ITA
International Teachers Association

Module 4 : Reading and Writing

Reading

4.1 Developing reading skills
4.2 Auditory and visual discrimination
4.3 Forming associations
4.4 Decoding
4.5 Reading for purpose

4.1 Developing reading skills

Imagine that teaching a student to read in a new language is like building a house

4.1.1 Beginning to read

Phonemic awareness: We discussed phonemes in detail in the previous module when we reviewed linguistics, but it is important to also mention phonemic awareness here because it is such an important part of the reading process. To help your students improve their phonemic awareness, you will expect your students to be able identify, understand, and manipulate phonemes. Helping your students gain phonemic awareness will give them the ability to break down and learn new words by themselves.

- Phonemes are unique to each language, so your students may have difficulty adjusting to learning new ones. They will likely need help understanding the structure of new phonemes and understanding how to sound them out.
- Your students may naturally think of the phonemes in their native language, which could be in direct contrast with English phonemes. If you are aware of phonemes in your students' native languages, you can use this to your advantage. Otherwise, it may be a good idea to try to train them to avoid this kind of thinking.
- Making the process of improving phonemic awareness more fun and active is an effective way to increase engagement and understanding. Try activities that turn phonemic awareness into a game or require your students to get up, move around, and be active.

4.1.2 Beginning to read

Phonics:

Learning the alphabet:

Letter-sound correlation:

Concepts of print: Some of

The English language is read from left to right.

- The English language is read from top to bottom.
- Letters and words convey messages.
- When you get to the end of a line (on the right), you need to return to the beginning of the next line (on the left).
- The illustrations in a book correspond to the words written there.

4.1.3 Advanced reading skills

Once your students have built up confidence with the basics of reading, your next step is to help them develop proficiency in more advanced reading skills.

Summarizing: Summarizing is an extremely important skill because it helps your students bridge the gap between understanding the words they are reading and understanding the meaning that those words are trying to convey.

Finding the main idea, important facts, and supporting details: While summarizing usually requires a student to understand the main idea of a text, it is still important to discuss this separately. Once students have summarized the text, you can ask questions that get to the main idea, for example, “What is the point that the writer is trying to make?”

Sequencing: Sequencing asks students to take a step beyond summarizing the text. Whereas summarizing the text concerns itself with simply understanding what happened, sequencing requires students to label, categorize, and compartmentalize what happens in the text.

Relating background knowledge: It is always helpful when working with students who are trying to learn a new language that you relate what they are learning to their background knowledge.

4.1.4 Advanced reading skills

Making inferences
Making inferences means reading between the lines and accessing meaning that is not explicitly stated. For example, if a man were to walk into the room, closing an umbrella, you would infer that it was raining outside.

Drawing conclusions:

Comparing and contrasting: Comparing and contrasting is the next step along the line of textual analysis. To compare and contrast two texts, a reader needs to understand the purpose of the text as well as the strategies that a writer uses to convey meaning. This skill can be extremely useful, as it easily lends itself to having students identify which text is more effective.

Distinguishing between fact and opinion:
Self-questioning: As your students get more comfortable with reading texts on their own, it is time to get them into the habit of reading actively. People tend to think of reading as a passive activity because it is done quietly, but to really understand a text, you need to constantly question what is going on. Having your students use annotations to express their self-questioning will help them get into the habit of asking questions as they read.

Problem solving: While problem solving is a cognitive skill, asking our students to solve problems in English can be complicated even for students who are natural problem solvers.

4.2 Auditory and visual discrimination

Both auditory and visual discrimination refer to our ability to perceive and distinguish between different elements. The best way to understand these two concepts is by looking at each one individually.

4.2.1 Auditory discrimination

Auditory discrimination refers to our brain's ability to organize and categorize sounds, thereby allowing us to make meaning of what we hear. While auditory refers to sounds and reading is typically done silently, the ability to distinguish between different sounds (phonemes) can affect our ability to sound out and identify vocabulary. The inability to effectively access one's auditory discrimination can impair someone's reading tremendously, especially when students are asked to read out loud. If someone has trouble with auditory discrimination, they will have trouble:

- Understanding phonemes and how they are different. This is especially true with phonemes that are similar, as we can see in the words "forty" and "fourteen." The subtle changes in the structure of these words may be difficult for someone who has poor auditory discrimination to perceive.
- Learning to read. As we have already discussed, many of the early reading strategies rely heavily on a student's ability to understand and distinguish between different sounds. This can add an extra hurdle for a new English language learner.
- Sometimes, struggles with auditory discrimination can affect students' ability to focus on what they are reading because they have difficulty blocking out background noise.

Just because someone suffers from an auditory discrimination disorder, however, does not mean they cannot learn a new language. Such a disorder simply provides a surmountable obstacle on the path to success.

4.2.2 Visual discrimination

Visual discrimination refers to an individual's ability to distinguish between letters, shapes, numbers, and objects. While both are important, visual discrimination is much more impactful on an individual's ability to read than auditory discrimination. Auditory discrimination affects an individual's ability to sound out words, but visual discrimination affects an individual's ability to recognize which letters he or she is seeing.

- The student has trouble identifying letters and learning the alphabet. The difficulty will be in recognizing the letters rather than being unable to remember what they are called.
- Difficulty telling the difference between similar letters (e.g., b and d), similar numbers (e.g., 6 and 9), and/or similar shapes (e.g., circles and ovals).

Difficulty differentiating between words that have similar beginnings or endings.

Visual discrimination issues, just like auditory discrimination issues, can be overcome, but reading is much more difficult for people with visual discrimination disorders. Here are some potential classroom exercises that you can use to help students who struggle with visual discrimination disorders or deficiencies.

- Using visuals that are bright and colorful to help students work on distinguishing between clear shapes and colors.
- Using digital tools such as a laptop or tablet that can help make working on visual discrimination fun for the students.
- Make learning about visual discrimination fun by using games or puzzles that require the student to differentiate shapes or letters.

4.3 Forming associations

Very early on in the process of learning to read, students need to learn to form associations between sounds (phonemes) and letters/words. This process is paramount to a student understanding how English speakers turn sounds into words and how English words convey meaning.

Here are the basic principles behind teaching a student how to form strong letter/sound associations:

- Assessment:
- Sequential and systematic instruction:
- Teach explicitly:
- Do not focus just on reading:

4.4 Decoding

Once you have your students form strong associations between letters and sounds, the next step is decoding, which refers to displaying those associations by turning written words into speech rapidly.

4.4.1 Common questions about decoding

Why is decoding important?

Decoding is important because it is the basis for most reading comprehension skills. An inability to decode words leads to an inability to identify and understand vocabulary, a difficulty building fluency, and difficulty with overall reading comprehension.

How can you tell if a student is struggling with decoding?

Students who are having trouble decoding often believe they are stuck, or reading is something they are bad at.

Here are some symptoms to look out for to identify students who are struggling:

- The student feels stuck when they need to read a lot of words because they cannot focus enough on any one word.
- Students spend so much energy trying to decode the words they are reading and say them properly that they are not comprehending what they read. I
- The student complains that they simply “do not know” how to sound out words. This is usually a sign of frustration
- The student can identify letters and sounds and even the relationship between the two but struggles putting them all together in a short amount of time.

Remember that these observations can reflect anything from a student struggling a little with a new skill to a student having a learning disability that is inhibiting their ability to decode words.

4.4.2 Common questions about decoding

How do I teach decoding to my students?

Here are some simple ways that you can help your students improve their decoding skills in your classroom:

- When you are teaching a sound, use visuals to prompt the students to reinforce their knowledge of sounds, and ask the students to say the sound out loud as practice.
- Use phonics to drill the students and give them more and more practice with sounding out phonemes and building to sounding out words.
- Use relevant reading and writing assignments that relate to what you are teaching.
- Don’t be afraid to use methods that will ask students to use their hands.

Try grouping your student homogeneously so that you can address specific problems or struggles in pockets of students and make your job a little easier. This leads to more individualized instruction and ensures that all of your students are growing and not that the children who understand the material are constantly waiting around for the others to catch up.

4.5 Reading for purpose

Now that your students have learned and mastered the basics of reading, it is time to move towards higher-level thinking, which means reading for purpose.

Let's take a look at some simple strategies that will help your students read with purpose more effectively.

- Teach your students to be reflective about their own reading. Reading is an active skill, not just a passive occurrence. If a child loves playing basketball, he cannot expect to just sit on the court and let basketball happen; he needs to try. The same principle applies to reading. Encourage your students to be aware of their reading, what works for them, what helps them, and then to have the follow-through to do what they need to do to read more effectively.
- Make sure that your students understand the purpose for which they are reading something. If you take a passage completely out of context, it is not going to make much sense, so give your students some context whenever you give them something to read. Ask them to look for something specific, give them guiding questions, or even just let them know why the piece is relevant to the curriculum.
- Invite the students in on the process of setting a purpose. Encourage them to question the text and really delve into it to get meaning. Then encourage them to identify their own purpose (with proper guidance, of course). When students have a role in the planning process, they tend to be more invested in lessons.
- Model active reading for your students. So many teachers like to tell their students to annotate a piece but don't like to show them what that means. A good way to do this is to take the first section of whatever you are going to have them read and go over it as a class. As you go, show them how you would annotate the piece, what kinds of questions you would ask, and when you would underline or highlight words, phrases, or sentences. This will help them visualize what they are supposed to do.

If you are able to take a student who does not know English from sounding out letters to reading actively and fluently, you'll know you have been successful.

Writing

4.1 Sentence structure
4.2 Grammar
4.3 Informative and explanatory writing
4.4 Persuasive writing

4.1 Sentence structure

Here are the five basic sentence patterns that your students will encounter in the English language:

Subject-verb (S-V): This is the simplest sentence pattern in the English language, only containing the information that needs to be there. Here are a few examples of sentences that follow the subject-verb pattern:

- Mark ran.
- Maria slept.
- The dog plays.
- Jimmy fell.

Subject-verb-object (S-V-O): Sentences that follow this pattern are very similar to S-V sentences except that an object has been added to the sentence. In an English sentence, the object is what is being acted upon by the subject. In other words, the noun (subject) is acting (verb) upon another noun (object). Here are a few examples of sentences that follow the subject-verb-object pattern:

- Mark ran to the store
- Maria slept in bed.
- The dog plays outside.
- Jimmy fell to the floor.

Subject-verb-adjective (S-V-Adj): This sentence pattern is similar to S-V-O except that the object is not a noun; it is an adjective. Since an object must be a noun or an entity that is being acted upon, when the verb acts as a state of being to set up a description of the subject, you get an S-V-Adj sentence. Here are a few examples of sentences that follow the subject-verb-adjective pattern:

- Mark is hungry.
- Maria was tired.
- The dog looks playful.

- Jimmy seems clumsy.

Subject-verb-adverb (S-V-Adv): To the untrained eye, this sentence pattern is the same as the previous one, S-V-Adj. The difference between that pattern and this pattern, however, is that while that structure saw the object turning into an adjective, this one sees it turning into an adverb. In other words, the verb no longer acts as a state of being to set up a description of the subject, but rather the words following the verb act as modifiers to the verb. Here are a few examples of sentences that follow the subject-verb-adverb pattern:

- Mark ran quickly.
- Maria slept peacefully.
- The dog plays loudly.
- Jimmy fell disastrously.

Subject-verb-noun (S-V-N): As you already know, the object of a pattern has to be a noun. Just because there is a noun following the verb, however, does not mean that it is the object of the sentence. In this sentence structure, the noun is not the object because, as with S-V-Adj, the words following the verb describe the subject. Here are a few examples of sentences that follow the subject-verb pattern:

- Mark is the store owner.
- Maria is a doctor.
- The dog was a corgi.
- Jimmy became a lawyer.

4.1.3 Clauses

Every sentence has at least one clause in it

Dependent clause (subordinating clause): This is exactly what it sounds like: a clause (or group of words containing a subject and a verb) that is dependent on other clauses. In other words, a dependent clause would not work alone as a sentence because it needs another clause for it to make sense. An example of a dependent clause is “because the world is ending.” The only thing that makes this clause dependent is the word “because,” which adds the implication of cause and effect to the sentence. We see the cause, but we need the effect to complete the sentence.

Independent clause: An independent clause is a clause (group of words containing a subject and a verb) that can exist by itself and be a complete thought and therefore complete sentence. Every sentence contains an independent clause, and all simple sentences are made up of one independent clause. An example of an independent

clause is “They went down to the bomb shelter.” The absence of subordinating word (“because” in the dependent clause) makes this sentence work as a complete thought.

If we combine the two clauses, one dependent and one independent, in the previous example, we get a complex sentence.

4.1.4 Basic sentence structure:

With dependent and independent clauses under our belts, we can turn our attention back to sentence structure and look closely at how these clauses can work together to create and convey meaning.

Simple sentence: A simple sentence contains one independent clause that stands alone as a complete thought. This is the most basic type of sentence and creates the structure for more complex sentences. Here is an example of a sentence that follows the simple sentence structure:
Bobby drove his car to the store.

Compound sentence: A compound sentence is a sentence that contains two or more independent clauses. These clauses could stand alone if they needed to but have been combined because they are related to each other. Here is an example of a sentence that follows the compound sentence structure:

Bobby drove his car and Mark read the directions

Complex sentence: A complex sentence includes an independent clause and one or more dependent clauses. This means that within the sentence are subject-verb pairs that would not be able to stand alone as a complete thought. Here is an example of a sentence that follows the complex sentence structure:

Bobby drove his car to the store to buy gum.

In this example, we have borrowed the simple sentence and added a dependent clause “to buy gum.” The subject (“Bobby”) is implied by the independent clause, and this dependent clause cannot stand alone and make sense.

Compound-complex sentence: A compound-complex sentence includes at least two independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses, essentially combining the elements of a compound sentence with the elements of a complex sentence. Here is an example of a sentence that follows the compound-complex sentence structure:

Bobby drove his car and Mark read the directions when they went to the store.

4.2 Grammar

Understanding sentence structure is a key aspect of grammar, but there are many other grammatical rules that are important for your students to know and understand. As you may already know, grammar is the set of rules for the English language. While we do not have the time to discuss every grammar rule in this section, we will cover the basics and make sure that your students have a good basis of knowledge from which to work, and that they understand how to create sentences that are grammatically correct and convey the meaning they are intending. We have already discussed the parts of speech in a previous module, but now we will look at those parts of speech in more detail and discuss some of the rules regarding how to use them.

4.2.1 Nouns (1 of 3)

As we discussed in an earlier module, a noun is a person, place, thing, or idea. Here are some different types of nouns:

Proper nouns: The names of specific places, people, or things.
Common nouns: General or colloquial names.
Concrete nouns: People, places, or things that are tangible.
Abstract nouns: Ideas that are intangible.

Nouns can be tricky because the term encompasses many different types of words. When using nouns, one of the grammatical rules you need to look out for most is whether or not you should pluralize a noun and how to do so.

When does a noun get pluralized?

Not every noun has a plural form because it does not always make sense for there to be more than one of something. Count nouns refer to nouns that can be counted, such as “cup,” “table,” and “monkey.” These nouns represent a specific object that there can be more than one of. Non-count nouns are nouns that cannot be counted because they already represent a group of objects or a type of object. For example, “water” is a non-count noun because you cannot look at the ocean and count the water.

4.2.2 Nouns (2 of 3)

How do I pluralize a noun?

The rules for pluralizing a noun are fairly simple, but since there are many nouns that do not fit into any of these rules, the task of pluralizing can be taxing. Here is a basic rundown of the general rules:

- Most nouns are made plural simply by adding an “s.”
  - Cup - Cups
  - Egg - Eggs
  - Joke - Jokes
  - Mask – Masks
- Nouns ending in “ch,” “x,” “s,” require the addition of “es” at the end.
  - Bench - Benches
  - Box - Boxes
  - Class – Classes
- Nouns ending in “f” or “fe” require you to change the “f” or “fe” to a “v,” and add an “es.”
  - Calf - Calves
  - Half - Halves
  - Knife – Knives
- Some nouns do not follow any rules for pluralizing, and your students will simply have to learn them.
  - Child - Children
  - Mouse - Mice
  - Woman – Women
- Some count nouns are the same whether they are singular or plural.
  - Moose - Moose
  - Deer - Deer
  - Species - Species

4.2.3 Nouns (3 of 3)

Possessive nouns: Because nouns represent people, places, things, and ideas, they sometimes need to be possessive to show that the person, place, thing, or idea owns or is in possession of something. Possession is usually marked by an apostrophe (’) and follows these rules:

- You can make most nouns possessive simply by adding an apostrophe and then an “s” at the end of the word.
  - Mark – Mark’s
  - Dog – dog’s
  - Boy – boy’s

- When you come across a plural noun that ends in “s” or a noun that already ends in “s,” you can make it possessive by simply adding an apostrophe.
  - Boys – boys’
  - Class – class’
  - Dogs – dogs’
- If you have one item, but you would like to express that two different people or things own it, you would add an apostrophe and an “s” after the last person’s name.
  - Bill and Frank’s new house
  - Boxer and Spot’s toy
  - Sally and Ann’s car.
- If the objects owned by two different people are separate things, then you should add an apostrophe and an “s” at the end of each name.
  - Bobby’s and Mary’s wedding rings are gold.
  - Jill’s and Samantha’s jobs are difficult.
  - Jean’s and Yancy’s tables are both oak.

4.2.4 Pronouns and antecedents

Pronouns are important in writing because they take the place of a noun to make the writing less repetitive and choppy. To illustrate this idea, take a look at an example of a written excerpt that does not use pronouns:

Mike grabbed Mike’s shirt and went to find Mike’s mom to tell Mike’s mom that Mike’s mom needed to leave right away because Mike and Mike’s Mom were in danger.

Now, let’s use pronouns:

Mike grabbed his shirt and went to find his mom to tell her that they needed to leave right away because they were in danger.

Clearly, the second example sounds much better and gets the point across without reusing the original nouns.

The major point that your students need to understand about pronouns besides the different types that exist (which we will discuss in this section) is that every pronoun needs an antecedentor a noun that it is taking the place of. The only exception is indefinite pronouns, which replace vague nouns, such as “all” or “some.”

Look again at the second example above, which contains pronouns. Each of those pronouns has an antecedent, which you can see in the first example. Let’s rewrite the second example, but this time we will include the antecedent to each pronoun in parentheses:

Mike grabbed his (Mike's) shirt and went to go find his (Mike's) mom to tell her (Mike's mom) that they (Mike and Mike's mom) needed to leave right away because they (Mike and Mike's mom) were in danger.

When a pronoun does not have a clear antecedent, the writing becomes very confusing, and it should distinguish who is doing what. Here is an example of a sentence with unclear antecedents. Note how difficult it is to understand who the sentence is truly talking about:

Mark, John, and Billy went to the mall because he needed a new shirt. When they arrived, he ran to the clothing store, and he ran after him, trying to keep up, while he hung back and headed to the food court.

Because the antecedents are unclear, you could not tell me which boy went to the store, which boy chased after him, and which boy went to the food court.

4.2.5 Types of pronouns

People often have trouble understanding the different types of pronouns, so your students may have trouble with it as well. Let's look at the nine different types of pronouns:

Personal: A personal pronoun is a pronoun that refers to a person. This is the most common type of pronoun, and for it to work in a sentence, it needs to have a clear antecedent that it agrees with (male nouns need male pronouns). Examples: "I," "he," "she," "me."
Possessive: Possessive pronouns are personal pronouns that convey ownership. These pronouns not only need an antecedent but also need to be followed by a noun (the thing that is possessed by the pronoun). Examples: "my carrots," "his book," "their time."
Indefinite: Indefinite pronouns can be a little complicated because they take the place of nouns that are not exactly clear. In other words, these pronouns will not have a clear antecedent. It is important to note, however, that if these types of pronouns are used to show possession, they are actually adjectives. Examples: "Everybody wants to go to the mall," "Somebody took my juice."
Reflexive: Reflexive pronouns usually occur at the end of a sentence or clause and reflect back to the subject of the sentence. Examples: "I am going to get a soda for myself," "What do you have to say for yourselves?"
Reciprocal: A reciprocal is exactly like a reflexive pronoun except that they refer to two subjects doing something to or for each other. The only two reciprocal pronouns in the English language are "each other" and "one another." Examples: "John and Tim are in the library quizzing each other," "Maria and Jenny are helping one another with laundry."

Intensive: Intensive pronouns are exactly the same as reflexive pronouns except they can be removed from a sentence without changing the meaning or rendering the sentence incomplete. Examples: “He is going to do the work himself.”
Interrogative: Interrogative pronouns are pronouns that are used in a question. Examples: “Who took the candy?,” “Which door is it?”
Relative: A relative pronoun is a pronoun that connects a phrase or a clause to a pronoun or a noun. Examples: “I am going to get whoever stole my bag,” “I am going to take whichever door leads to the bathroom.”
Demonstrative: Demonstrative pronouns take the place of specific nouns and are typically used when the speaker or narrator is talking about a specific object. Examples: “This is the Captain’s wine,” “That candy belongs to her.”

4.2.6 Verbs

Along with nouns, verbs are part of the two most important parts of a sentence, so it is important that your students know how to use them and the rules that govern English verbs. Verbs are extremely complicated because there are so many different little rules governing how verbs are used, but they can be generally broken down into three categories: transitive, intransitive, and linking. We will look at each of these types to help your students have a sense of how verbs work.

Transitive verbs: A transitive verb is a verb that exists in a sentence with an object. The subject of the sentence is doing something to something else.

Brian hit the ball, and ran to first.

Both “hit” and “ran” are transitive in this sentence because they have objects. In the first clause, it is clear that the ball (object) has been hit (transitive verb). In the second clause, it is clear that first base (object) is being run to (transitive verb).

Intransitive verbs: An intransitive verb is a verb that does not take an object, and rather describes an action or state of being that is not acting upon something else.

Because the food was not free, she left.

While she is leaving whatever place she is in, the object does not need to be expressed because the intransitive verb “left” is enough to describe the action.

Linking verbs: These verbs link the subject to the rest of the sentence when the verb is not describing something being acted upon.

These avocados seem like they have not ripened yet.

The subject of the sentence (these avocados) is not acting upon anything else, so “seem” is a linking verb, describing their relationship to the rest of the sentence.

4.3 Informative and explanatory writing

Now that your students have a decent handle on sentence structure and grammar, it is time to learn how to write to convey meaning. In the next two sections, we will explore the most common types of writing they will come across in their lives. First, we will start with informative and explanatory writing, an extremely helpful tool for individuals in a number of different professions.

Informative and explanatory writing involves researching or analyzing a topic that is already generally accepted to be true. Unlike persuasive writing, there is no argument but rather an exploration of why or how something is what it is. This is why informative and explanatory is the most common type of writing that your students will find in their careers; more careers are focused on explaining and exploring the nature of things rather than creating an argument. To illustrate this point, here is a brief list of the different applications for informative and explanatory writing:

Definition: In this type of writing, your students will have to define a topic and explain it in detail. Potential practical application: Your student works in an office, and the sales team is going to try to land a new client that works with industrial refrigeration parts. The boss asks your student to provide a report on industrial refrigeration parts so that the sales team is prepared when they pitch the client.

Breaking something into parts: In this type of writing, your student will have a topic that is generally understood but needs to be understood in more detail. To do this, he or she can break it into parts and/or types to make it more palatable for the reader. Potential practical application: Your student works for a team that is in charge of creating new programs and projects for their company. The project team comes up with an idea they need to pitch to their boss. Your student is tasked with writing a breakdown of the project, e.g., detailing what each department will be responsible for, how much it will cost, and how much revenue it will generate.

Describing behavior or function: In this type of writing, your student will have to explore how something behaves and/or functions. Potential practical application: Your student works for a zoo that is going to receive a new animal in three weeks that they have never accommodated before. Your student is asked to write a report on how the animal behaves and what kind of accommodations it will need.

Explaining why: In this type of writing, your student will have to explore why a generally held opinion or fact is true. Potential practical application: Your student works for a museum that is about to have an exhibit on dinosaurs. Your student is tasked with writing a report for why dinosaurs became extinct so that the museum can inform its guests.

4.4 Persuasive writing

While persuasive writing is generally less utilized in most careers than informative and explanatory writing, it is still an extremely important genre that can help your students in many different aspects of their life. From trying to convince your boss that you deserve a raise to trying to convince your colleagues that a new idea will work, persuasive writing can be very powerful. Unlike informative and explanatory writing, persuasive writing explores a topic or an idea that is not already widely accepted and creates an argument for why it should be. Rather than discuss the different types of persuasive writing, we will focus this section on how to craft an argument by focusing on the most important aspects of an argument.

Thesis: While experts will argue on where a thesis is most effective in a persuasive argument, they will all agree that a thesis is important. A thesis statement is a short (one or two sentences) summary of the writer's position and serves as the main idea for the piece of writing. A strong thesis statement provides the writing with a focus and gives the writer a frame of reference for the rest of his or her argument.

Organization: An argument needs to be carefully organized to be as effective as possible. This means that the writer needs to constantly think about the thesis and how the argument is connecting back to it. Proper organization helps the argument flow and eases the reader through the writer's ideas.

Support: An argument is not complete without strong support. Whether the support comes in the form of direct textual evidence, facts, or the opinions of respected professionals, it gives the reader a reason to believe your claims. The support serves as an assurance to your reader that you are not coming up with this argument off the top of your head, but rather that there is evidence to support what you are trying to convince the audience to believe.

Elaboration and Analysis: Your argument needs to explore the topic and why the support you have provided is worthwhile and relates back to the thesis. Without proper elaboration and analysis, your support will simply hang there limply and not be effective in convincing your audience.

Conclusion: Your conclusion should come with a summation of the rest of the argument to solidify your ideas in the readers' heads as well as a call to action or a last attempt to convince the audience to understand and/or believe your argument.

If your students can master these basic components of a strong argument, they will find it much easier to be convincing whenever they are trying to persuade.

Link to Exam