

SRMS WRITING GUIDELINES

2026-27



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Writing Style Structures

Expository, Informational, Analysis, Argument

Opening

- ✓ Hook- grab your reader with a statistic, question, figurative language or fun fact
- ✓ Declare what you are going to prove, present, or argue. Explain your issue; provide background information
- ✓ State your first main point or reason; state your thesis- your side of the issue.
- ✓ List the three main points or reasons.

Point #1

- ✓ Present evidence from the work to defend your first point
- ✓ Explain your evidence; show how it proves your first point

Points- #2-3...

- ✓ **Transition** from previous point
- ✓ Repeat steps of Point #1

Conclusion

- ✓ Concluding transition
- ✓ Restate thesis
- ✓ Restate three reasons in a different manner
- ✓ Summarize how your three points proved it
- ✓ Leave reader with something to think about, ex. lesson learned, call to action, positive result

Argument

Use the format above, extending the argument to include the counterclaims.

Compare and Contrast

Use the format above with these variations:

Thesis Statement:

Both Text #1 and Text #2 present (this topic or theme), but they do so in different ways.

Contrast: Transition; use evidence to show how Text #1 deals with the topic.

Contrast: Transition; use evidence to show how Text #2 deals with the topic differently.

Compare: Transition; discuss what Text #1 and Text #2 have in common.

Conclusion: Transition; discuss what both texts help us realize.

Narrative (Alternate Ending)

- ✓ **Opening Paragraph:** Topic Sentence- This is the “what” and must be clearly stated. Tell the reader what you are going to say and the direction you are planning to go.
- ✓ **Supporting Detail:** Show what happened first; include who and where; focus on what the reader should see.
- ✓ **Expand** on first event
- ✓ **Supporting Detail:** Show what happened next; include how and when; focus on what the reader should hear
- ✓ **Expand** on next event
- ✓ **Continue** with supporting details and expansion
- ✓ **Detail** your actual **climax**
- ✓ **Expand** on the climax
- ✓ **Denouement and Resolution-** explain what happens after the climax
- ✓ **Expand** on denouement and resolution
- ✓ **Reflect** on the event of the conflict
- ✓ **Provide** insight or information regarding what the character gained
- ✓ **Detail** the resolution and answer “what next?”

Terms to Know

Non-fiction – informational, informative, explanatory text; gives real world information

Non-fiction forms/text types – biography, essay, speech, textbook, letter, journal, interview

Author's purpose – to inform, persuade, or entertain

Audience – For whom are you writing?

Author's point of view – What is the author's attitude or opinion on the topic?

Central idea – synonym for main idea/central claim

Primary document/source – in history, a.k.a. the original source or evidence; examples: artifacts, documents, diaries, speeches, manuscripts, autobiographies, recordings, or some other source of information that was created during a specific time

Organizational Structures (how writings are organized):

Sequential – Chronological or time order; traces the development of an event

Cause and Effect – Shows the relationship between an event and the resulting effects

Explanation – Explores/tells why things happen or how something came to be

Problem/Solution – What was wrong? How is it solved or how can it be solved?

Compare/Contrast – Examines how things are alike/different

Punctuation

“ ” Quotation marks - shows what someone said

‘ Apostrophe - shows possession or represents missing letters in contractions

, Comma - indicates a pause, sets off a phrase, separates items in a series

() Parentheses - sets off important details such as an afterthought or comment

: Colon - introduces a list; used in Bible verses

; Semi-colon - joins two related sentences or separates items in a series with commas

/ Slash - indicates line breaks when quoting poetry

- Hyphen - divides a word or used in compound words

Nine Comma Rules

1. Between independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction:

Each independent clause could stand alone as a complete sentence:

[I pushed the button], [but] [nothing happened.]
↓ ↓ ↓ ↓
ind. clause comma coord. conj. independent clause

2. To separate coordinate adjectives:

Put a comma between adjectives – if you could use the word “and” between them instead of a comma:

her [open] [,] [smiling] face
↓ ↓ ↓
coord. comma coord.
adj. adj.

*If the word would not sound natural between the adjectives, don't put in a comma:
Ex. A cute little baby
("A cute and little baby" doesn't sound natural.)*

("Her open and smiling face" sounds natural.)

3. To set off an appositive:

An appositive is a noun phrase that stands next to another noun and gives additional information about it:

[Mrs. Santaria] [,] [our history teacher][,] is planning a trip.
↓ ↓ ↓ ↓
noun comma appositive comma

4. Between the name of a city and a state:

Trenton, New Jersey
↓ ↓ ↓
city comma state

5. Before a direct quotation:

The comma goes after the words that identify the speaker of the quote:

[Bill] asked[,]"When do we start?"
↓ ↓ ↓
speaker comma direct quote

6. To set off a name in direct address:

Use a comma to set off a person's name when he or she is being spoken to:

(A name used this way is called a noun of address.)

Yes[,][Mr. Greene][,] I can hear you.
↓ ↓ ↓
comma name comma
in direct
address

Don't use a comma if the quote precedes the speaker and ends in a question mark or exclamation point. "Don't touch the stove!" shouted her mom.

7. After a transitional word or phrase:

Use a comma after an introductory word that doesn't have a strong connection to the rest of the sentence:

[Well][,] I guess so.
↓ ↓
trans. comma
word

8. After an introductory participial phrase:

A participial phrase is a phrase built around a verb form known as a participle. There are two kinds of participles, present and past.

[Walking quickly][,] I made it to class on time.
↓ ↓
part. phrase comma

9. After an introductory dependent clause:

A dependent clause is usually introduced by words like if, because, although, after, before, when:

[If we leave early][,] we'll get there before noon.
↓ ↓
dep. clause comma

Common Transitional Words and Phrases

Time Order Cause/Effect

earlier
former
formerly
as a result
heretofore
in retrospect
in the past
not long ago
of late
preceding
previously
prior to
recently
at present
at the same time
at this moment
by now
currently
immediately
now
presently
simultaneously
until now
in contrast
in the future
after a long time
afterward
later on
not long after
right after
soon after

Contrast

a clear difference
a distinct difference
a striking difference
whereas
a strong distinction
against
although
although this may be true
an opposing view
and yet
another distinction
balanced against
but
by contrast
contrarily
contrary to
conversely
counter to
despite
despite the fact that
different from
for
however
like
nevertheless
on the contrary
on the other hand
opposing
otherwise
regardless
whereas

Comparison

after all
along the same lines
also
too
as compared with
as well as
balanced against
by comparison
comparable
comparable to
comparatively
consistent with
conversely
correlate
correspondingly
equal
equally important
equivalent
however
in the same way
in comparison
in the same manner
in the same way
while
likewise
similarly
to the same extent

(great for science)

accordingly
consequently
since
the ramifications of
because
because of this
caused by
thereafter
due to
following that
the outcome
for this purpose
furthermore
hence
in conclusion
in effect
in view of
it follows that
on account of
the outcome
subsequently
the end result
henceforth

Exception

despite
however
in spite of
nevertheless
of course
once in a while
sometimes
to conclude

Summarize/Conclude

accordingly
as a result
as stated
as noted
as demonstrated
consequently
on the whole
as a result

Concede

admittedly
although it is true
granted
of course
naturally
it is possible that
therefore
in summary/to summarize

Sequence	Adding Info	Example	Emphasis
at first	after	a case in point	above all
at the beginning	afterward	after all	actually
at the onset	again	another way	after all
earlier	also	as an example	as a matter of fact
first	and	for example	certainly
from this point	and then	for instance	decidedly
in the first place	besides	for one thing	definitely
initially	equally important	in another case	to begin with
in addition	in fact	especially	without a doubt
after that	furthermore	in one example	without question
furthermore	thus	in the same manner	to be sure
immediately after	in addition	in order to clarify	increasingly
in turn	indeed	in other words	clearly
later on	moreover	in particular	most of all
previously	in this case	in the following	of major concern
finally	to show	to exemplify	of great concern
the next day	therefore	to clarify	to be exact
simultaneously	on this occasion	the main issue	primarily
the following week	in this situation	significantly	
lastly	to explain	the main problem	
at the end	such as	the main reason	
in conclusion	to illustrate	to conclude	
finally	to show		
the next time	specifically		

Coordinating Conjunctions (FANBOYS) – Connect Clauses

For	Because	Sam drank some water, for he was thirsty.
And	In addition to	I like ice cream, and I like brownies.
Nor	And not	Sara doesn't like apples, nor does she like pears.
But	However	Everyone wanted to eat pizza, but no one wanted to buy it.
Or	Either	We could go to the zoo, or we could go to a theme park.
Yet	But	The weather was cold and wet, yet we enjoyed walking in the park.
So	Therefore	He is sick, so he is not going to school.

Subordinating Conjunctions (AAAWWUBBIS)

“Comma Causers” – they start introductory phrases and set off dependent clauses in a complex sentence

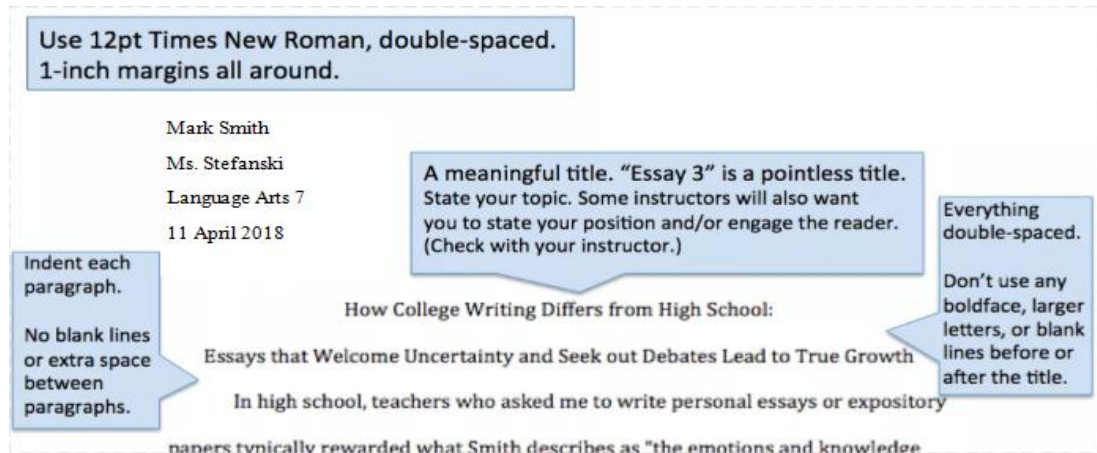
A= After	U= Until
A= Although	B= Because
A= As	B= Before
W= When	I= In
W= While	S= Since

Prepositions

aboard	beside	near	under
about	besides	of	underneath
above	between	off	until
across	beyond	on	up
after	but	onto	upon
against	by	out	with
along	despite	outside	within
alongside	down	over	without
among	during	past	
around	except	since	
as	for	through	
at	from	throughout	
before	in	till	
behind	inside	to	
below	into	toward	
beneath	like		

Vivid Verbs			Helping Verbs	Adept Adverbs		
<i>abolish</i>	<i>discover</i>	<i>overcome</i>	<i>am</i>	<i>accidentally</i>	<i>exactly</i>	<i>mortally</i>
<i>accelerate</i>	<i>eliminate</i>	<i>persuade</i>	<i>are</i>	<i>always</i>	<i>faithfully</i>	<i>mysteriously</i>
<i>achieve</i>	<i>emphasize</i>	<i>pinpoint</i>	<i>be</i>	<i>angrily</i>	<i>finally</i>	<i>nervously</i>
<i>adopt</i>	<i>ensure</i>	<i>prevent</i>	<i>been</i>	<i>anxiously</i>	<i>foolishly</i>	<i>never</i>
<i>align</i>	<i>establish</i>	<i>realize</i>	<i>can</i>	<i>awkwardly</i>	<i>fortunately</i>	<i>obediently</i>
<i>anticipate</i>	<i>explore</i>	<i>reconsider</i>	<i>could</i>	<i>badly</i>	<i>frequently</i>	<i>obnoxiously</i>
<i>assess</i>	<i>filter</i>	<i>replace</i>	<i>did</i>	<i>blindly</i>	<i>gleefully</i>	<i>occasionally</i>
<i>avoid</i>	<i>finalize</i>	<i>resist</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>boastfully</i>	<i>gracefully</i>	<i>perfectly</i>
<i>boost</i>	<i>focus</i>	<i>retain</i>	<i>does</i>	<i>boldly</i>	<i>happily</i>	<i>politely</i>
<i>burn</i>	<i>gather</i>	<i>shatter</i>	<i>had</i>	<i>bravely</i>	<i>hastily</i>	<i>powerfully</i>
<i>capture</i>	<i>generate</i>	<i>sidestep</i>	<i>has</i>	<i>brightly</i>	<i>hopefully</i>	<i>quickly</i>
<i>choose</i>	<i>grasp</i>	<i>signal</i>	<i>have</i>	<i>cheerfully</i>	<i>honestly</i>	<i>rapidly</i>
<i>clarify</i>	<i>identify</i>	<i>simplify</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>coyly</i>	<i>hopelessly</i>	<i>rarely</i>
<i>comprehend</i>	<i>ignite</i>	<i>solve</i>	<i>may</i>	<i>defiantly</i>	<i>innocently</i>	<i>selfishly</i>
<i>compromise</i>	<i>illuminate</i>	<i>transfer</i>	<i>might</i>	<i>deftly</i>	<i>inquisitively</i>	<i>seriously</i>
<i>confront</i>	<i>improve</i>	<i>transform</i>	<i>must</i>	<i>deliberately</i>	<i>irritably</i>	<i>silently</i>
<i>connect</i>	<i>innovate</i>	<i>understand</i>	<i>shall</i>	<i>devotedly</i>	<i>jealously</i>	<i>sometimes</i>
<i>conquer</i>	<i>inspire</i>	<i>underestimate</i>	<i>should</i>	<i>doubtfully</i>	<i>justly</i>	<i>technically</i>
<i>decide</i>	<i>leverage</i>	<i>unleash</i>	<i>was</i>	<i>dramatically</i>	<i>kindly</i>	<i>unexpectedly</i>
<i>define</i>	<i>manage</i>	<i>utilize</i>	<i>were</i>	<i>eagerly</i>	<i>lazily</i>	<i>victoriously</i>
<i>deliver</i>	<i>master</i>	<i>wander</i>	<i>will</i>	<i>elegantly</i>	<i>loosely</i>	<i>vivaciously</i>
<i>design</i>	<i>maximize</i>	<i>warn</i>	<i>would</i>	<i>enormously</i>	<i>madly</i>	<i>wearily</i>
<i>develop</i>	<i>motivate</i>	<i>yield</i>		<i>eventually</i>	<i>merrily</i>	<i>wildly</i>

MLA Heading for Typed Papers (All Assignments)



Figurative Language

Alliteration – the repetition of initial consonant sounds (ex. Marvelous Martha)

Allusion – a reference to another work of literature, movie, tv show, the Bible

Flashback – present time stops and we go back; reveals information

Foreshadow – hints or clues as to what will happen next

Hyperbole – exaggeration (ex. I have a TON of homework!)

Idiom – a common phrase where the meaning differs from that of the individual words

Metaphor – compares two unlike things without using "like" or "as"

Simile – compares two unlike things using "like" or "as"

Onomatopoeia – sound words (POW!)

Personification – assigning human qualities to non-living things, ex. the wind howled

Repetition – the intentional repeating of words, lines, or phrases for a particular effect

Rhyme – similar ending words

Rhythm – the beat of a poem

Sensory details – 5 senses (sight, smell, sound, touch, taste)

Soliloquy – a speech where a character reveals his thoughts, feelings to the audience

Sarcasm – means the opposite of what is said; criticizes; annoying to person criticized

Symbolism – one thing/object stands for or represents something else

Tone – the attitude of the writer toward his subject/content

Verbal Irony – a character says the opposite of what he means ("This is SO awesome!" = ugly)

Analyze – examine methodically and in detail the structure of a text to explain or interpret it

Assonance – repetition of vowel sounds in a piece of text

Consonance – repetition of consonant sounds in a piece of text

Understatement – the presentation of something being less important than it actually is

The Rules of Written Dialogue (Narrative)

- 1. A character's direct speech is always enclosed in quotation marks.**

"The meeting will be held on Friday."

- 2. When the dialogue tag comes BEFORE the dialogue:**

Mrs. Wilson said, "The meeting will be held on Friday."

- 3. When the dialogue tag comes AFTER the dialogue:**

"When will the meeting be held?" asked Mrs. Wilson.

- 4. When the dialogue tag INTERRUPTS the dialogue:**

"The meeting," continued Mrs. Wilson, "is scheduled for Friday."

- 5. If a character delivers a speech in *multiple, uninterrupted sentences*, only a single set of quotation marks is required.**

"The meeting is on Friday? I thought you said it was on Thursday! This is going to be a problem," fumed Mrs. Wilson.

- 6. Begin a new paragraph every time there is a change of speaker.**

"The meeting is on Friday?" asked Mrs. Wilson, obviously disturbed by the news.

"Yes, it is," replied her assistant.

"I just don't understand why the schedule was changed," Mrs. Wilson complained. "They should have asked me whether that change was okay."

6-Trait Writing Rubric

	4	3	2	1
IDEAS The “heart” of the message. The message within the piece of writing-the main theme-with details that enrich and develop that theme.	•Writer has one clear, well-focused topic. •Main idea stands out and is supported by significant, detailed information that goes beyond the obvious.	•Writer understands topic and narrows it. •Main idea is clear, but the supporting information is general.	•Writer may have chosen a topic too big. Main idea is somewhat clear, but there is a need for more supporting information.	•Writer has no identifiable topic. •Main idea is not clear. There is a seemingly random collection of information.
ORGANIZATION The “skeleton” or internal structure-the logical pattern of ideas. Ideas are put together through logical paragraph structure.	•The introduction is inviting, states the thesis. •Conclusion restates the thesis and includes a satisfying take-away statement. •Details are placed in logical order and effectively keeps the interest of the reader.	•Introduction clearly states the thesis but is only somewhat inviting to the reader. •Conclusion restates thesis and take-away statement is attempted. •Details are logical but not fully effective.	•Introduction states the thesis but is not particularly inviting to the reader. •Conclusion restates thesis weakly and take-away statement is ineffective. •Some details are not in logical order and distracts reader.	•There is no clear introduction or thesis. •Conclusion neglected to restate the thesis and take-away statement. •Many details are not in logical order, and there is no organization.
VOICE The unique perspective and personality of the writer that comes through in his/her writing. The author’s tone that is seen through his/her word choice.	•The writing evokes a lasting and personal tone. •The writer crafts the writing with an awareness for the audience and connects strongly with the reader.	•The writing evokes a personal tone. •The writer makes the writing interesting and occasionally engages the reader using a voice that matches audience.	•The writing is safe. •The writer is not always involved or excited about the topic yet tries to connect with the audience.	•The writing is flat, lifeless, and uninteresting. •The writer may not have understood the topic and fails to connect with the audience.
WORD CHOICE The use of rich, colorful, precise language that moves and enlightens the reader.	•Powerful words and phrases used are natural and not overdone. •Strong verbs, sensory words, precise nouns and modifiers are used to create vivid pictures in reader’s mind.	•Words chosen are clear, writing makes sense and words fit nicely. •Some strong verbs, adjectives, and adverbs are used but may not be enough to create a picture in reader’s mind.	•Words used get the message across but may be unclear at times; word choice variety is attempted but may distract from message. •Words are not specific or colorful; they do not create a picture in the reader’s mind.	•Words are used incorrectly or are hard to understand and may be used over and over. •Vague words or phrases do not create pictures in the reader’s mind.
SENTENCE FLUENCY The rhythm and flow of the language, the sound of word patterns, the pleasantness in the way the writing sounds when read.	•Writing has an easy flow and rhythm that invites expressive oral reading with stylistic elements to enhance fluency. •Varied sentence beginnings, lengths and structure, adding variety and energy.	•Writing sounds natural and is easy to read aloud; sentence fragments, if used, work. •Includes variety in sentence beginnings, lengths, and patterns.	•Writing is choppy, rambling, and may have run-ons, fragments, or repetitions and is difficult to follow. •Includes some variety but sentence patterns are the same and sound monotonous.	•Writing is confusing and difficult, if not impossible to read aloud because of short, choppy, or rambling sentences. •Reader must fill in missing words in order to understand writing.
CONVENTIONS The mechanical correctness of the writing: spelling, grammar, usage, paragraphing, capitalization, and punctuation.	•Capitalization, punctuation, spelling, grammar, and paragraphing are used effectively to enhance the writing.	•Mistakes in capitalization, punctuation, spelling, grammar, and/or paragraphing but do not make the paper difficult to read.	•Frequent and significant errors in capitalization, spelling, grammar, and paragraphing make the writing difficult to read.	•Some parts of the writing contain so many errors in capitalization, punctuation, spelling, grammar, and paragraphing that it is impossible to understand.

11 Sentence Paragraph Model – Non-Fiction Text Analysis

1	Topic sentence (claim): This your focus, it tells the reader what you are going to argue.
2	Transition + State your first point or reason.
3	EVIDENCE- Provide text evidence from documents or reading that connects to your first point.
4	EXPLAIN- Explain the first piece of evidence that you cited above and how it supports your first point.
5	TRANSITION + State your second point or reason.
6	EVIDENCE- Provide text evidence from documents or reading that connects to your second point.
7	EXPLAIN- Explain the piece of evidence that you cited above and how it supports your second point.
8	TRANSITION + State your third point or reason.
9	EVIDENCE- Provide text evidence from documents or reading that connects to your third point.
10	EXPLAIN- Explain the piece of evidence that you cited above and how it supports your third point.
11	Conclusion sentence: Reiterate your claim and how you supported/proved it.

11 Sentence Paragraph Using REEL

REEL-ing in the perfect response

R	RESTATE the prompt and answer the question
E	Support with EVIDENCE
E	EXPLAIN & ELABORATE on your EVIDENCE
L	LINK your Ideas

11 Sentence Paragraph Model Using “REEL”

1	RESTATE all parts of the prompt in your introductory sentence; include an appealing HOOK.
2	State your 1st point or reason.
3	EVIDENCE #1 - Support your point with EVIDENCE from the text.
4	EXPLAIN & ELABORATE #1 - How does your piece of evidence support your point?
5	State your 2nd point or reason.
6	EVIDENCE #2 - Support your point with EVIDENCE from the text.
7	EXPLAIN & ELABORATE #2 - How does your piece of evidence support your point?
8	State your 3rd point or reason.
9	EVIDENCE #3 - Support your point with EVIDENCE from the text.
10	EXPLAIN & ELABORATE #3 - How does your piece of evidence support your point?
11	Conclusion sentence: LINK your ideas back to your introductory sentence.

PREAMBLE TO THE CONSTITUTION

(Signed September 17, 1787; ratified June 21, 1788)

**We the People of the United States,
in order to form a more perfect union,
establish justice,
insure domestic tranquility,
provide for the common defense,
promote the general welfare,
and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity,
do ordain and establish this Constitution
for the United States of America.**

Personal Signature

Your signature will be needed at various points of your life to sign official documents. Use the scripts below to create and practice your signature.

<i>Cursive Alphabet</i> Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz	
---	--