Г. Б. Козловська

МЕТОДИЧНІ ВКАЗІВКИ

ДО ПРАКТИЧНИХ ЗАНЯТЬ ТА САМОСТІЙНОЇ РОБОТИ
З ДИСЦИПЛІНИ „КОМПОЗИЦІЯ ТЕКСТІВ РІЗНИХ
ЖАНРІВ”

для студентів 5-го курсу спеціальності „Переклад” денної
форми навчання

СУМИ ВИД-ВО СУМДУ 2005
THE IMPORTANCE OF WRITING

Main problems for discussion
1 Composition as thought.
2 Purpose in composition.

1 Study the text and retell it in detail
Composition As Thought

The way a man thinks will probably always be one of the greatest mysteries about him. In spite of all of our work in experimental psychology in recent years, we are still on the frontier, as far as our knowledge goes, about the working of man’s mind. Gerard Manley Hopkins, a nineteenth-century English poet, once wrote, “The mind has mountains,” by which he meant that men’s minds work in many ways, some of which are so devious and complex as to be frightening. Man may be a reed in the wind, said Pascal, but at least he is a thinking reed. Man’s capacity to think is one of his major adornments. We delight in our ideas.

And, of course, we want to express them to others; indeed, we must, if our world is to continue. If communication of ideas fails, nothing is possible, and we will again be primitives. Our ideas must find their way into language – clear, orderly, effective language – in order that we and others can act on our ideas.

The composition program is the means of giving practice in the fitting of ideas to words. Writing and thinking have a remarkable effect on one another. To be required to write an idea down – in language which another person can fully understand in such a way as to know whether or not he can accept it – is undoubtedly the surest way of getting to know what the idea actually is. When we say, “I know what I want to say, but I can’t express it,” we are probably deluding ourselves. Hunches, impressions, sensations, guesses, all moving around in profusion and chaos in our minds, are mistaken for thought, and verbalization would be a hazy stream-of-consciousness outburst with neither coherence nor logic. Communication would be a nightmare. But if we are required to compose the thought – that is, to find the proper language for it; if we are required to sort the true
idea out of all the irrelevant and chaotic musings and disorders of our minds; and if we are further required to see the idea in relation to other ideas – that is, required to shape and develop it in an ordered paragraph, and to go on to relate this paragraph to ideas in other paragraphs, then we have begun to exercise our minds and to use them fully and responsibly.

Composition means thinking and the expression of that thinking, with the assumption that the two have a strongly reciprocal relationship to one another. Being required to write the thought is often the quickest and most accurate way of knowing what the thought is.

**Purpose in Composition**

Viewed one way, purpose in composition can be expressed as a simple equation: to compose is to think. Or, somewhat more accurately: to compose is to think in language.

There are other excitements to composition, of course. One can learn to take delight in rhetoric and language for their own sakes; even, to be sure, in grammar for its own sake. But there are few satisfactions which can equal that of seeing an idea which we regard as our very own take shape in words which we feel are exactly the right ones for it. No other achievement in the process of study surpasses this one.

**2 Composition activity: recognizing the importance of writing**

Select some aspect of our culture that has been preserved for us through writing. In a brief but specific paragraph, support an opening sentence that (1) names the object, procedure, or knowledge preserved through writing, and (2) reveals how that object, procedure, or knowledge influences life today. Some areas you might consider are:

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<tr>
<th>Architecture</th>
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<td>Manufacturing</td>
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Topic sentences other students have written include the following:
1 If Anna Kozlovskaya had not given my family a written record of manners in her Complete Book of Etiquette, I think my mother would be very insecure.
2 Even though digging basements and building sidewalks are skills my dad learned from his dad, we are still very grateful for formulas and practices worked out long ago and transmitted to us today in writing.
3 One of the most magnificent documents ever written, the Bill of Rights, guarantees Americans certain freedoms today.

3 Composition activity: writing in community life

A Jot down on a sheet of paper the kinds of writing which you think each of the following persons would probably be called upon to do in his work.
1 A doctor.
2 A sales representative.
3 A lawyer.
4 A school principal.
5 An editor.

B In a paragraph, state your career interest. Then explain the types of writing you will need to do on the job.

4 Composition activity: learning to think clearly

Here are some very general topics, any one of which undoubtedly will suggest several thoughts to you. Select one and think about it for a few minutes; then jot down the ideas which occur to you.

Finally, put these ideas into words, writing three or four short paragraphs.

| 1 Changing seasons in the city | 1 A hobby that I enjoy |
| 2 Unusual summer pleasures     | 2 Respect must be earned |
| 3 Neighborhood customs        | 3 Imitation can be undesirable |
| 4 Minding my own business     | 4 Shopping for the family |
INTRODUCTION TO THE PARAGRAPH

Main problems for discussion
1 What is a paragraph?
2 The topic of a paragraph.
3 The topic sentence.
4 Unity.
5 Coherence.

1 Read the text carefully concentrating on its contents and terminology

A paragraph is defined as a group of sentences that develops one main idea; in other words, a paragraph develops a topic. A topic is the subject of the paragraph; it is what the paragraph is about. When you assigned topics to write about, they will often be too general to be developed adequately in one paragraph. Therefore, you will need to restrict your topic; that is, you will need to narrow down your topic to a more specific one.

The topic of a paragraph is usually introduced in a sentence; this sentence is called the topic sentence. However, the topic sentence can do more than introduce the subject of the paragraph. A good topic sentence also serves to state an idea or an attitude about the topic. This idea or attitude about the topic is called the controlling idea; it controls what the sentences in the paragraph will discuss. All sentences in the paragraph should relate to and develop the controlling idea. A paragraph that has sentences that do not relate to or discuss the controlling idea lacks unity.

We have seen that a paragraph must have a topic and controlling idea, support, and unity. Another element that a paragraph needs is coherence. A coherent paragraph contains sentences that are logically arranged and flow smoothly. If the sentences are not logically arranged or if they do not connect with each other smoothly, the paragraph is incoherent. Coherence is an important quality of writing.
2 Composition activity: the topic sentence

Study the topic sentences that follow. Circle the controlling idea and underline the topic in each sentence. Note: The controlling idea and the topic may be expressed in more than one word.
1 Another way to reduce the rate of inflation is to balance the federal budget.
2 Another problem for students is finding a part-time job.
3 Some seeming English-Spanish equivalents are deceptive.
4 Although bright, Maria is a very shy girl.

3 Composition activity: improving the topic sentence

Read the following weak topic sentences. Rewrite each one to make it more specific. You can narrow down the topic and/or the controlling idea. The first one is done for you.
1 The Honda Civic is an excellent automobile. The Honda Civic is economical to maintain.
2 My hometown is a wonderful place.
3 Exercise is good for you.
4 Driving a car can be hazardous.
5 Computers are useful.

4 Composition activity: unity and coherence

A Study the following paragraph, which lacks both unity and coherence:

First of all, teenagers work for their own current expenses. For example, my cousin Celia works at a clothing store and buys all her own clothes. Last week she bought herself a nice leather jacket. And one of my friends bought himself a used car just from the money he made after school. Young people want to make money for their future. Young people want to buy clothes, and they want to save money to buy a car or a stereo or a television. An example of this is saving money for an education after high school. My cousin Robert is doing this for his future. He also told me that he is saving some money to set up a household after marriage.

B Rearrange the sentences for coherence and omit any sentences that do not belong.
THE EXPOSITORY PARAGRAPH

Main problems for discussion
1 Exposition defined.
2 The process of explanation.
3 The critical report.
4 Definition.
5 Analysis.

1 Read the text carefully concentrating on its contents and terminology

The kind of prose composition which we call exposition/expository writing is the kind most frequently found in present-day communication. The word exposition means “explanation”, and expository writing is the kind which gives information. Expository writing embraces the techniques of the process of explanation, the critical report, definition, and analysis.

The housewife giving a young neighbor a recipe, the shop foreman orienting a new worker to his job, the librarian instructing students in the library’s many services, all use the form of exposition which we call the explanation of a process.

Many varieties of critical writing can be found in the world today: reviews of books, plays, movies, TV and radio programs, concerts and operas, art exhibits, etc. Most newspapers and magazines have staff critics who review the artistic productions to which readers have access. The verb “to criticize” means to evaluate; that is, to express a judgment which takes account of both the good and bad features of an object. Criticism is an act of appraising a specific work, performance, etc.

There are almost as many forms of definition as there are people who try to define. Saying what something is can be a rather personal matter. Thus, a definition has to describe something in such a way that there can be no doubt of the object being described.

Analysis is a means of gaining an understanding of something, primarily through classification and/or partition. The definition theme tells what something is or what a word or a term means. The
theme of analysis begins where the definition theme ends. In an analytical essay the writer either assumes that the term to be used in his analysis is known to the reader or, more likely, he establishes his definition and proceeds from that point.

2 Composition activity: clarity and order
Suppose that a foreign exchange student is your guest for the summer. This is his first visit to Ukraine, and he is totally unfamiliar with Ukrainian customs. How would you explain the following activities to him? Select one activity, jot down everything you think he should know about it, and arrange the material in sequence.
1 How to get a job (such as camp counselor)?
2 How to play football?
3 How to arrange a date?

3 Composition activity: defining
Write (a) operational and (b) fresh definitions of two of the following words. Do not limit yourself to a single sentence; in nearly all of these cases the single sentence could hardly be adequate. Furthermore, do not use different form of the word in your definition; that is, do not write something like “Success is the process of succeeding”. Define each word in terms of (a) how it operates, according to your observation, (b) something genuinely fresh about these abstractions.
Love, democracy, pleasure, prejudice, art, success, slavery, deceit, friendship, honor, truth, justice, duty.

4 Composition activity: special meaning for words
Invent a word (igran, porin, or the like) to serve as a noun or adjective expressing some substance or quality for which there is not at present a proper word in English. Without defining the word you invent, use it in a paragraph until its meaning becomes clear.
5 Composition activity: definition and explanation

Which of the following single-sentence definitions would you be willing to accept? Write a brief explanation of your reaction to each definition.

1 “Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought”.
   Percy Bysshe Shelley
2 “What is rhythm? Man, if you got to ask, you ain’t got it”.
   Louis Armstrong
3 “A short story is a story that is shorter than some other story”.

NARRATIVE AND DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPHS

Main problems for discussion
1 The narrative paragraph.
2 The descriptive paragraph.

1 Study the text and retell it in detail

Narration

Narration is quite different from exposition, because it involves the reader more closely in action. Although the ultimate purpose of narration may be to convince a reader of an idea or attitude, narration is usually less direct in its expression of opinion than exposition, argumentation or persuasion, and more concerned with picturing an event.

To write narration, we must present characters in action, but our plot must also fulfill the three principles of unity, coherence, and emphasis if we wish our story to have point or meaning.

Unity means oneness. To succeed, all narration must select only the details that help reveal one idea, attitude, or experience.

Coherence is achieved when there is a common idea that ties the story together and makes the whole clear to the reader. Coherence is greatly helped by good transitions – that is, words, phrases, sometimes repetitions, that link detail to each other, and show their relationship to each other and to a whole. In addition, the order of relating events can add a great deal to coherence.

Emphasis is stress on whatever is most important.
Kinds of narrative writing: newspaper writing, diaries and journals, war experiences.

Description

Description is most often used as a secondary and auxiliary backdrop by an author rather than as a clear and independent technique. It is a very important ingredient when used in combination with other forms of writing. But it can also provide an independent expression of ideas.

The elements of description: a) organized details; b) figurative language; c) language to convey mood; d) varied sentence patterns.

Descriptive writing is used to picture people; to describe objects; to recreate a natural setting; to illuminate a character.

2 Composition activity: the narrative paragraph

Imagine yourself as a taxi driver, a king or queen of England, a chef in a famous restaurant, a newspaper reporter, a soda jerk, a railroad conductor, a gossip columnist, a trial judge, an assembly line worker, or an overseas airline stewardess. Recount your activities for a day or an interesting episode from your life. Cast your account in the form of an entry for a diary or journal. Give vivid images of places and people. If you think the places and people are familiar to the reader, give instead your reactions to the events.

3 Composition activity: narrative experiences

Write a pure narrative composition of about 350 words. Tell the reader about an unusual or critical experience in your own life or in the life of someone you know. See how much suspense you can create but don’t interpret the events for your reader. Just give him the narrative facts.

4 Composition activity: the descriptive paragraph

Select any object in the room in which you happen to be and write a careful description of it in three or four paragraphs. Be sure to show the object in relation to other objects and from some clearly established point of observation.
5 Composition activity: writing informal description

Write a descriptive sketch of about 250 words in which you try to arouse a particular feeling in your reader. The description can be of a person, a place, or an object. Test your success by reading the piece to another person to see whether he responds as you want him to.

ARGUMENTATION AND PERSUASION

Main problems for discussion
1 Argumentation.
2 Persuasion.

1 Read the text carefully concentrating on its contents and terminology

Argumentation

A good argument often employs the principles of persuasion, and effective persuasion is often based on the principles of argumentation. An important difference between persuasion and argumentation: *Persuasion* seeks to influence other people to accept preconceived ideas or conclusions, sometimes in an illogical and emotional way; *argument*, on the other hand, guides people in reaching conclusions logically themselves. Both argumentation and persuasion seek to convince that one view is better than another and both can be used for good or bad purposes, depending upon the speaker.

The four fundamental assumptions of argument:
- there is a variety of choices;
- there is individual worth;
- there is freedom to test ideas against each other;
- there is an intellectual-emotional basis of belief.

Aristotle says that there are three kinds of proof: (a) *ethical proof*, or the *ethos* of the speaker; (b) *pathetic proof*, or the *pathos* of the audience; (c) *logical proof*, or the *logos* of the argument.

Fallacies of argumentation:
- the faulty dilemma;
• ignoring the question;
• post hoc ergo propter hoc;
• begging the question;
• argumentum ad hominem;
• non sequitur.

**Persuasion**

*Persuasion* is the use of language to make a reader or hearer receptive to an idea or a point of view that he may not have held before.

The uses of persuasion: (1) political persuasion; (2) educational persuasion; (3) advertising persuasion (bandwagon, sex or status appeal); (4) propaganda persuasion.

Some things to remember when writing a paper of persuasion: (1) relate your thesis to the existing opinion or attitude; (2) appeal to the dominant interests and motives of your readers; (3) end your paper with an incontrovertible appeal; (4) use specific information to convince; (5) be reasonable and reasoning.

How to write affective persuasion:

• use rhetoric;
• use figures of speech;
• use repetition;
• vary sentence structure.

2 Composition activity: the argumentative paragraph

Write a three-paragraph composition in which you state a religious or political belief which is very important to you. Make your statement quiet, rational, informative, and in good taste. Your aims are two: (1) to make your position understood, and (2) to win respect for it. Your paper will be evaluated on the basis of how you carry out these two aims. Any display of anger, bad temper, or intemperate language will be penalized. If you read the paper of a fellow student, remember that your interest is in how well he fulfilled the two aims, not in whether or not you have the same view.
3 Composition activity: argumentative and persuasive paragraphs

Consult the editorial page of one or several newspapers and select two editorials, one of which you regard as argumentation (that is, the attempt to explore a public problem objectively), and one of which you regard as persuasion (that is, the attempt to move readers to a particular course of action). Write a two-paragraph analysis of the two editorials in which you show their similarities and differences. Give particular attention to the manner in which the writer involves the reader in the discussion.

4 Composition activity: the three kinds of proof

Shakespeare knew the principles of argumentation very well. In a copy of Julius Caesar turn to the famous funeral oration of Mark Antony, Act III, Scene 2, lines 7-248. Mark off those sections of Antony’s speech which contain ethical proof, pathetic proof, and logical proof. Notice how skillfully he moves from one to the other. Remember, however, that Antony’s skillful use of these techniques does not necessarily mean that he is right, or even that he is a good man. Aristotle was merely trying to describe the art of successful argument, which has been used by both virtuous and non-virtuous men.

CREATIVE WRITING

Main problems for discussion
1 Principles of creative writing.
2 Using your senses.
3 Setting the scene and mood.

1 Study the text carefully and retell it in detail

All writing is creative. All writing involves “the originating, the making, the bringing into being” of a new communication. Even when you use “old” ideas and “secondhand” materials, you will create a new and unique expression of them. In this sense, all writing is creative.
Whether you decide to write in prose or in verse, you will be acting as a poet in the original meaning of the word, rather than as a communicator. In Greek the word *poietes* meant “one who makes,” and as a modern *poietes* you will be interested in *making* or in *recreating* an experience, not just in communicating it.

The major principles of creative writing: (1) sincerity; (2) emotion; (3) originality; (4) recreation (or “creation”) of an experience.

An absolute essential of creative writing is sincerity. No matter how beautiful and how technically perfect a work of art is, if it lacks sincerity – and, amazingly enough, trained critics can almost always tell – it is worth little.

Most of your writing has been expository; that is, it has been the kind of writing that communicates facts or ideas. Creative writers are usually less interested in communicating facts than they are in communicating **attitudes and emotions**. Expository writing is important for what it *contains*; creative writing is important for what it *is*. Expository writing tends to make the reader *think*; creative writing tends to make him *feel*.

Every human being is a unique individual. Because you are unique, you have ideas and emotions that no one else has ever had, and if you respect your own uniqueness you will write sincerely and **originally** about what only you can write about. As Emerson said, “Envy is ignorance and imitation is suicide!”

In writing creatively you **recreate the original experience** as much as possible. To accomplish this, you use concrete words that appeal to your reader’s senses; you should include actual conversations and let your language and its sound parallel the effect of the original experience.

**2 Composition activity: using your senses**

Look at an object. Use your eyes to see its color, size and shape. Then reach out to feel it, or use your imagination to guess what texture and warmth it would have if you touched it. Is it rough? Silky? Cool? Hard? Polished? What sounds might it make if you banged or tapped it? Does it have any scent or taste?
3 Composition activity: setting the scene and mood

A sense of place is crucial to most stories and novels, and to many other kinds of creative writing. A piece of fiction often begins by describing the scene where the action will happen. To create a setting that seems “real,” a writer chooses significant details to describe. The more he singles out particular objects, colors, street names and sounds, the more vividly the reader can imagine that place.

A What scenes and significant facts would you choose, if you wanted to tell a stranger about your home town? Write a page or two, describing it.

B Write five or six sentences about any place, referring to specific details and establishing a mood. The place may look frightening and mysterious to you, or sunny and friendly.

CRITICIZING PROSE CRITICISM OF A POEM

Main problems for discussion
1 Criticism of a poem.
2 Criticizing prose.

1 Study guidelines for reading a poem
• Check out the poem’s title. In many instances the title alone can tell you a lot about the poem.
• Read the poem carefully; be sure you have a good understanding of the literal meaning of the poem. As you read it, mentally paraphrase what you are reading.
• After you have a handle on what it means literally, you must look at it again for its figurative meaning. Are there underlying metaphors? Which words have special connotations? Are there special references or allusions in the poem?
• What imagery do you find? Be very conscious of what “feeling” words the author is using.
• Is there special diction or syntax to consider? Do any of the words give you information about when the poem might have been written (assuming you do not have that information available to you)? How are the sentences structured? Be particularly aware of the author’s use of punctuation.

• Is there a change in the poem? Can you detect any shifts – in narrator, or the tone, or the mood of the piece? Sometimes you can detect this by the setup of the stanzas. Other times you have to look closely at the action within the poem to see if there has been a shift. Sometimes shifts are earmarked by a change in pronoun or a change in verb tense.

• Has the poet used any specific poetic techniques that are important to the analysis?

• Are there any details that particularly strike you as worth noting? Can you identify an author’s style by these details? And, is that even significant?

• What is the tone of the poem? How do you know that? And then, what is the narrator’s attitude in the poem? Can you guess at the effect the poem is supposed to have? Can you detect any difference in attitude between the narrator and the poet him/herself? Is that significant?

2 Composition activity: poetry exercise

Read the poem “When I was one-and-twenty…” by A.E. Housman and then be ready to answer the multiple-choice questions.

3 Composition activity: key terminology

Here are some common terms you may have to face on Test Day. You also may want to use this terminology – correctly! – in your essays. Review unfamiliar terms and be ready to explain: allegory, alliteration, allusion, anaphora, anecdote, antagonist, antithesis, apostrophe, archetype, assonance, asyndeton, attitude, ballad, ballad stanza, blank verse, caesura, caricature, chiasmus, colloquial, conceit, connotation, consonance, couplet, dactylic, denotation, dialect, diction, dramatic monologue, elegy, enjambment,
epic, exposition, extended metaphor, falling action, farce, foreshadowing, formal diction, flashback, free verse, genre, hyperbole, iambic, imagery, informal diction, in medias res, irony, jargon, juxtaposition, limited point of view, litote, loose sentence, lyric, message, metaphor, meter, metonymy, mood, motif, narrative structure, narrator, occasional poem, ode, omniscient point of view, onomatopoeia, overstatement, oxymoron, parable, paradox, parody, parallel structure, pastoral, periodic sentence, persona, personification, Petrarchan sonnet, plot, protagonist, quatrain, realism, refrain, rising action, rhyme, rhythm, sarcasm, satire, scansion, setting, Shakespearean sonnet, shaped verse, simile, soliloquy, speaker, stanza, stereotype, stock character, structure, style, symbolism, synecdoche, syntax, terza rima, theme, tone, tragedy, trochee, turning point, villanelle, voice.

4 Composition activity: prose exercise

(A) Read an abstract from “Story of an Hour” by Kate Chopin and study the analysis that follows.

(B) Read an excerpt from the short story “Araby” by James Joyce, study the analysis chart that follows and be ready to answer some multiple-choice questions.

(C) Read two passages by Virginia Woolf who describes two different meals that she was served during a university visit. The first meal was served at the men’s college, while the second meal was served at the women’s college. Read the two passages carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you explain how formal elements such as structure, syntax, diction, and imagery reveal not only the speaker’s response to the two meals, but also discuss possible conclusions a reader might draw about the narrator’s attitude, based upon these descriptions.

WRITING LETTERS

Main problems for discussion
1 Business letters.
2 Social letters.
1 Study the text and retell it in detail

Classes of letters

There are but two general classes of letters – business and social. The business letter includes all forms for business purposes. The social letter varies from the informal letter of friendship to the most formal note. A letter, of course, may be a combination of the two classes.

Business Letters – Importance, Requirements, Structure

A great part of the world’s business is transacted through the exchange of letters; therefore the business letter is of tremendous importance.

Requirements of a good business letter are the following: promptness, accuracy, economy, completeness, correctness, courtesy, neatness, friendliness, effective sentence construction, proper paragraphing, appropriate words properly spelled, freedom from hackneyed expressions.

There are seven main parts of a business letter: 1 the letterhead, 2 the date, 3 inside name and address, 4 salutation, 5 the message, 6 complimentary closure, 7 the writer’s signature and official position.

There are business letters appropriate to all phases of business; therefore it would be almost impossible to classify all types of the business letter. The following are types of business letters in general use: acknowledgement, adjustment, application, appreciation, claim, collection, congratulation, inquiry, introduction, order, recommendation, sales.

Social Letters

The social letter serves the same purpose in the social world that the business letter serves in the realm of business. It varies from the informal letter of friendship to the most formal note. All social letters may be divided roughly into three groups: friendship, courtesy, formality.

2 Composition activity: give the examples of letters of friendship, letters of courtesy (acknowledgment or thanks, appreciation, condolence, congratulation), letters of formal invitation.
3 Composition activity: complete these sentences by explaining what the abbreviations printed in bold type mean. Use a dictionary if necessary.

1 Rd., St. and Sq. are short for ________.
2 #24 in the USA and No.24 in Britain both mean __________.
3 On an envelope the abbreviation c/o, Attn. and P.O.B. mean __________.
4 You may see these in a report or textbook: e.g. or eg, i.e. or ie, etc. and P.T.O. They stand for _______. And you may also find these: cf. (compare), do. (ditto) and viz. (namely).
5 A British film’s name may be followed by plc or PLC, Ltd, Bros or & Co. These are short for __________.
6 An American firm’s name may be followed by Corp. or Inc., meaning _____.
7 At the end of an informal letter you might add a P.S., in other words a ________.
8 At the end of a formal business letter it’s common to use the abbreviations c.c. and enc. or encl., which stand for ________.
9 But you’d only see these in very old-fashioned correspondence: ult. (last month), inst. (_____ month) and prox. (_____ month).

4 Composition activity: writing an invitation and thank-you note

Design an invitation to an imaginary party; then exchange invitations with a classmate. Read the invitation, imagine the get-together, and then write an appropriate thank-you note.

POLISHING AND PERFECTING

Main problems for discussion

1 Using words effectively.
2 Major composition problems.
1 Read the text carefully concentrating on its contents and terminology

Every time we speak or write we choose from about half a million words that make up the English language. Because we have such a large potential vocabulary, it is possible for us to express a great many shades of meaning – to be precise in conveying what we mean. But along with this advantage, we also have the problem of finding the appropriate word to use in every situation, the word which expresses exactly the meaning we wish to convey. As human beings we must learn to express our emotions, our desires, and our thoughts well. To do this, we must seek to become masters of words by:

• using denotative and connotative words;
• using synonyms;
• using concrete and abstract words;
• using figures of speech;
• judging figures of speech;
• using idiomatic expressions;
• using colloquialisms;
• knowing words to avoid.

Major composition problems

1 Main idea unclear or missing.
2 Main idea too broad.
3 Main idea lacks significance.
4 Main idea seems insincere.
5 Main idea doesn’t challenge you.
6 Subtopics need connection to the main idea.
7 Ideas require more support.
8 Paper needs specifics, concretes.
9 Some ideas seem off the subject.
10 Paper needs more originality.
11 Content needs better balance.
12 Some ideas seem “parroted.”
13 Needs better introduction.
14 Needs better conclusion.
15 Needs better transitions.
16 Ideas need reordering.
17 Paragraphs not organized well.
18 Needs more helps for the reader (summary, definition, paraphrase, etc.).
19 Fragments.
20 Run-ons and comma splices.
21 Too simple.
22 Too complicated.
23 Misplaced modifiers.
24 Dangling modifiers.
25 Pronoun reference.
26 Needs more variety (length, type of sentences).
27 Pronoun-antecedent agreement.
28 Subject-verb agreement.
29 Overuse of expletive.
30 Overuse of passive voice.
31 Tense-sequence problems.
32 Wrong words.
33 Pompous words.
34 Childish words.
35 Clichés.
36 Abstract words.
37 Deadwood.
38 Inappropriate tone.

2 Composition activity: using denotative and connotative words
Make a list of ten loaded words that, to most people, have a favorable connotation and ten that have an unfavorable connotation. Examples: freedom, reaction.

3 Composition activity: using synonyms
Find, in using your dictionary, as many synonyms as you can for the words in the following list. Be prepared to explain the different shades of meaning of two or three synonyms for each word.
1 awkward 5 big 9 stop
2 dark 6 small 10 scold
4 Composition activity: using figures of speech

Use simile and metaphor to describe five of the following things or ideas: a ballerina, cold, hunger, home, an angry person, sunset, a silent chuckle, a mountain lake, a frisky squirrel, popular music. For each of the five, write two sentences, one containing a simile and one containing a metaphor.

5 Composition activity: major composition problems

Discuss each composition problem and be ready to give the examples.

PUNCTUATION

Main problems for discussion
1 Punctuating the ends of sentences.
2 Punctuating within sentences.

1 Composition activity: punctuating the ends of sentences

Most punctuation has been omitted from the passage “Christmas Thoughts”. Rewrite the text and place the appropriate marks of punctuation (periods, question marks, exclamation points, commas). If a new sentence should begin after the end mark, don’t forget to write the first word of the sentence with a capital letter.

2 Composition activity: punctuating within sentences

This exercise covers the use of the comma. Write C for any sentences that are correctly punctuated.
1 Caesar’s message was I came I saw I conquered.
2 The boys are sitting on benches on tables and even on the floor.
3 For lunch we had iced tea a vegetable salad and bacon and egg sandwiches.
4 Having packed the travelers left.
5 The wind blew and the rain came in torrents.
6 In the confusion that followed the escape of the prisoners went unnoticed.
7 To tell the truth I’m not sure what I’ll do.
8 Mrs. Knight is a teacher whom everyone admires.

3 Composition activity: punctuating within sentences
   Copy the sentences that follow and add colons, dashes, parentheses, or brackets where needed.
   1 In the course of his research he thought he discovered one important fact Abraham Lincoln did not have a girl friend named Ann Rutledge.
   2 These articles of furniture are now ready to be painted three chairs, two tables, one shelf.
   3 The storm lasted you won’t believe this only five minutes.
   4 They had all sorts of pets a dog, some rabbits, and even a cage of white mice in their tiny backyard.
   5 The man said but I can’t tell you what he said.

4 Composition activity: punctuating within sentences
   Copy each of the following sentences and use italics or quotation marks wherever necessary. If quotation marks are preferred, use them instead of italics.
   1 Carrie Jacobs Bond wrote I Love You Truly.
   2 We went to Europe on the Italia and returned on the Queen Elizabeth.
   3 Our class spent three weeks on Macbeth and four on Vanity Fair.
   4 Gainsborough’s Blue Boy is one of the world’s famous paintings.
   5 Do not confuse the following words: principal and principle, lie and lay, it’s and its. Also, avoid using too many and’s.
   6 You’re a’s and o’s look alike.
   7 Are You Freezing This Summer is an interesting article in this month’s Better Homes and Gardens.
   8 Well, I wouldn’t say that it’s exactly comme il faut.
СПИСОК ЛІТЕРАТУРИ