

GOLD EDITION

PRACTICE COACH PLUS



English Language Arts

8



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Contents

Chapter 1	Reading Literature	5
Lesson 1	Literary Structure	6
Lesson 2	Plot and Setting	18
Lesson 3	Character.	30
Lesson 4	Theme and Summary	42
Lesson 5	Patterns in Literature.	54
Lesson 6	Figurative Language	66
Lesson 7	Supporting Inferences	78
Chapter 2	Reading Informational Text	91
Lesson 8	Cite Textual Evidence	92
Lesson 9	Main Idea and Supporting Details	104
Lesson 10	Summarize.	116
Lesson 11	Arguments and Author’s Point of View. . .	128
Lesson 12	Compare and Contrast.	140
Lesson 13	Text Structures.	152
Lesson 14	Graphics	164
Lesson 15	Fact and Opinion	176
Lesson 16	Domain-Specific Vocabulary	188
Lesson 17	Compare and Contrast Texts Across Genres	200

Chapter 3 Writing	211
Lesson 18 Write an Argument	212
Lesson 19 Write an Informative Text	222
Lesson 20 Write a Narrative	232
Lesson 21 Considering Purpose and Audience	242
Lesson 22 Respond to Literature	252
Lesson 23 Respond to Informational Texts	264
Lesson 24 Revising, Editing, and Proofreading	276
Lesson 25 Using Resources	286
Chapter 4 Language	297
Lesson 26 Grammar and Usage	298
Lesson 27 Capitalization, Punctuation, and Spelling	305
Lesson 28 Finding Word Meanings	312
Lesson 29 Roots and Affixes	320
Lesson 30 Denotation and Connotation	328
Key Terms and Definitions	337
Writing Rubrics	341
Chapter Diagnostic Assessments	A1



Write an Argument

Coached Instruction

Writing an argument involves using specific structures to persuade the reader. Review these three structures.

► Writing a Topic Sentence

Read the paragraph.

Geography is a subject taught in school. It is important to know specific details about geography so that you understand where you are in relation to the other places in the world. Many people lack simple geography skills. They do not know basic information about their own country, such as the names of all of the states, let alone information about other places that they have not been. Understanding geography helps to provide a sense of global awareness that is necessary in today's day and age.

Discuss

What is the subject of this paragraph? What evidence does the author include to support his or her claim?

Apply

Rewrite the topic sentence so that it relates to the supporting evidence and reasons in the paragraph.

Think It Through When I first read the paragraph, the first line seems to make sense to me. But as I continue reading, I can tell the author is stressing the importance of learning geography. This makes me realize that the first line merely states a simple fact. It's not a strong topic sentence for an argument. I'll rewrite it so that it clearly states the author's position and is supported by the details that follow it.

► Including Reasons and Evidence

Read the paragraph.

The voting age should be lowered from eighteen to sixteen. Many teens today are interested in our nation and its policies. They have student government groups. They also have other interesting school groups. Juniors and seniors in high school are the future of the nation. They have a right to help choose their leaders.

Discuss

Look at the underlined sentences. What problems do you find in them?



Apply

Rewrite the underlined portion of the paragraph so that it includes only reasons and evidence that support the main idea. Develop any ideas that require more details.

Think It Through As I scan the paragraph, I see reasons that don't seem to be fully developed. I also see some information that has nothing to do with the issue of voting age. When I rewrite these lines, I'll leave out irrelevant information. I'll also expand some points that are currently a bit unclear so that they include more details.

► Using Precise Language

Read the paragraph.

Parents who search their children's rooms do more harm than good. Children feel bad and think that their parents were wrong. This could cause them to act differently, or at the very least it will not be good for their relationship. Children might become more secretive as a result and less willing to share information or feelings about things that may be going on in their lives.

Discuss

Look at the underlined sentences. Which words and phrases are very general or vague in meaning?



Apply

Rewrite the underlined sentences in the paragraph so that they include more precise and descriptive language.

Think It Through To make the language more precise and descriptive, I'll start by circling words and phrases that I think are vague or dull. Then I will think about what the writer is really trying to say. I can rewrite the sentences to make the message clearer and to support the topic sentence better.

Lesson Practice | Part 1

Use the Writing Guide to help you understand the passage.

Writing Guide

- Which sentence in the introduction is the author's central claim?
- How could the author organize paragraph 2 more effectively?

Cloning Dolly

Many years ago, the idea of cloning sounded like something out of a science fiction movie. However, when Dolly the sheep was cloned from the nucleus of an adult cell in 1996, science fiction collided with reality. Dolly's birth proved that just because scientists *can* do something does not mean they *should*. Cloning should be banned throughout the world.

Dolly was the first mammal to be cloned from an adult cell. Before Dolly, scientists had created clones from embryonic cells. Dolly's birth came as a shock to the scientific community and the world. Some people were excited at this scientific breakthrough, but others were horrified. Their horror is understandable. Anyone who has read *Frankenstein* knows that things didn't turn out too well. Cloning is just as unnatural and unethical.

The scariest thing about cloning animals is that it may lead to the cloning of humans. Is that a power we really want anyone to have? It could be abused in so many ways. People could choose to clone others based on skin or eye color. If all it takes is a cell, people could be cloned without their knowledge or permission.

Write the conclusion to this argument.

Plan Your Writing

Read the writing prompt, and then plan your response below.

The Constitution requires that in order to be president of the United States a person must be born a U.S. citizen. Someone who is born a citizen of another country can never run for U.S. president, even if he or she becomes a U.S. citizen through the process of naturalization. What do you think? Should a person who was not born a U.S. citizen have the right to become president? Be sure to support your argument with reasons, examples, and details.

Claim	
Topic Sentence 1	
Topic Sentence 2	
Topic Sentence 3	
Concluding Statement	

Checklist for Argument Writing

Does your essay

- have a clear topic?
- show a point of view about that topic?
- have a logical structure?
- support reasons with details?
- connect reasons and details with the right words or phrases?
- use a style and vocabulary that is correct for the audience and purpose?
- have a solid conclusion?
- have good spelling, capitalization, and punctuation?
- follow the rules for good grammar?

Read the passage.

The Great Recession

From 2007 until 2009, the United States endured the Great Recession. A recession is a decline in economic activity. People stopped spending money, while businesses halted hiring and lowered the production of goods and services. Economists, politicians, and citizens have all debated the causes of the recession. However, one clear cause cannot be argued: Investing in housing in the United States led to poor decisions by banks and resulted in the fall of the economy.

In the early 2000s, many viewed owning a home as an investment. Demand was high, and home prices rose at a rate of almost 10% each year. Buying and selling homes seemed like a good way to make money. The problems began when buyers were given mortgages—loans from banks used to buy homes—that they could not afford. Mortgages are paid back with interest, the money charged by banks for the loan. Banks offered buyers huge loans for huge houses. Many banks offered adjustable rate mortgages with low interest rates. However, these low interest rates only lasted a few years, resetting to much higher rates. This was fine if buyers sold the house before the interest rates increased. In contrast, some homeowners couldn't afford mortgages with the higher rates. In addition, these buyers also didn't qualify for new loans; it became clear that many homeowners were approved for loans that they could not pay back.

In contrast, some blame the recession on buyers seeking bigger and better homes. But many argue that banks approved the loans. Furthermore, many buyers didn't understand the terms of the loans or how adjustable rate mortgages work. More evidence that banks caused the recession can be found in mortgage-backed securities. These are investments that included the “bad” mortgages that banks sold to other companies. The investments were worthless. By approving questionable loans in the first place and then selling them as investments, banks made unfortunate decisions that led to the housing market crisis and the Great Recession.

Plan Your Writing

Read the writing prompt, and then plan your response below.

Although the United States is made up of people from various countries, some argue that Americans do not have enough knowledge of different cultures. It has been proposed that college students should be required to travel to foreign countries in order to encounter new perspectives and learn more about different cultures. Write an argument for or against this proposal. Be sure to include your claim in the introduction and at least two paragraphs with topic sentences that support your claim. Remember to support your claim with facts and reliable sources and to restate your claim in the conclusion.

Claim	
Topic Sentence 1	
Topic Sentence 2	
Topic Sentence 3	
Concluding Statement	

