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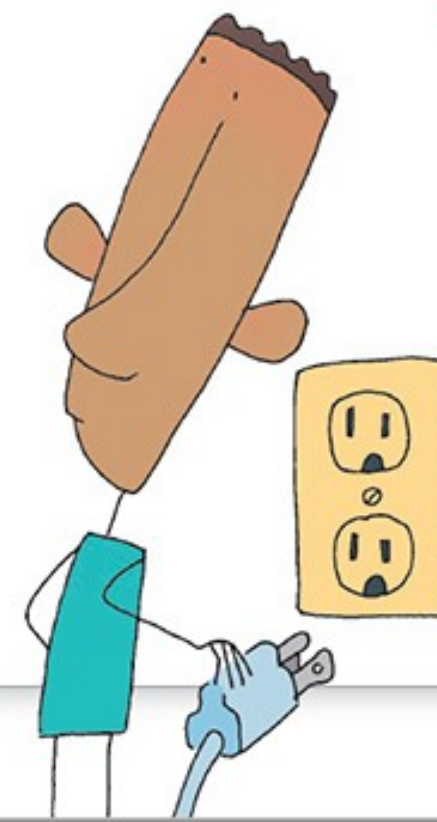
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Selecting a Topic

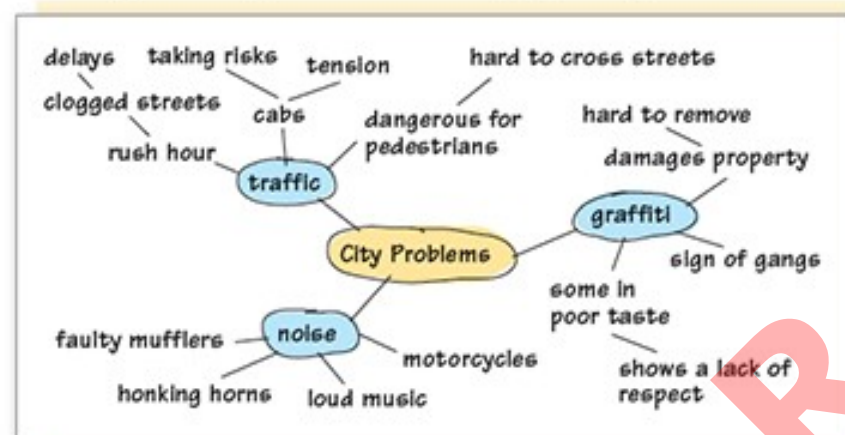
The following strategies will help you select specific topics that truly interest you. Try them all to learn which ones work best for you.

Journal Writing

Write on a regular basis in a journal or notebook, exploring your experiences and thoughts. Review your entries from time to time and underline ideas that you would like to explore. (See pages 129–134.)

Clustering

Begin a cluster with a nucleus word or phrase that is in some way related to your writing assignment. Circle it and then cluster words around it, as in the model below. After clustering for a few minutes, you will begin to sense an emerging writing idea.



Helpful Hint

When you begin to sense an emerging writing idea, stop clustering, and freewrite for 5–8 minutes about the idea. (See pages 33–34.)

Listing

List ideas as you think about your writing assignment. Keep listing for as long as you can. Afterward, look for a possible subject.

Sentence Completions

Complete an open-ended sentence in as many ways as you can. Try to word your sentence so that it leads you to a subject for a particular writing assignment.

I wonder how . . . I hope our school . . . Television is . . .
Too many people . . . I just learned . . . Cars can be . . .
The good thing about . . . One place I enjoy . . . Grades are . . .

Review the Essentials of Life Checklist

The list below provides an endless variety of subject possibilities. Consider the category *energy*. You could write about . . .

- your uncle's hybrid car,
- wood-burning furnaces, or
- the five easiest things to do to conserve energy.

Essentials of Life Checklist

clothing	machines	rules/laws
housing	intelligence	tools/utensils
food	history/records	heat/fuel
communication	agriculture	natural resources
exercise	land/property	personality
education	work/occupation	recreation/hobby
family	community	trade/money
friends	science	literature/books
purpose/goals	plants/vegetation	health/medicine
love	freedom/rights	art/music
senses	energy	faith/religion

Freewriting

Write nonstop for 5–10 minutes to discover possible writing ideas. Begin writing with a particular thought in mind—one related to your assignment. Afterward, underline any ideas that might work as a specific topic. (See page 34.)

Quick Guide ■ Revising

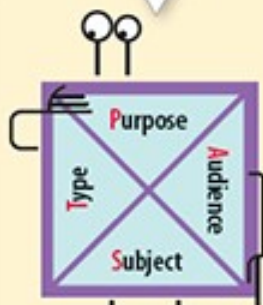
Revising helps you turn your first drafts into clearer, more effective pieces of writing. This step deals with the changes you make by adding, cutting, rewriting, and reordering information. You're ready to revise once you . . .

- complete your first draft,
- set it aside for a day or two, and
- review your writing.

Revisit the Writing Situation

Consider the writing situation before revising.

- ▼ **Purpose:**
Does my writing inform, persuade, share, or entertain?
- ▼ **Audience:**
Do I connect to my readers?
- ▼ **Subject:**
Do I provide enough information about the topic?
- ▼ **Type:**
Do I use the correct form?



Link to the Traits

Revise for the following traits. (Also see pages 49–54.)

- **Ideas:** Check your focus (thesis) statement and support.
- **Organization:** Check your beginning, middle, and ending.
- **Voice:** Make sure you sound interested in and knowledgeable about your topic.
- **Word Choice:** Select specific words to communicate ideas.
- **Sentence Fluency:** Make sure your sentences flow smoothly from one idea to the next.

Revising for the Traits

When revising, first focus on the ideas, organization, and voice in your writing. Then consider word choice and sentence fluency.

Revising for Ideas

The ideas are the most important feature in any piece of writing. Let these three questions guide you as you revise for ideas:

- Have I stated a specific thesis about my topic?
- Do all of the details support the thesis?
- Have I included enough details to make my ideas clear?

Making Changes

This excerpt shows the changes the writer made in the *ideas* of a biographical story.

The thesis is made more specific.

An unnecessary detail is cut.

Additional details make the ideas clearer.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Rosa Parks are often recognized as civil rights icons. Not as many people know ~~about Septima Poinsette Clark~~, **an important contributor to the civil rights movement**.

Clark was born in 1898 in Charleston, South Carolina, so she experienced firsthand the racial hardships of the Jim Crow South. ~~Her father was a former slave, and her mother grew up in Haiti.~~

For example, after high school Clark wanted to teach in Charleston but wasn't allowed ~~because she was black~~. In 1919 she became an active member in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People **citizenship schools**. ~~Among other things, she petitioned for equal pay for black teachers. (NAACP). She helped them in many ways.~~

In 1956 she lost her teaching position for refusing to leave the NAACP. She then helped establish **schools** to teach black adults to read. This was very important because many southern states required citizens to pass literacy tests . . .

Patterns of Nonfiction

Knowing the common patterns of nonfiction makes it easier to understand your assigned reading. Six of these patterns are reviewed in this chapter: *description*, *main idea/supporting details*, *comparison/contrast*, *chronological order*, *cause and effect*, and *process*.

Description

This page from a Web site about earth science describes a geologic event called *subduction*. The page uses metaphors, relationships, and definitions to describe the event.

Previewing



Study-Reading

As you read, notice important information you will want to record.

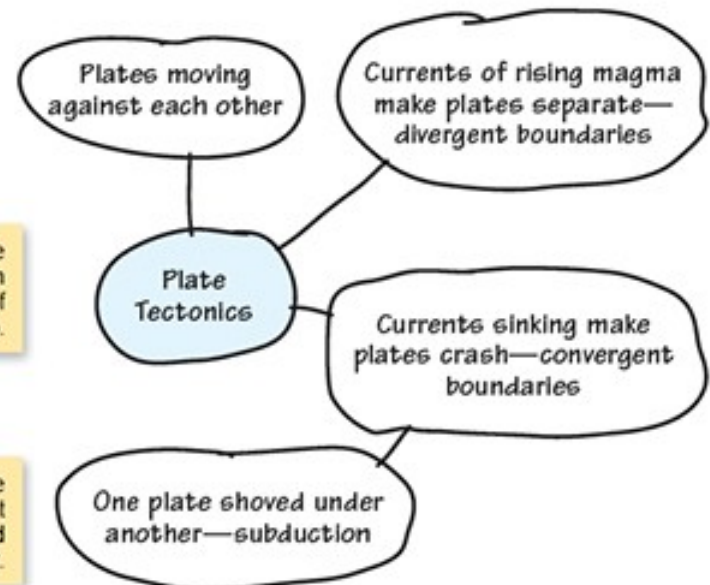
Now, the crust of the earth isn't one solid piece, but rather is made up of curved stone plates that are jostling against each other. The **movement of these plates is called plate tectonics**. But what is moving the plates? Currents in the magma, **that's what**. Some **currents rise up between plates, pushing them apart**. These areas are called **divergent boundaries**, because the plates are spreading apart by centimeters each year. In other places, the **currents sink away between the plates, drawing them together**. These areas are called **convergent boundaries**. Imagine two inflatable rafts colliding. If they hit hard enough, one raft will slip under the other one—what in geological terms is a **subduction zone**.

Andrea Danti/Shutterstock.com

Web ■ As you read (or after you read) consider using a graphic organizer to help you organize your thoughts. You can use a web to help you organize the important information that follows a description pattern like the sample below.

Note Taking

Plate Tectonics



First, name the subject in the middle of the web.

Then write the important details around the subject.

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Marking Punctuation

Period

A **period** is used to end a sentence. It is also used after initials, after abbreviations, and as a decimal point.

479.1 At the End of Sentences

A period is used to end a sentence that makes a statement, a request, or a mild command.

Homes in the future will have many high-tech features.
(statement)

Check your video doorbell to see who stopped by while
you were gone. (request)

Don't worry. (mild command)

Your household robot (yes, you'll probably own one) will not reveal
your whereabouts unless programmed to do so. (statement)

Note: Do not place a period after a parenthetical statement that is within another sentence.

479.2 After an Initial

A period should be placed after an initial.

J. R. R. Tolkien (author) E. Benjamin Nelson (politician)

479.3 After Abbreviations

A period is placed after each part of an abbreviation—unless the abbreviation is an acronym. An acronym is a word formed from the first (or first few) letters of words in a set phrase. (See 501.5.)

Abbreviations: Mr. Mrs. Ms. Dr. B.C.E. C.E.

Acronyms: AIDS NASA FEMA

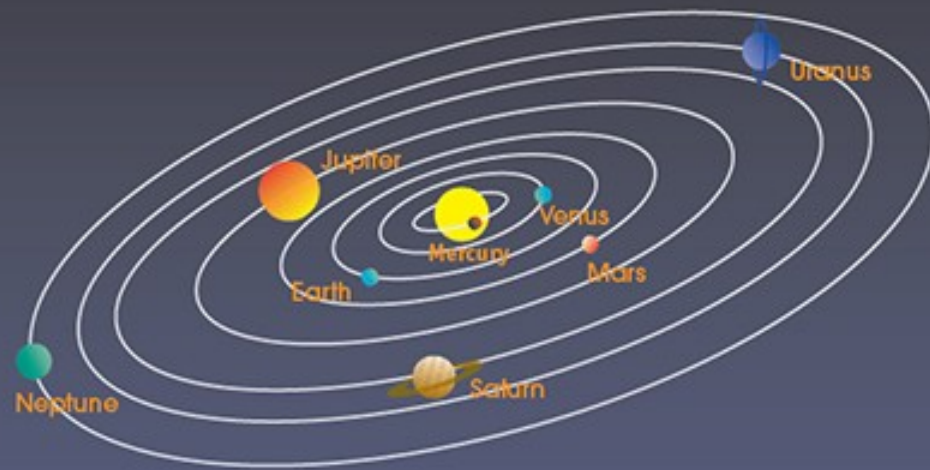
Note: When an abbreviation is the last word in a sentence, use only one period at the end of the sentence.

Fossil fuels will eventually be replaced by renewable energy sources such as hydropower, wind, solar, geothermal, etc.

479.4 As a Decimal

Use a period as a decimal point or to separate dollars and cents.

For \$4.99 on Tuesdays, I can buy three taco supremes. But is it smart to spend 33.3 percent of my allowance on tacos?



Planet Profusion

There are hundreds of billions of galaxies in the universe. Our solar system is located in the Milky Way galaxy, which is 150,000 light-years in diameter. Even though this galaxy contains an estimated 250 billion to one trillion stars, our solar system contains only one star—the sun. The sun, which is the center of our solar system, has eight planets and a myriad of dwarf planets, asteroids, meteorites, and comets orbiting it. The planets are large, nonluminous bodies that follow fixed elliptical orbits about the sun. (See the illustration above.)

Some of the planets are considered terrestrial planets—Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars—which resemble Earth in size, chemical composition, and density. They have rocky bodies and distinct atmospheres. Some planets are considered Jovian planets—Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune—which are much larger in size and have thick, gaseous atmospheres, low densities, and only a small hidden rocky core. The dwarf planets are balls of rock and ice large enough for gravity to make them round, but too small to clear away other objects in their orbits. Some, like Pluto and Eris, have at least one moon. An estimated 200 dwarf planets lie beyond Neptune in the “Kuiper belt.” Only Ceres is closer, in the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter.

	Sun	Moon	Mercury	Venus	Earth	Mars	Jupiter	Saturn	Uranus	Neptune
Orbital Speed (in miles per second)		0.6	29.8	21.7	18.5	15.0	8.1	6.0	4.2	3.4
Rotation on Axis	25 days 10 hrs. 46 min.	27 days 7 hrs.	59 days	243	23 hrs. 56 min.	24 hrs. 37 min.	9 hrs. 56 min.	10 hrs. 39 min.	17 hrs. 15 min.	16 hrs. 7 min.
Mean Surface Gravity (Earth = 1.00)	28.02	0.17	0.38	0.90	1.00	0.38	2.53	1.07	0.92	1.12
Density (times that of water)	150 (core)	3.4	5.4	5.2	5.5	3.9	1.3	0.7	1.3	1.7
Mass (times that of Earth)	333,000	0.01	0.06	0.82	5.98 x 10 ²⁴ metric tons	0.11	318	95.3	14.6	17.2
Approximate Weight of a 150-Pound Human	4,203	26	57	136	150	57	321	161	138	168
Number of Satellites	8 planets	0	0	0	1	2	67	53	27	14
Mean Distance to Sun (in millions of miles)	(234,878 miles from Earth)		36.0	67.24	92.96	141.63	483.7	885.9	1,783.9	2,795.1
Revolution Around Sun	(27 days 7 hrs. around Earth)		88 days	227.4 days	365.25 days	687 days	11.86 years	29.46 years	84.0 years	164.8 years
Approximate Surface Temperature (degrees Fahrenheit)	10,000° surface 27,000,000° (center)	-250° to 250°	-279° to 801°	864°	-126° to 136°	-125° to 23°	-234°	-288°	-357°	-353°
Diameter (in miles)	864,949	2,160	3,030	7,521	7,926	4,222	88,846	74,898	31,764	30,776