre-writing
Simple sentence
Subject
Topic
Topic sentence
Verb