

READ THE PASSAGE

Think about what Jeff Biggs does and how he feels about his job.

Dirty Job? Oh Yeah!

"You couldn't pay me to do that job!" Have you ever said that? Some occupations are so gross that most people would never be willing to do them.

Jeff Biggs has a job like that, but he likes it. He's the kind of guy who, as a kid, loved to slosh around in mud after a rainstorm, the kind of kid who loved squeezing oatmeal through his fingers.

Biggs's dirty job is being a sewer inspector. "Believe me," says Biggs, "gross doesn't come close to describing it; I creep, sometimes swim, through sewage all day." City sewers carry household wastewater and storm-drain runoff to water treatment plants. In addition to the unpleasant smells, sewer tunnels are home to creatures such as cockroaches and rats. And these creatures aren't shy.

What is it like to do a really disgusting job day after day? "Someone has to do it," says Biggs. "I seriously can't imagine sitting in an office all day, and I earn a good salary. At the end of my workday, I've accomplished something, and I've helped to keep our city's water clean and drinkable."

And after work? "I don't walk into the house right away," explains Biggs. "We installed the washing machine in the garage and put a shower stall in there, too. I toss my clothes into the washer, take a shower, and dress in clean clothes. Then I greet my family. Of course, sometimes, the clothes go into the trash, not the washer."

STRATEGY/PRACTICE

What would happen if no one performed jobs like the one Jeff Biggs has?

SKILL PRACTICE

Fill in the bubble next to the correct answer for each question.

- Which adjectives best describe Jeff Biggs?
 - flashy, conceited, loud
 - positive, upbeat, thoughtful
 - smart, wealthy, nervous
 - negative, shy, withdrawn
- Which adjective best describes the setting in which Biggs works?
 - disgusting
 - boring
 - pleasant
 - appealing
- Which sentence best describes the central message of the passage?
 - Biggs's job embarrasses him.
 - Biggs cannot imagine having a nicer job.
 - Biggs is proud of the work he does.
 - Biggs is just doing his job until he gets a better one.
- Which one would Jeff Biggs probably most enjoy being?
 - a lawyer
 - a poet
 - a computer programmer
 - a deep-sea diver

READ THE PASSAGE

Look for descriptions of things or practices that have changed since 1899.

Newsies Strike New York

Today, people can buy a newspaper from a machine or at a newsstand. But back in the 1800s, newsboys, or "newsies," were the principal sellers of newspapers. Newsies sold their newspapers, or "papes," on New York's streets. Newsies bought their newspapers from the companies that printed them. The newsboys then made their money by selling the newspapers to customers.

For two weeks in 1899, however, the newsies went on strike, refusing to sell papers. Boys from 5 to 15 years old united to make two newspaper companies reduce the price that they charged newsies for the newspapers. Striking newsboys held rallies, gave speeches, and chose leaders. One rally drew more than 7,000 striking newsies. Newsboys who continued to sell papers were harassed by the strikers. Some strikers threw the newspapers away, and others threatened to hurt the newsboys who wouldn't stop selling newspapers.

What started the strike? During the Spanish-American War, people were eager to read the news, so the *Journal and Evening World* raised the price that they charged for their newspapers. Newsies had to pay ten cents more for the papers. A dime made a difference to the kids who earned less than a dollar each day. Most newsies lived on the streets. Others used their earnings to help their struggling families. When the war ended, newsies expected newspaper companies to reduce their prices, but that did not happen.

Although the cost of papers to newsies never dropped, the strike was considered a success. The two offending newspaper companies agreed to buy back all unsold papers, and eventually this strike helped bring about child labor laws in the United States.

STRATEGY PRACTICE

What does the newsies' strike of 1899 remind you of today?

SKILL PRACTICE

Fill in the bubble next to the correct answer for each question.

- Where and when did the strike occur?
 - in a Spanish-American colony in the 1800s
 - in New York City in the 1950s and 60s
 - in New York City in 1899
 - in Spain in the 1890s
- How do you think the strike helped bring about labor laws?
 - The public became aware of the newsboys' problems.
 - The newspaper companies decided to help all newsboys.
 - People decided to buy their newspapers from machines and newsstands.
 - Newspaper companies stopped selling their newspapers to the public.
- What lesson can you learn from the passage?
 - Working together gets things done.
 - People should not read about war.
 - Holding rallies is not a good strategy for changing things.
 - Businesses that treat workers badly do not succeed.
- Based on the passage, which characteristics were most common in a newsboy?
 - kind, sweet-tempered, and gentle
 - cruel, defiant, and undependable
 - smart, quiet, and considerate
 - self-reliant, hardworking, and loyal

Contrast Context Clues

Teaching

Contrast clues are words or phrases that mean the opposite of an unfamiliar word. A contrast clue may be signaled by words and phrases such as *but*, *however*, *although*, and *on the other hand*. In the following sentence, the word *although* signals the contrast between the clue, a *small* scoop, and the meaning of *immense*—"huge."

Benji helped himself to an *immense* portion of ice cream, although his mother had told him to take just a small scoop.

A. Contrast Clues in Action

In the sentences below, look for contrast clues that mean the opposite of the word printed in italics. For each item, underline the word or phrase that is an opposite of the word in italics. Then circle the best meaning of the word in italics from the three choices next to the sentence.

- The *youngster* climbed under the fence, but her father had to use the gate. gymnast child truant
- Most people mow a lawn in straight lines; however, Carl made a *zigzag* pattern. plaid messy back and forth in sharp turns
- The *elder* sister wore a blue dress; on the other hand, the younger one wore red. older shorter brighter color
- You can *doze* in class again; however if you do, I'll pinch you and wake you up. make a mistake draw fall asleep
- The twins played a piano *duet*, but their brother did a trumpet solo. piece for two players melody piece for one player
- Although Sam's suit was *costly*, his shoes were cheap. fashionable expensive valuable
- "I don't have anything *decent* to wear. Everything's wrong." dirty interesting proper
- Cats are *beloved* animals to Dejan; however, his sister hates them. tame well-liked friendly
- Although the time in a dentist's chair is *brief*, it can feel like several hours. short painful frightening
- The *departure* of their flight was delayed for 20 minutes, but they still arrived on time. destination order leaving

) Definition Context Clues

Teaching

A common type of context clue actually defines a word that may be unfamiliar. A **definition clue** is similar to a restatement clue. Definition clues may be signaled by commas or dashes and words or phrases such as *or*, *that is*, and *in other words*. In the following sentence, the comma and the word *or* signal the definition of *props*.

Everyone had a part in the play: some were actors, some did the lighting, and others were in charge of the *props*, or scenery and objects used on the stage.

A. Definition Clues in Action

In each sentence below, look for clues that define the word printed in italics. For each item, underline the word or phrase that is a definition clue.

1. The best team usually *prevails*—is the winner.
2. In this race, you have to *sprint*, that is, run as fast as you can.
3. Everyone experiences some *misfortune*, or bad luck, at one time or another.
4. Many states charge a *levy*—a tax—on items such as groceries and clothing.
5. Her mother's spaghetti is so good that Janine *devours* it, eats it all up; even if she isn't very hungry.
6. "Put away your books and get ready for a short *quiz*. Yes, that means a test."
7. Uncle Max *prefers* coffee to tea; that is, he likes coffee more.
8. All languages have *vowels*—open sounds—and consonants—sounds made by stopping the breath.
9. The *accordion*, a musical instrument with a keyboard attached to a squeeze box, has a lively sound.
10. To join our club, members must take an *oath*, or make a solemn statement, promising to keep our activities a secret.
11. Michael *anticipated*—expected—that he would receive a new CD for his birthday.
12. Angela thought the red and orange metallic wallpaper was *gaudy*, or showy in a tasteless way.
13. During their mountain hike, Zach and Hank came across a beautiful *cascade*, that is, a waterfall over steep rocks.
14. To enter school, students must first *register*, or officially sign up, in the Principal's Office.
15. Once part of an ancient sea, the Mojave Desert is known for its *arid*—really dry—climate.



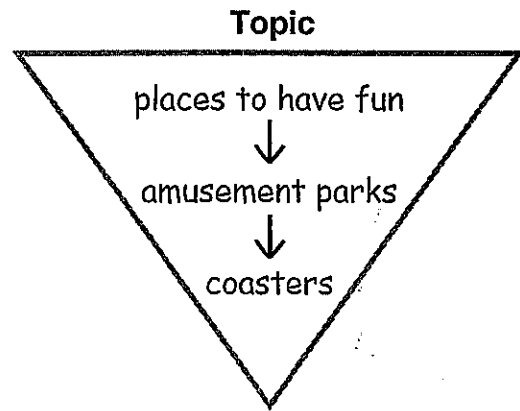
The best writing begins with a good topic. Make your topic as specific as possible.



- Read these informational paragraphs. Both writers started with a similar topic, but the second writer narrowed it down to be more specific. Fill in the narrowing triangle for the second paragraph to show how the topic was narrowed down.

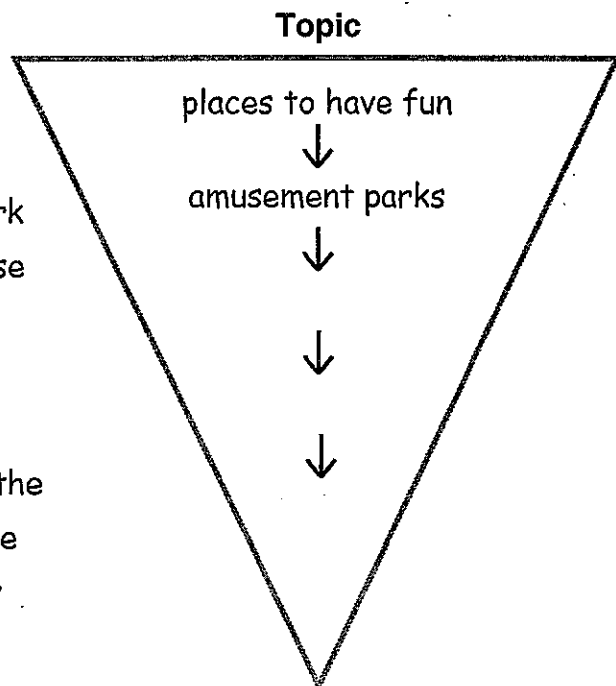
Roller Coasters

Roller coasters are exciting rides. Every amusement park has at least one roller coaster, and every roller coaster has cars running on tracks. The tracks rise to great heights, and the cars climb slowly. After the climb, the cars speed down the steep dips, causing riders to scream.



A Wild Ride

Wild Goose Park is located five miles outside of Williamsville. The first roller coaster in the state was built in this old park over 100 years ago. Known as the Wild Goose Chase, it was designed by Jay T. Allen, Jr. It's still there! Although the cars on the tracks are not the original ones, they are painted to look like the geese that swim in the lake at the center of the park. A ride on the Wild Goose Chase coaster is a must for any visitor to this historic park.



- Underline all of the proper nouns in "A Wild Ride." Circle their capital letters.



Be sure your topic is appropriate for your audience.

Read this paragraph. It was written for the newsletter of the Outdoor Adventurers Club. Use proofreading marks to capitalize the proper nouns. Then answer the questions.

My Favorite Weekend Activity

If you're looking for something fun to do next weekend, learn to play zorn's outer space battle. It's a cool new computer game by a company called galaxy games. Not only do you get to fly a spaceship, but you also create alien monsters. Just be sure to read the directions! I learned that lesson the hard way. I used to think that reading the directions was a waste of time. Then, last february, I spent hours trying to figure out a game called planet of the cowboys. If I had just read the directions, I would have saved myself hours of frustration. So, fellow members of the outdoor adventurers club, run out and buy zorn's outer space battle. But don't forget to read the directions!

1. What is the topic of the paragraph? _____

2. What did the writer forget about her audience? _____

3. If you were writing for the Outdoor Adventurers Club newsletter, what kinds of topics do you think the audience would be interested in? List three specific topics that you might write about.

Topic 1: _____

Topic 2: _____

Topic 3: _____



Choose ideas that will achieve your purpose.

A. This essay was meant to persuade students to participate in team sports. Read the essay. Then:

- Underline the negative ideas that the writer expresses that do not support her purpose.
- Use proofreading marks to capitalize the proper nouns.

Join a Team!

Playing on a sports team can be fun and educational. One team sport that some students enjoy is baseball. The barkeyville blast baseball team practices every thursday afternoon. Sometimes players don't feel like practicing, especially when the weather is not great, but they have to practice anyway. The long practices can make it hard to get homework done, too. Playing on a soccer team also takes a lot of time, and coach allen yells at players. If you don't make the perfect play every time, he'll make you feel really bad.

Our community also has an ice hockey team for kids. The team is coached by mr. bordasian. He is much nicer than the baseball coach, but falling down on the hard ice can really hurt. Interested students should call ms. graf at the barkeyville department of recreation for more information about joining a team.

B. What ideas could the writer of the essay have included to better achieve her purpose? List four positive things about team sports that she could have written about.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Name: _____



Ideas

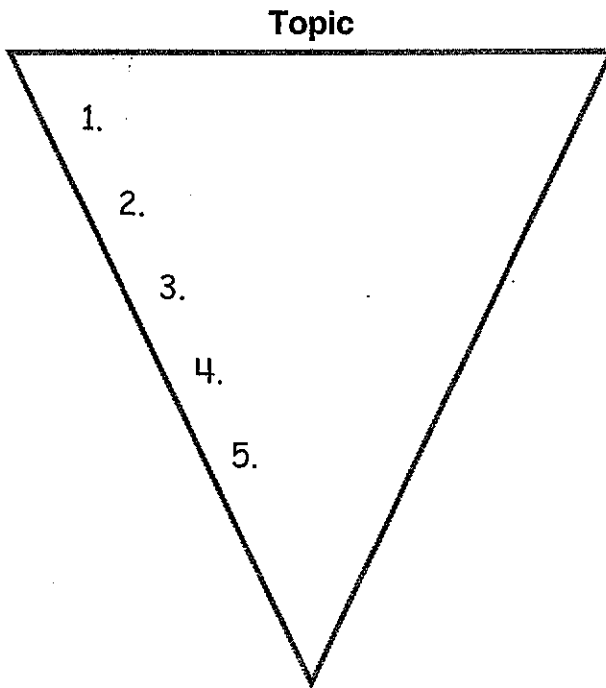
Be sure your topic and ideas suit your purpose and audience.

A. Imagine that you have been asked to write an editorial for your school newspaper. First, think about your audience by answering the questions.

1. Who reads the school newspaper? _____

2. What are some topics that your audience cares about? _____

B. Choose a topic from your list above. Use the triangle to narrow it down as much as possible. Then jot down some ideas to express your opinion about the topic. List reasons and examples that would persuade your audience to agree with you.



Opinion: _____

Reasons and Examples: _____

