

ESSENTIAL STUDY SKILLS

MARK PENNINGTON



**56 TEACHER
OR SELF-
GUIDED
LESSONS**



**PERSONAL
ASSESSMENTS,
STUDY SKILLS,
AND
REFLECTION**



How to Prevent Procrastination Self-Assessment

	Always 5	Usually 4	Sometimes 3	Rarely 2	Never 1
1. I avoid procrastination (postponing work).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I know why I procrastinate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I start projects immediately when they are assigned.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. If I skip a day working on a long-term project, I double-up work the very next day.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Before beginning work on long-term projects, I divide up tasks and write them down.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Results

- 23-25 You know all the strategies to help you prevent procrastination.
- 20-22 You know many of the strategies to help you prevent procrastination.
- 17-19 You know some of the strategies to help you prevent procrastination.
- 13-16 You know few of the strategies to help you prevent procrastination. Learn the procrastination prevention strategies to help you get started and complete projects.
- <13 You don't know the strategies to help you prevent procrastination. Learn the procrastination prevention strategies to help you get started and complete projects.

Already Know: What I already know about how to avoid procrastination is _____

Want to Know: What I want to know about how to avoid procrastination is _____

How to Prevent Procrastination Lesson

To avoid procrastination, learn how to develop a **Procrastination Prevention Plan**. Remember what adults always say? “Procrastination means to put off until tomorrow what you could be doing today.” Of course, they are right, but do you know the strategies to develop a plan that will help replace your bad habits with good ones? Here is a workable plan with the strategies to help you learn how to avoid procrastination.

But first, take a moment to figure out *why* you are procrastinating. People usually procrastinate for one of these reasons:

1. “I don’t want to do it.” The goal may be difficult and take significant effort or time. Or you might be just plain rebellious or lazy.
2. “It’s not worth it.” The pay-off for achieving the goal may not be considered worth the effort.
3. “It just doesn’t feel right.” You might think that it isn’t the right time or set of circumstances to begin. You might be waiting for the magic fairy to make you want to get started.
4. “I might fail or succeed.” You might be reminded of a past failure or even a past success which creates future expectations.
5. “It’s someone else’s responsibility or fault.” Playing the blame game can certainly prevent you from taking personal responsibility and action.

Which reasons listed above are the ones that influence you to avoid getting started on long-term school projects, extra-curricular (outside of school) commitments, or family responsibilities? List a few of your recent procrastinations and identify which of the reasons above were most responsible for your delays in getting started on the projects.

Procrastination _____ Reasons _____

Procrastination _____ Reasons _____

Procrastination _____ Reasons _____

To avoid procrastinating on long-term school projects, follow these proven steps:

The Procrastination Prevention Plan

1. Get started on your project as soon as it is assigned-that very day.
2. Start small. The longest journey begins with a single step, but you must take that step.
3. Keep at it! Do something on the project every day until it is finished. An object at rest, tends to stay at rest. However, an object in motion, tends to stay in motion.
4. If you miss a planned work day, double-up your work on the project on the very next day.
5. Divide up the project sub-tasks so that you have a day off, say once per week. Plan your timeline to finish the project early. Celebrate with rewards if the project is completed early. Get your parents on board with the rewards.

How to Prevent Procrastination Reflection

1. Something I did not know about preventing procrastination is that _____ -

2. My specific goal about preventing procrastination is _____

3. Accomplishing this goal will especially help me because _____

4. Experts I plan to go to for help will be _____

5. I will tell _____ about my goal so that they will hold me accountable for making progress toward my goal.

6. Before I begin working toward my goal, I will need to _____

7. I plan to begin working toward my goal when _____

8. This is how and when I will evaluate progress toward my goal: _____

9. I will know that I have accomplished my goal when _____

10. After reading the tips, I would still like to know _____

Teacher/Parent Review _____ (signature)

Teacher/Parent Comments: _____

How to Create a Home Study Environment Lesson

We are affected by our surroundings. Where we complete homework and study contributes to or detracts from the quality of our work at home. Follow these tips to learn how to create a productive home study environment.

1. Develop a study environment that works for you. Select a **quiet area** to dedicate to serious study. Learn to associate this place with uninterrupted study and success. Don't float around from place to place during study time.

Where and when is the best place for you to complete work at home? _____

2. **Avoid distractions** in your study environment. Keep your cell phone off and keep anyone or anything that will compete for your concentration out of that environment. Get help from others, such as parent, to support uninterrupted study time.

What and whom are your greatest distractions during study time at home? _____

What can you do about these distractions? _____

3. Unlearn poor study skills. For example, studying with the television or music as background may be something that you have always done; however, **sound competes with concentration**. Turn off these competing inputs during homework time.

What poor study skills do you have, if any? _____

4. Study on an uncluttered desk or table with good lighting and a straight-back chair. The study environment should be **business-like**, not overly comfortable.

What, if anything, could be improved? _____

5. Have study materials on or **next to your study area** so that you don't have to interrupt study time to locate these items. Keep sharpened pencils, pens, paper, and books convenient to your study area.

Which study materials and supplies do you need to add to your study area?

How to Improve Reading Comprehension Lesson

Readers fail to understand text because they lack cueing strategies to prompt effective interaction with what the text says. This is a fancy way of saying that poor readers don't know how to prompt themselves to understand what they are reading. Reading research is clear that readers who prompt themselves with thinking strategies and questions as they read tend to understand and remember what they read far better than readers who don't. So, how can you learn and apply these self-prompting strategies to improve your reading comprehension?

The five **SCRIP** reading comprehension strategies teach readers how to independently interact with and understand both narrative and expository text to improve reading comprehension. The **SCRIP** acronym stands for Summarize, Connect, Re-think, Interpret, and Predict.

Summarize means to put together the main ideas and key details of a reading into a short-version of what the author has said. A summary can be of an entire reading, but it is more useful to summarize often at key transition points in the author's train of thought. It frequently requires the reader to go back to the previous reading section and skim that part of the reading once more.

Connect means to notice the relationship between one part of the text with another part of the text. The parts may compare (be similar) or contrast (be different). The parts may connect as a sequence (an order) of events or ideas. The parts may respond to other parts of the text, such as to provide reasons for or effects of what came before in the reading. Good readers also connect the relationship between one part of the text with a similar text or source. It could be something from another book, movie, television show, or historical event. Lastly, good readers see the relationship between one part of the text with their own personal experiences. You may have had a similar experience in your own life to that described in the text.

Re-think means to re-read the text when you are confused or have lost the author's train of thought. Reviewing what has just been read will usually improve understanding. You may even understand what the author has said in *a different way* than how you understood that section the first time that you read it.

Interpret means to focus on what the author means beyond the words that are used. Authors may directly say what they mean right in the lines of the text, but they also may *suggest* what they mean with hints to allow readers to draw their own conclusions. These hints can be found in the tone (feeling or attitude) of the writing, the word choice, or in other parts of the text in which the clues may be stated more directly.

Predict means to make an educated guess about what will happen or be said next in the text. A good prediction uses the clues presented in the reading to make a logical guess that makes sense. Good readers check their predictions with what actually happens or is said next in the text.

Good reading is interactive reading. Prompt your understanding of the text with these self-prompting thinking and questioning strategies to understand and remember more of what the author says. Download the [SCRIP Comprehension Strategies Bookmarks](#) and practice.

How to Do a Close Reading for Expository Text Lesson

CLOSE Reading Expository Worksheet Select an article to practice this strategy.

Reading Checklist

Reading #1

- Read to find out how the author shares the BIG IDEA.
- Look for the key details which support or explain the BIG IDEA.
- Think–Pair–Share about the BIG IDEA and KEY details with a classmate.

Reading #2

- Identify how the author organizes the text.
- Use subtitles to form WHAT, HOW, or WHY questions and answer them as you read.
- Label TS in the right margin for each topic sentence.
- Star important ideas.
- Use arrows to connect ideas.
- Circle key vocabulary words.
- Analyze how graphics and pictures support the BIG IDEA.
- Discuss the author’s craft and structure in a small group.

Reading #3

- Think about how you could use this information.
- Label TE in the right margin for any textual evidence.
- Think about how the BIG IDEA and textual evidence connect to related readings.
- Share with the whole group.

from *Teaching Reading Strategies*

Before, During, + After

Teacher or Student Research

Before

BIG IDEA

PRE-READING NOTES

Text-dependent SCRIP Questions

During

SUMMARIZE

CONNECT

RE-THINK

INTERPRET

PREDICT

How to Use Textual Evidence

After

APPLY

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How to Quote and Cite Textual Evidence Lesson

When we write an essay, report, document, or article, we frequently use an expert's words or ideas to support our own thoughts. Borrowed words are termed *direct quotations*, while borrowed ideas, using our own words to paraphrase, are termed *indirect quotations*. We also must tell our readers *who* said it and *where* it was said in a *citation*. A *citation* includes the author's last name (or the source title if no author is listed) and the page number where the author's words or ideas are found. The citation is placed within parentheses after the direct or indirect quotation. Write your own example sentences in the spaces provided.

Beginning and ending quotation marks are placed before and after the author's words. Place a period after the ending parenthesis of the citation. **Examples** If the author uses an exclamation point or a question mark, place it where it is used inside the quotation marks. If you, the writer, ask a question about the quotation, place the question mark after the citation instead of the period.: "Cheetahs are fast!" (Nen 8). The author asked, "Are they as fast as is often reported?" (Nen 8). Did the author really mean "fast" ("Energy Concerns" 8)?

When using a direct quotation, the first word of a complete sentence must be capitalized, even if it is in the middle of a sentence. However, when quoting part of a sentence, don't capitalize the first letter. Also, both parts of a divided quotation are enclosed within quotation marks. The first word of the second part is not capitalized unless it begins a new sentence. **Examples:** The dentist said, "We saw it" and then he said that it "quickly disappeared." (Nen 8).

An ellipsis is punctuated as three periods (...) and is used in direct quotations to delete unnecessary parts of the quotation. **Example:** I gave it some thought... but I never did anything.

When quotations or quoted titles are placed within quoted speech, use single quotation marks ('_') at the beginning and end of the inside quotations. Use double quotation marks ("_") at the beginning and end of the entire quotation. **Example:** The author asked, "Do you agree with Beth's statement that 'the case is closed?'" ("Energy Concerns" 8).

Direct quotations which include incorrect or non-standard spelling, word usage, mechanics, and grammar must include the bracketed *sic* [sic] after any spelling or grammar mistakes. **Examples:** "It seemed sily [sic], but that's how she orientated [sic] her thinking. Sad! [sic]"

An indirect quotation reports someone else's ideas without quoting each word. Indirect quotations don't include quotation marks, but must provide citations. **Example:** The author stated that cheetahs are the fastest animals (Perkins 52).

How to Memorize with the Grouping Strategy Lesson

The Grouping Strategy can be an effective tool to help you memorize items that are able to be placed into categories. We know from recent scientific research that our brains act much like computer file folders, slotting newly learned information in the same file as already-learned information that fits within that same file. If we take the time to organize new information in same way that our brains do, we can increase the amount of information that we are able to remember.

The groups we develop to remember similar items don't have to be organized by content. Any similarities can be used to classify items as a group. For example, a group of people could be classified according to sex, body size, color of skin, eye or hair color, or introverted-extroverted. For another example, in history you could classify information into these categories: politics/government, economics, culture, religion, military, and technology.

Let's learn how to use the Grouping Strategy to remember a list of nine items. You are driving into work and your friend phones to tell you that you've been invited to go on a backpacking trip next weekend. "Sure, I'll remember what to bring," you respond to your friend. The equipment list includes the following: tent, flashlight, stove, matches, sleeping bag, fuel, utensils, ground cloth, and food. **Stop and re-read the last sentence; try to memorize the items; recite (without looking); and count how many items you were able to remember.**

How many items did you remember? There are nine items to take on that camping trip. Most of you probably missed a few. But, now, let's take a few moments to apply the Grouping Memorization Strategy to remember the items in this list. First, simply categorize the items into groups such as these:

Sleeping: sleeping bag, tent, ground cloth

Light/Fire: matches, stove, flashlight, fuel

Eating: food, utensils

Next, re-read the first group and close your eyes to visualize how the items are pictured together. Do the same for the second and third groups. Now try to recite all nine items. Works, doesn't it? But what if some items don't fit into the groups you form to memorize a list? A few exceptions would be easier to remember than memorizing the entire list as random, unrelated items.

For abstract concepts, try substituting them with concrete objects. For example, it is easier to substitute and place the concrete *Liberty Bell* into a group than the abstract concept of freedom.

Memorizing using the **Grouping Strategy** will help you memorize many seemingly unrelated items. Frequent rehearsal of the groups and their items will place the information into your long-term memory. Take the information learned in your subjects or classes each day and organize it into memorable test-preparation form with this strategy.

How to Dissect a Writing Prompt Lesson



Step 1: Dissect the Writing Prompt

Directions

1. Carefully read the **Writing Prompt** and the definition of the key **Essay Direction Word**.

Writing Prompt

Both the Abominable Snowman and the Loch Ness Monster have interested curious-minded people for years. The question of whether either creature really exists is probably still unanswered. Compare and contrast the evidence for the existence of these creatures found in this blog post and magazine article excerpt.

Essay Direction Word: *Compare* means to show how things are the same, and *contrast* means to show how things are different.

2. Next, re-read the **Writing Prompt** and use the following symbols or color highlight to mark the words that fit into these categories:

WHO, WHAT, HOW, DO

WHO

Underline any words which identify the audience and the role of the writer.

WHAT

Circle any words which identify the topic and format of the writing task.

[HOW]

Bracket any words which identify the context, author(s), and source(s).

DO

Box any words which identify key writing direction words.

Now put the **Writing Prompt** into your own words.

How to Organize Formal Outline Notes Lesson

Two types of formal outline notes are frequently used to organize information: the alphanumeric and decimal outlines.

Alphanumeric Outlines use numbers, letters, and periods to organize information. The first letter of the word, group of words, or sentence that follows each symbol is capitalized.

- Main ideas present the key informational sections of the lecture, video, or textbook topic and are listed as Roman numerals on the left margin and are followed by periods.
Examples: I. II. III. IV. V. VI. VII. VIII. IX. X.
- Major details are listed as capital letters, followed by periods, and are indented on the lines below the main ideas. Major details *modify* the main ideas. *Modify* means to describe, change, or limit. **Examples:** A., B., C.
- The first minor detail modifies the major detail and is double indented on the next line. It begins with the Arabic numeral 1 and is followed by a period.
- The second minor detail is double indented on the next line and listed as 2.
- If examples are used to discuss minor details, use lowercase letters.

Decimal Outlines use numbers to organize information. The first letter of the word, group of words, or sentence that follows each symbol is capitalized.

- Decimal Outlines begin with an Arabic numeral followed by a period and then a zero to represent the first main idea.
- The first major detail is indented from the main idea. It repeats the Arabic numeral followed by a period and then a "1." The second major detail would end in a "2," etc.
- The first minor detail is indented from the major detail. It repeats all the symbols of the major detail followed by a period and then a "1." The second minor detail would end in a "2," etc. **Examples:** 1.0, 1.1, 1.1.1, 1.1.2; 1.2, 1.2.1, 1.2.2

Practice: Apply what you have learned to fill in the blanks in both outlines.

Alphanumeric Outline Example

- I. Ice cream
 - A. Chocolate base flavors
 - 1. _____
 - 2. Rocky road
 - a. Peanuts
 - b. Marshmallows
 - B. Fruity flavors
 - 1. Strawberry
 - 2. Cherry
- II. Sherbet
 - A. Orange
 - B. Pineapple
 - C. _____

Decimal Outline Example

- 1.0 Cake
 - 1.1 Layer cake
 - 1.1.1 Fudge filling
 - 1.1.2 Fruit filling
 - 1.2 _____
 - 1.3 Bundt cake
 - 1.3.1 Cinnamon and sugar
 - 1.3.2 Apples and cloves
 - 1.3.3 Honey and raisin
- 2.0 Pie
 - 2.1 Fruit
 - 2.1.1 Blueberry
 - 2.1.2 _____
 - 2.2 Cream
 - 2.2.1 Chocolate
 - 2.2.2 _____

How to Use Grammatical Sentence Openers for Sentence Variety Lesson

One of the best ways to improve your writing style is to improve the variety of your sentence structures. Professional writers vary the subject-verb-object pattern with other grammatical sentence structures. A simple guideline for good sentence variety would be 50% subject-verb-object sentence openers and 50% other grammatical sentence openers. Revise each of the examples that follow by starting each sentence with the grammatical sentence openers.

Prepositional Phrase

Start with a phrase beginning with one of these common prepositions:

aboard, about, above, according to, across, after, against, along, among, around, as, as to, at, before, behind, below, beneath, beside, between, beyond, but, by, despite, down, during, except, for, from, in, inside, instead of, into, in place of, in spite of, like, near, next, of, off, on, onto, outside, out of, over, past, regardless of, since, than, through, throughout, to, toward, under, underneath, unlike, until, up, upon, with, within, without

Example: He found the missing watch behind the cabinet.

Revision: _____

Adverbial Clause

Start a dependent clause (a noun and verb that does not express a complete thought) with one of the following subordinating conjunctions:

after, although, as, as if, as long as, as much as, as soon as, as though, because, before, even if, even though, how, if, in order that, once, since, so that, then, that, though, unless, until, when, whenever, where, wherever, whether, or while.

Example: Lake Tahoe is fun in the summer, although it is best known for its winter activities.

Revision: _____

d, __ed, or __en Verbs

Start with a __d or an __en verb that acts as an adjective to modify a following noun or pronoun.

Example: I was frightened by the noise, so I got out of my bed to investigate.

Revision: _____

__ing Verbs and Nouns

Start a phrase with an __ing word that acts as an adjective or with an __ing word that serves as the subject of the sentence.

Example (Adjective): The climber fell rapidly, but hoped that the rope would hold.

Revision: _____

Example (Sentence Subject): The chef tastes the sauce and it always makes him hungry.

Revision: _____

How to Revise Non-Standard Usage Lesson

Non-standard English often differs from Standard English because of regional or cultural dialects. We also speak Standard English and Non-standard English in different social situations. You probably talk to your teacher differently than how you talk to your friends. We call this *code switching*. Following are examples of non-standard English for you to code-switch and revise.

Substitutions: Don't substitute *be* for *am*, *are*, or *is* to create an ongoing action in Standard English. **Example:** He be so funny. Instead, use *am*, *are*, or *is* to connect to a present participle (a verb with an “__ing” ending). **Revision:** He is being so funny.

Don't substitute *of* for *have* in modal forms. **Example:** I could of run. Also, don't mis-match plural and singular “to be” verbs with their subjects. **Example:** I were sad. **Revision:** I was sad.

Revise these substitutions: I be given some food, but I still were hungry. I could of eaten more.

Deletions: Don't drop verbs or parts of verbs. **Examples:** She ~~nice~~ (is nice), but I ~~been~~ (had been) nice to her first. ~~Who~~ Who is she? Revise these deletions: Where you at? I told you it needs fixed before you leave.

Additions: Avoid using additions. Don't add the *of* or *on* prepositions when unnecessary. **Examples:** Get off ~~of~~ my couch. Don't blame ~~on~~ me for that.

Avoid using the object case pronoun as a reflexive pronoun. **Example:** I got me a sandwich. **Revisions:** I got myself a sandwich. or I got a sandwich.

Revise these non-standard additions: All of the students knew what to do in an emergency. We pulled the alarm ~~on~~ accident, and we got us a detention.

Double Negatives: When writing in Standard English, do *not* use double negatives. **Example:** Don't use ~~no~~ double negatives in English.

Revise these non-standard double negatives: She doesn't ask for no help never.

Confused Verb Forms: Non-standard English often confuses verb forms. Don't substitute a past participle (a verb ending in “__ed,” “__d,” “__t,” or “__en” for regular verbs) for the simple past tense. **Example:** He given his best effort. **Revision:** He gave his best effort.

English often has irregular past participle verb forms and these can be confused with the simple past tense in Non-standard English. **Example:** She ~~gone~~ went crazy.

Revise these confused verb forms: She spoken her own truth, but I knowed what she done.

How to Use Multiple Choice Test-taking Strategies Lesson

Learning how to maximize your scores on multiple-choice tests will significantly increase your over-all test scores. Multiple-choice sections are found on both teacher-constructed and standardized tests from elementary school through college. Here are the tips to “ace” any multiple-choice section on your next test.

1. **Read the numbered test problem or question twice**, being alert for little change words, such as *not*. Try to predict the correct answer before you look at the choices offered. This will provide a mind-set for evaluating the answer choices before you begin to answer. This process also helps to unlock your prior knowledge about the subject that you learned in test study and from experiences in your own life. Many students find it helpful to cover up the answer choices with one hand to make sure that they complete this first step.
2. **Read all answer choices** before selecting an answer. Test-takers frequently say that this strategy helps eliminate rushing through a test and answering impulsively. Students find it helpful to read the answer choices “up from the bottom” to ensure that they read each choice.
3. Use the **process of elimination**. If possible, cross off incorrect answer choices to permit strategic guessing. The fewer the answer choices, the greater is the likelihood of a correct answer selection.
4. **Look for grammatical clues** to help match. The numerical test problem or question must match the answer choice. For example, singular must match singular and plural must match plural; also, verb tenses must match.
5. The answer should match the **language** of the test problem or question (positive to positive, negative to negative, grammar, singular or plural, vocabulary level of difficulty).
6. Two **close-sounding or looking answers** such as “quotient” and “quotation” or 22 and 222 tend to mean that one of the answers is correct.
7. On math tests, if answers cover a wide range, choose the one in the **middle**, if you have to guess. For example, if answers range from A. 14 B. 234 C. 1,655 D. 243, choose B or D.
8. Answer choices that have “Both A and B”, “None of the Above,” or “All the Above,” or similar tend to be correct.
9. If you must guess, the **second to last answer choice** is most frequently correct. The last answer is most frequently incorrect. This strategy only works on teacher-constructed tests.
10. If an **Absolute Word** such as the following: all, only, every, completely, none, always, never, best, worst, absolutely is found in an answer choice, the answer choice tends to be incorrect because these words do not allow for exceptions.
11. If an **Exception Word** such as the following: some, often, usually, most, sometimes, frequently, often, usually, maybe, many, generally, partially is found in an answer choice, the answer choice tends to be correct because these words do allow for exceptions.
12. Finally, make sure to **guess**, if not sure of your answer choice.