

ENGL210/CA - WEEK 2 - DAY 2

INTRODUCTION TO ESSAY WRITING



**WHAT MAKES
A GOOD
PARAGRAPH?**

A GOOD PARAGRAPH

- ▶ **Unity/Coherence**
- ▶ **A Topic Sentence**
- ▶ **Adequate Development**

WHAT MAKES FOR A GOOD

TOPIC SENTENCE?

TOPIC SENTENCES

- ▶ Every topic sentence will have two things: a **topic** and a **controlling idea**.



WRITING STRATEGIES:

**GENERAL-
SPECIFIC**

(Starting Point)
General statement

Elaboration on statement

More detailed elaboration
(Landing Point)

Broader statement:
complexity / significance

Stacking
Pattern:
General Specific

(Starting Point)
General statement

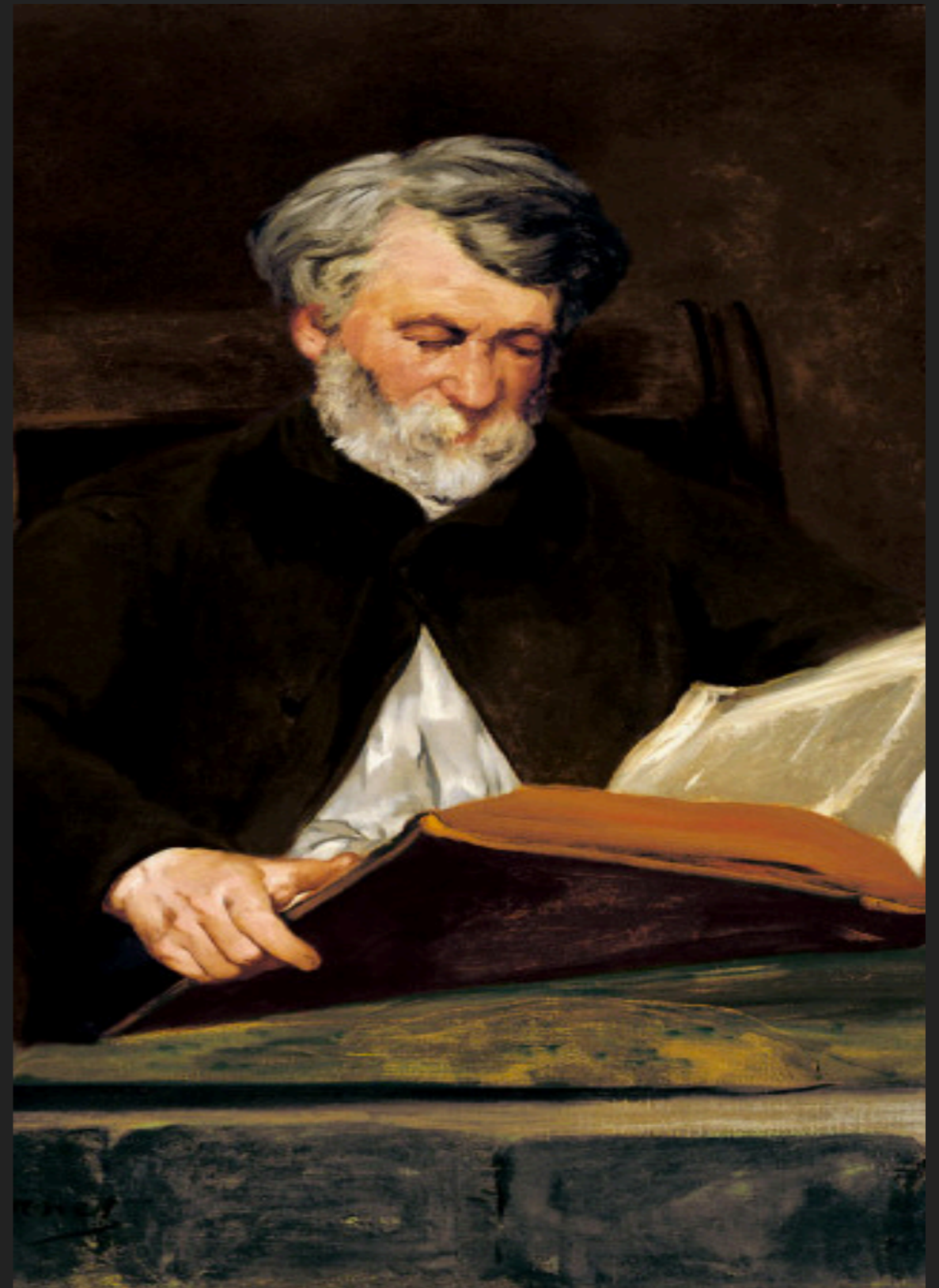
Elaboration on statement

More detailed elaboration
(Landing Point)

FLOW

NARRATIVE MOMENTUM

▶ How can we propel the reader forward?



HOW DO WE ACHIEVE FLOW?

At its most basic level,
sentence flow depends on two
elements:

1. Organization of ideas
2. Rhythm of the sentences

HOW CAN WE FIX THIS PARAGRAPH?

- ▶ Soils represent major sinks for metals like cadmium that are released into the environment. Soil does not have an infinite capacity to absorb metal contaminants, and when this capacity is exhausted, environmental consequences are incurred. Contamination of soils by cadmium and other heavy metals has become a global concern in recent years because of the increasing demands of society for food production, waste disposal, and a healthier environment. The main causes of cadmium contamination in soils are amendment materials (e.g., municipal waste sludge) and fallout from nonferrous metal production and power plants.

ORGANIZATION OF IDEAS:

KNOWN TO NEW CONTRACT

GOING FROM KNOWN TO NEW

- ▶ **Effective writers build a bridge from one sentence to the other so that their readers can follow them from one idea to the next. The known–new contract can help build that bridge. At the beginning of a sentence, your reader expects you to refer to previous ideas.**
- ▶ **Once you have provided a link to those ideas, you can offer new information. This can be done by either restating something you mentioned previously or by the use of pronouns.**

TOPIC AND STRESS POSITION

Making Complex Writing Intelligible with the Known-New Contract

A sentence can be divided into two parts: a **topic** and a **stress** position. The topic is first part of the sentence, the stress is last.

Below is an example sentence with the topic and stress positions labeled.

Accounts of depression^{Topic} evolved after psychologists introduced the concepts of defeat and entrapment.^{Stress}

Readers expect to find different types of information in the topic and stress positions.

Topic

In the *topic position*, readers

- expect to understand what the sentence is about
- try to connect the sentence to what they've already read

Stress

In the *stress position*, readers

- expect to see new and important ideas and information
- focus most of their interpretative effort

The Known-New Contract

The known-new contract suggests that comprehension is increased when the topic position of a sentence contains information that links back to what the reader already knows and the stress position contains new information that the writer wants to emphasize.



Notice how the following example uses the known-new contract to create a coherent flow of ideas.

Accounts of depression evolved after psychologists introduced the concepts of defeat and entrapment. These concepts have been implicated in theoretical accounts of anxiety and suicide. Such theories...

What if I have multiple ideas I want to stress in a sentence?

Try to introduce just one major new idea per sentence, especially if you anticipate your reader will have difficulty because of your text's complexity. If your text is highly technical or complex—and you have multiple ideas or concepts worth emphasizing—create two sentences.

Let's try using these steps to improve our sample text.

Step 1- Identify stress position

People are injuring themselves at home, work and out in public from ^{Stress}slipping and falling.

The material of the shoe sole, the material of the floor surface that the individual is walking across, and a contaminant, like water or oil, that may decrease friction between the two materials ^{Stress}all contribute to slipping. ← stress position does not contain new information

Step 2- Identify topic position

^{Topic}People are injuring themselves at home, work and out in public from ^{Stress}slipping and falling.

^{Topic}The material of the shoe sole, the material of the floor surface that the individual is walking across, and a contaminant, like water or oil, that may decrease friction between the two materials ^{Stress}all contribute to slipping. ← topic position does not link back

Step 3- Put old information in the topic position and new information in the stress position

^{Topic}People are injuring themselves at home, work and out in public from ^{Stress}slipping and falling.

^{Topic}Factors contributing to slipping include ^{Stress}the material of the shoe sole, the material of the floor surface that the individual is walking across, and a contaminant, like water or oil.

THE CHAIN

Using the Contract: The Chain

- **Denver** has a successful bike-share program. ←
- **The program** offers the city 50 B-cycle stations.
- **These B-cycle stations** serve the metro area, so people can easily commute.

BREACH OF CONTRACT

Smartphones are not just small computers. People connect to the world and each other with them.

BREACH OF CONTRACT

Smartphones are not just small computers. People connect to the world and each other with them.

Smartphones are not just small computers. They are tools that people use to connect to the world and each other.

BREACH OF CONTRACT

Congress could not agree on a budget. Many government agencies had to shut down because of it.

BREACH OF CONTRACT

Congress could not agree on a budget. Many government agencies had to shut down because of it.

Congress could not agree on a budget. Because of their indecision, many government agencies had to shut down.

BREACH OF CONTRACT

- ▶ This chapter was written to introduce you to the basic concepts of Alain Badiou's theory of ethics. A thorough explication will also be presented, situating Badiou's philosophy in the context of other contemporary approaches. Furthermore, three arguments that suggest new avenues for philosophical inquiry will be outlined, challenging Badiou's fundamental concepts.

This chapter was written to introduce **the reader** to the **basic concepts** of Alain Badiou's theory of ethics.

Badiou's concepts will be **explicated** in the context of other contemporary theories of ethics.

In addition to this explication, **the reader** will also be presented with three critiques of **Badiou's theory of ethics** that suggest new horizons for philosophical inquiry.

4 WAYS TO GO FROM KNOWN TO NEW

Noun or Pronoun Reference: The second sentence begins with a common noun, noun phrase, or pronoun that refers back to a previous clause in the first sentence.

Restatement: The second sentence restates some of the information in the first sentence.

Structural Arrangement: The chain of sentences have a common formal aspect that suggests a listing or rhetorical strategy that links the ideas for the reader back to the main idea.

Relational Transition: The sentences have words or phrases that define the relationship between them, such as *later*, *on the other hand*, *similarly*, *in addition*, *as a result*, *also*, *consequently*, *in fact*, *that is*, etc.

HOW CAN WE FIX THIS PARAGRAPH?

- ▶ Soils represent major sinks for metals like cadmium that are released into the environment. Soil does not have an infinite capacity to absorb metal contaminants, and when this capacity is exhausted, environmental consequences are incurred. Contamination of soils by cadmium and other heavy metals has become a global concern in recent years because of the increasing demands of society for food production, waste disposal, and a healthier environment. The main causes of cadmium contamination in soils are amendment materials (e.g., municipal waste sludge) and fallout from nonferrous metal production and power plants.

REVISED

- ▶ Such sources as mines, smelters, power plants, and municipal waste treatment facilities release metals into the environment. **These heavy metals**, especially cadmium, then find their way into the soil. **The soil** does not have an infinite capacity to absorb **these metals**. Instead, **unabsorbed metals** move through the soil into the groundwater or are extracted by crops that take the contamination into the food chain.

RHYTHM:

SENTENCE VARIETY

This sentence has five words. Here are five more words.
Five-word sentences are fine. But several together become
monotonous. Listen to what is happening. The writing is
getting boring. The sound of it drones. It's like a stuck record.
The ear demands some variety.

Now listen. I vary the sentence length, and I create music.
Music. The writing sings. It has a pleasant rhythm, a lilt, a
harmony. I use short sentences. And I use sentences of
medium length. And sometimes when I am certain the reader
is rested, I will engage him with a sentence of considerable
length, a sentence that burns with energy and builds with all
the impetus of a crescendo, the roll of the drums, the crash of
the cymbals—sounds that say listen to this, it is important.

So write with a combination of short, medium, and long
sentences. Create a sound that pleases the reader's ear. Don't
just write words. Write music.

-Gary Provost

WHY VARY SENTENCES?

- ▶ The art of sentence-making comes down to variety. George Saintsbury compared the art of sentence making to the letting out and pulling in of the slides of a trombone.



TYPES OF SENTENCES

- ▶ Simple
- ▶ Compound
- ▶ Complex
- ▶ Compound/Complex

Simple sentence

Contains one subject + verb pairing plus any number of adjectives, adverbs, or phrases (independent clause)

[A Simple Sentence](#) has just one independent clause. For example:

You can't surprise a man with a dog.

(Cindy Chupack)

A Compound Sentence

- A compound sentence has at least two independent clauses. For example:

Cry "Havoc," and let slip the dogs of war.
(William Shakespeare, 1564-1616)

A Complex Sentence

- A complex sentence has an independent clause and at least one dependent clause. For example:

Diplomacy is the art of saying "nice doggie" until you can find a rock. (Will Rogers)

- When you're on the Internet, **nobody knows you're a dog.**

Compound-Complex sentence

A compound-complex sentence has at least two independent clauses and at least one dependent clause. For example:

When a dog bites a man, **that is not news** because it happens so often, but if a man bites a dog, **that is news**. (John B Bogart)

SENTENCE VARIETY: STRATEGIES

- 1. Vary the rhythm by alternating short and long sentences.**
- 2. Vary sentence openings.**
- 3. Sentence Position and Variation for Achieving Emphasis**
- 4. Arrangement of Clauses**

1) Vary the rhythm by alternating short and long sentences.

- ▶ The Winslow family visited Canada and Alaska last summer to find some native American art. In Anchorage stores, they found some excellent examples of soapstone carvings. But they couldn't find a dealer selling any of the woven wall hangings they wanted. They were very disappointed when they left Anchorage empty-handed.**

REVISION

- ▶ **The Winslow family visited Canada and Alaska last summer to find some native American art, such as soapstone carvings and wall hangings. Anchorage stores had many soapstone items available. Still, they were disappointed to learn that wall hangings, which they had especially wanted, were difficult to find. Sadly, they left empty-handed.**

2) VARY SENTENCE OPENINGS

If too many sentences start with the same word, especially "The," "It," "This," or "I," prose can grow tedious. Different beginnings can alter not only the structure but also the emphasis of the sentence.

Example: The biggest coincidence that day happened when David and I ended up sitting next to each other at the Super Bowl.

POSSIBLE REVISIONS

- ▶ Coincidentally, David and I ended up sitting right next to each other at the Super Bowl.
- ▶ In an amazing coincidence, David and I ended up sitting next to each other at the Super Bowl.
- ▶ Sitting next to David at the Super Bowl was a tremendous coincidence.
- ▶ But the biggest coincidence that day happened when David and I ended up sitting next to each other at the Super Bowl.
- ▶ When I sat down at the Super Bowl, I realized that, by sheer coincidence, I was directly next to David.
- ▶ By sheer coincidence, I ended up sitting directly next to David at the Super Bowl.

POSSIBLE REVISIONS

- ▶ With over 50,000 fans at the Super Bowl, it took an incredible coincidence for me to end up sitting right next to David.
- ▶ What are the odds that I would have ended up sitting right next to David at the Super Bowl?
- ▶ David and I, without any prior planning, ended up sitting right next to each other at the Super Bowl.
- ▶ Without any prior planning, David and I ended up sitting right next to each other at the Super Bowl.
- ▶ At the crowded Super Bowl, packed with 50,000 screaming fans, David and I ended up sitting right next to each other by sheer coincidence.

POSSIBLE REVISIONS

- ▶ Though I hadn't made any advance arrangements with David, we ended up sitting right next to each other at the Super Bowl.
- ▶ Many amazing coincidences occurred that day, but nothing topped sitting right next to David at the Super Bowl.
- ▶ Unbelievable, I know, but David and I ended up sitting right next to each other at the Super Bowl.
- ▶ Guided by some bizarre coincidence, David and I ended up sitting right next to each other at the Super Bowl.

REVISE FOR EMPHASIS

- ▶ **Since the terminal position in the sentence carries the most weight and since the main clause is more emphatic than a subordinate clause in a complex sentence, writers often place the subordinate clause before the main clause to give maximal emphasis to the main clause.**

3) VARIATION FOR EMPHASIS

- ▶ **For a long time, but not any more, Japanese corporations used Southeast Asia merely as a cheap source of raw materials, as a place to dump outdated equipment and overstocked merchandise, and as a training ground for junior executives who needed minor league experience.**

REVISED

- ▶ **For a long time Japanese corporations used Southeast Asia merely as a cheap source of raw materials, as a place to dump outdated equipment and overstocked merchandise, and as a training ground for junior executives who needed minor league experience. Those days have ended.**

ARRANGEMENT FOR CLAUSES

- ▶ **I believe both of these applicants are superb even though it's hard to find good secretaries nowadays.**

How Do I Vary My Sentences?

- Combine sentences.
 - Don't use all simple sentences. This makes your writing choppy.
 - Choppy: We went to the movies. We went out eat. We came home. We went to bed.
 - Combine independent and dependent clauses to create compound and complex sentences. Also, use transitions!
 - We went to the movies, and then we went out to eat. After that, we came home and went to bed.

How Do I Vary My Sentences?

- Begin sentences with an adverb.
 - Luckily, I won the lottery last night.
 - Unfortunately, no one passed the exam.
 - Yesterday, we went to the zoo.
- Begin sentences with a prepositional phrase.
 - In the morning, I hope to feel better.
 - At lunchtime, I'm going to meet some friends at Red Lobster.
 - Under the desk, you'll find your notebook.

How Do I Vary My Sentences?

- Join ideas using an –ing verb form.
 - Two sentences:
 - She studied all night.
 - She passed the exam.
 - Combined:
 - Having studied all night, she passed the exam.



IN-CLASS WRITING:

EDITING EXERCISE #1