

Part 1

Before You Write

Exploring Ideas



▲ There are many types of books and brochures about different colleges.

What Do You Think?

Ranking Factors

Below are some factors a student might think about when choosing a college. Which ones are most important to you? Rank them in order from 1 (most important) to 12 (least important).

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| _____ class size | _____ courses offered |
| _____ facilities (libraries, laboratories) | _____ cost |
| _____ location | _____ ease of admission |
| _____ quality of classes | _____ prestige |
| _____ number of international students | _____ help with job placement |
| _____ special programs | _____ family connection |

1 Adding Factors Think about the factors listed above. Are there any other factors you would add? Write them on a separate piece of paper.



2 Discussing Your Ideas In small groups, discuss your ideas with other students. Give reasons you think certain factors are important.

Building Vocabulary

3 Using a Vocabulary Chart Look at the vocabulary words in the chart below. Look up any words you don't understand. Circle the words used in your discussion in Activity 2, and add words to the list. Then continue the discussion using any words on the list that you have not yet used.

Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives	Other
advantage	attend	advantageous	
attendance	prefer	challenging	
campus		diverse	
disadvantage		huge	
facility		impersonal	
faculty		prestigious	
location			
preference			
prestige			
scholarship			
student body			
tuition			

4 Matching Words to Their Definitions Match the vocabulary words in Activity 3 with the words and phrases below.

1. a good thing
2. the cost of college classes
3. very large
4. a good reputation
5. teachers
6. a building, a laboratory, a library
7. go to
8. having many different kinds
9. not friendly
10. a bad thing

advantage _____



5 Discussing Advantages In small groups, discuss the advantages of large and small colleges. Write your ideas on the lines below.

Advantages of a Large College

Advantages of a Small College



6 Discussing Preferences Look at your lists of advantages. In small groups, discuss whether you think large or small colleges are better.

7 Choosing a Topic Choose the topic you want to write about: the advantages of a large college or the advantages of a small college.

Organizing Ideas

Strategy

Organizing Ideas in Order of Importance

When you made the list of the advantages of large and small colleges, you were giving your opinion. Once you have decided on your opinions, you need to organize them. One way of doing this is to write about the most important ideas first, then write about the less important ones.

8 Ranking Ideas in Order of Importance Look at the lists of advantages you made in Activity 5. Which advantages are most important to you? Rank these advantages in order of importance, with the first one as the most important. Cross out any advantages that are not very important.

Strategy

Giving Reasons

When you write, you should give at least one reason or example to support each of your opinions. You need to tell your readers what you think and why you think it.

9 Giving Reasons for Your Opinions On the following lines, list your opinions about the advantages of small or large colleges in order of importance. Then give at least one reason or example for each opinion. This will make an outline you can use when you write.

Opinion 1: It's easier to make a lot of friends at a small college.

Reason: If there are fewer students, you see the same people more often and get to know them better.

Opinion 2: _____

Reason: _____

Opinion 3: _____

Reason: _____

Opinion 4: _____

Reason: _____

Strategy

Writing Topic Sentences

The topic sentence usually comes at the beginning of a paragraph. It tells the reader the main idea of the paragraph. A good topic sentence shouldn't be too specific because it needs to relate to all the ideas in the paragraph. In addition, in an opinion paragraph, a good topic sentence will clearly state your opinion.



▲ Studying in a foreign country can be fun.



10 Choosing the Best Topic Sentence Look at the list of possible topic sentences for an opinion paragraph about the advantages of studying abroad. Discuss them in groups or as a class. In your opinion, which topic sentences will work? Which ones won't? Why?

1. Students who study abroad often can't speak the language well.
2. Studying abroad has three main advantages.
3. I believe this for several reasons.
4. There are many good schools in foreign countries.
5. If possible, all college students should spend some time studying in a foreign country.

11 Writing a Draft Topic Sentence Write a draft topic sentence for your paragraph about the advantages of large or small colleges.



12 Sharing Your Topic Sentence Work with a partner. Read each other's topic sentences. Give your partner feedback by answering the following questions about his or her topic sentence:

1. Is it a complete sentence?
2. Does it tell the reader what the author is going to write about?
3. Is it too general or too specific?
4. Does it include the author's opinion?

Developing Cohesion and Clarity

GIVING REASONS WITH *BECAUSE*, *SO*, AND *THEREFORE*

When you give reasons to support your opinions, you may want to use connectors that show cause or result. Note the different punctuation and capitalization in sentences with these three connectors.

Use *because* in phrases and clauses that state a cause or reason.

Examples

Because large schools offer many different courses, students have a wide variety of subjects to choose from.

Students at large schools have a wide variety of subjects to choose from because large schools offer many different courses.

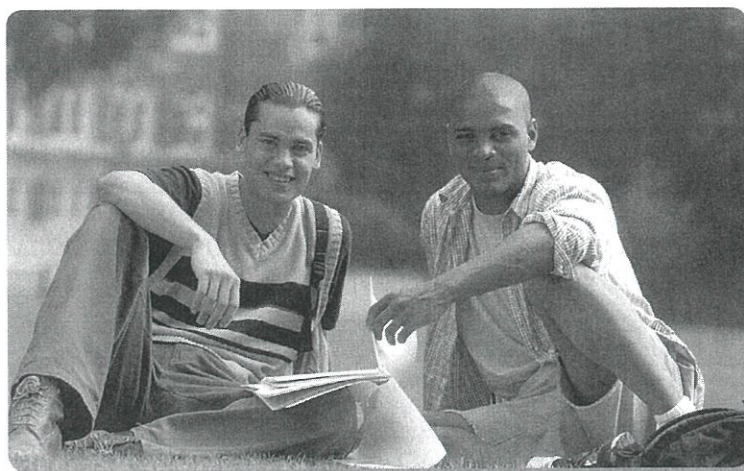
Use *so* and *therefore* in phrases and clauses that state an effect or result.

Examples

Large schools offer many different courses, so students have a wide variety of subjects to choose from.

Large schools offer many different courses; therefore, students have a wide variety of subjects to choose from.

Large schools offer many different courses. Therefore, students have a wide variety of subjects to choose from.



▲ Large universities and small colleges can both offer diversity.

1 **Completing Sentences with *Because, So, and Therefore*** Complete the following sentences with *because, so, or therefore*.

1. Students who study in a foreign country live with people who do not speak their native language; therefore, they will learn that country's language well.
2. Public colleges are more practical _____ they are less expensive.
3. When students attend a local college, they can live at home, _____ they don't have to spend a lot on rent and food.
4. _____ international students have to study in a foreign language, they often have difficulty with their courses.
5. International students spend a long time away from home. _____, they may lose touch with their own customs and culture.

USING CONNECTING WORDS: *IN ADDITION* AND *ALSO*

In a paragraph, it's important to use connecting words—words that connect the ideas. Otherwise, the paragraph will sound choppy—that is, not smooth. You can make a paragraph more cohesive by using *in addition* and *also* to connect similar ideas.

In addition usually comes at the beginning of a sentence. In this position, it is always followed by a comma.

Example

It is very difficult to study abroad. In addition, it can be much more expensive than studying in your own country.

Also can come at the beginning of a sentence, before a simple present or a past tense verb, or after an auxiliary verb or modal. Note that if it comes at the beginning of a sentence, it is followed by a comma.

Examples

Also, large universities offer a more diverse student population.
Large universities also offer a more diverse student population.
Large universities can also offer a more diverse student population.

2 **Connecting Sentences with *Also* and *In Addition*** Use *also* and *in addition* to connect the sentences. More than one answer is possible.

1. Many students learn a lot about the world from their study abroad experience. They learn a lot about themselves.

Many students learn a lot about the world from their study abroad
experience. They also learn a lot about themselves.

2. Most students in four-year colleges are very intelligent. They study hard.

3. Some professors don't always understand international students. They may know very little about foreign cultures.

4. Many students who go abroad to study lose contact with their families. Some of them marry foreigners and never return home.

5. Studying in a foreign country can be more exciting than studying in your native country. You may get a better education.

- 3** **Rewriting a Paragraph with Connecting Words** Rewrite the following paragraph using *also* and *in addition* to connect similar ideas.

Studying abroad offers students many advantages. First of all, students have the opportunity to learn a new language by interacting with native speakers every day. The students live in a new culture, so they can learn both in and out of the classroom. Studying abroad teaches students that there are other ways of looking at the world. This is a very important part of education. Students learn to be flexible because they have to adapt to different ways of living. They experience another culture in a much more significant way than if they simply took a vacation to another country. Foreign students are far from home. Therefore, they have to become responsible and self-reliant. When they study abroad, students have an experience they will remember all their lives.

USING TRANSITION WORDS AND PHRASES: *FIRST OF ALL* AND *FINALLY*

Use *first of all* and *finally* when you want to list several points. *First of all* starts the list, and *finally* ends it. These are also called *listing cues*.

Examples

There are many reasons international students might feel homesick. First of all, they may be away from their families for the first time. In addition, there is the problem of adapting to a completely different culture. Finally, not knowing the native language can make students feel isolated.

Note that *first of all* and *finally* come at the beginning of a sentence and are always followed by a comma.

4 **Writing Sentences with *First of All* and *Finally*** Look at your notes for your paragraph. Are there any ideas that you want to list? Write those ideas using *first of all* and *finally*.

MAKING GENERAL STATEMENTS WITH PRESENT TENSE VERBS

There are several ways to make statements that are generally true. Look at the sentences in the activities in this chapter and answer these questions:

1. What tense are the verbs?
2. Are the subjects usually singular or plural?
3. Does the article usually precede the subject?

You will notice that general statements are in the simple present tense and that the subjects are usually plural with no articles. When the subjects are people, singular personal pronouns can be awkward in English. For example, look at the following sentences. Which sentence sounds awkward? Why?

Students must leave their families.

A student must leave his or her family.

When you write sentences that contain general statements, make sure you follow these rules:

1. Use simple present verbs.
2. Add -s to verbs with third-person singular subjects (*he*, *she*, or *it*).
3. Count nouns should generally be plural with no article.
4. Pronouns must agree in number with their antecedents.

The sentence, *Every student should try to hold on to his or her culture*, is correct although it is awkward.

The sentence, *Every student should try to hold on to their culture*, is incorrect because *student* is singular and *their* is plural.

5 Finding and Correcting Mistakes Find the mistakes in the underlined words in the sentences below. Make corrections based on the four rules on page 12, or write *correct* above the correct sentences.

1. Most ^{families} ~~family~~ save for many years to send their children to college.
2. Some students feel homesick.
3. Some small schools don't have good library.
4. A large school has fewer teachers on their faculty.
5. A school with many courses offer more majors.
6. People who work often prefer to attend community colleges.

TOEFL® iBT

Focus on Testing

General Statements on Standardized Tests

A prompt is a set of directions for a question on a writing test. On the TOEFL® Internet-Based Test (iBT), there are two types of writing prompts. One is for a 20-minute "integrated" writing task. The other is for a 30-minute "independent" writing task. Here are some sample prompts for the independent task:

Sample 1 *Students should work for at least one year after high school before entering college.*

Do you agree with this statement? Discuss reasons for your opinion with a partner. Support your opinions with specific examples.

Sample 2 *Socializing is having conversations, going to parties, or doing any recreational activity with other people.*

Do you prefer to socialize with other students or with nonstudents? Explain your preference to your partner, and give specific examples to support it.

In this chapter, you learned that the simple present tense is very effective for making general statements. The sample prompts above use the simple present tense.

Practice To practice writing general statements in response to TOEFL® iBT writing prompts, add more general statements to each list in the chart on the next page. Each list relates to one of the sample prompts.

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Sample Prompt 1: Working Before College	Sample Prompt 2: Socializing with Students or Nonstudents
<i>Working can help you decide what you want to study.</i>	<i>Socializing with nonstudents gives you a better sense of the town or city where you are studying.</i>

Strategy

Avoiding Overgeneralizations

When you write, it is important to not overgeneralize; that is, do not make statements that are so general that they are not true.

Examples of overgeneralizations

All international students work harder than other students. (This is not always true.)

Teenagers are always irresponsible. (This is not always true.)

To avoid overgeneralizations:

Don't use the adverbs of frequency, *never* or *always*, when you are giving your opinion about something.

Instead of *never*, use *rarely*, *hardly ever*, *almost never*, or *not usually*.

Example

International students almost never want to go home at the end of a year abroad.

Instead of *always*, use *usually*, *almost always*, or *often*.

Example

Teenagers are often irresponsible.

Don't use the quantifiers *no*, *none*, or *all* when you are giving your opinion about something. Instead, use *very few*, *hardly any*, *almost no*, or *almost none*.

Example

Very few international students learn English easily.

Instead of *all*, use *almost all*, *most*, or *many*.

Example

Many international students work harder than other students.

6 Correcting Overgeneralizations Rewrite the following sentences so that they are not overgeneralizations. Use adverbs of frequency and/or quantifiers.

1. All international students have a difficult time their first year.

Many international students have a difficult time their first year.

2. International students never become friendly with native-speaking students.

3. All international students get better grades than other students.

4. Professors never understand students from other countries.

5. International students always feel isolated.

6. All students in city colleges are too busy to be friendly.

7. No four-year colleges offer practical training.

8. Studying in a foreign language is always very difficult.

9. All students in community colleges can live at home.

10. Studying in a private college is always extremely expensive.

WRITING WITH COMPUTERS

If you need to verify information while you are writing or preparing to write, you can use an on-line encyclopedia. Open a search engine and enter the word **encyclopedia** to see many different options. Be sure to use a reputable source.

Strategy

Writing the First Draft

Once you have developed and organized your ideas, you are ready to write your paragraph. The first paragraph you write will still need work; we call this paragraph a *draft*. A draft is an intermediate step, not the final product.

7 Writing the First Draft Write the first draft of your paragraph on the advantages of large or small colleges. Include reasons for all of your opinions, and use connecting and transition words to join your ideas.



▲ It's easy to find your way around a small college or university campus.

Part 3 Revising and Editing

Revising for Content and Editing for Form

Strategy

Revising for Content

You should review a piece of writing at least twice. The first time, you should revise it for content, and the second time, you should edit it for form. When you revise your writing for content, focus on the ideas. Ask yourself if you have included everything you wanted to write about and if there are any unnecessary details. Also, look at how ideas are connected and organized.

1 Revising for Content Look at the paragraph below. Focus only on the content—the writer’s ideas and organization. Make comments and suggestions based on the following questions:

1. Does the writer give enough information?
2. Does the topic sentence state the main idea of the paragraph?
3. Does the writer give reasons for his or her opinions?
4. Is the paragraph smooth or choppy?
5. Does the writer use overgeneralizations?

Don't worry about misspelled words and other errors for now.

There are several reasons that undergraduate students should not study away from home living away from home is much more expensive than living at home. Families can save money by not paying room and board, teenagers are not mature enough to live far away from their families. Therefore, they often get into trouble. Some students even fail courses because they are not disciplined enough to study in addition they never go to class. Finally many students feel lonely and homesick So they are not able to study. All undergraduate students who stay home with their families get a good education and also a good price.

Strategy

Editing for Form

When you edit writing for form, focus on how the writing looks on the page as well as the grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Following are some guidelines for forming paragraphs:

Guidelines for Forming Paragraphs

(For more rules on capitalization and punctuation, see Appendix 2 and Appendix 3.)

1. Indent the first sentence of your paragraphs.
2. Leave a one-inch left and right margin.
3. Begin each sentence with a capital letter.
4. End each sentence with a period (.), a question mark (?), or an exclamation point (!).
5. Make sure that the end punctuation immediately follows the last word of the sentence.
6. Leave one space between sentences.
7. Double-space the paragraph.