

Writing Strategy 10

Report the content information

Use indirect statements and strong verbs to report the content information in the reading passage and the lecture. Choose verbs for your report based on the point of view expressed by the author of the reading passage and the speaker presenting the lecture—doubtful, neutral, certain, or negative.

Doubtful Verbs	Neutral Verbs	Certain Verbs	Negative Verbs
allege	describe	argue	contradict the theory/idea/concept
assume	explain	assert	challenge the theory/idea/concept
believe	illustrate	conclude	deny the theory/idea/concept
claim	indicate	confirm	dispute the theory/idea/concept
imply	mention	contend	reject the theory/idea/concept
propose	note	demonstrate	
suggest	observe	discover	
suppose	point out	find	
suspect	report	maintain	
think	say	prove	
	show		
	state		

EXAMPLES

Content

1. New volcanoes are forming all of the time, usually in the same areas where existing volcanoes have already been found.

Certain Report

The lecturer contends that volcanoes are forming all of the time, usually in the same areas where existing volcanoes have already been found.

Content

2. Evidence from Harappi documents an Indus Valley Civilization that had a written language as early as 3,500 B.C.E.

Neutral Report

The reading passage explains that evidence from Harappi documents an Indus Valley Civilization that had a written language as early as 3,500 B.C.E.

Content

3. The brain is the only organ that is more active at night than during the day.

Doubtful Report

The lecturer claims that the brain is the only organ that is more active at night than during the day.

Content

4. Cave art reduced images to the most essential, stylized forms and eliminated most of the details.

Neutral Report

The lecturer observed that cave art reduced images to the most essential, stylized forms and eliminated most of the details.

Content

5. Genetic drift may occur by chance fluctuations in the gene pool.

Doubtful Report

The reading suggests that genetic drift may occur by chance fluctuations in the gene pool.

Content

6. Social stratification is functional for society because it guarantees that the most able members will be assigned to the most demanding positions.

Negative Report

The reading passage rejects the theory that stratification is functional for society because it guarantees that the most able members will be assigned to the most demanding positions.

Content

7. Immigration from abroad was not significant until the 1820s.

Certain Report

The lecture confirms that immigration from abroad was not significant until the 1820s.

Content

8. A nebula, which is a cloud of dust and gas, can span across many light years.

Certain Report

The lecturer argues that a nebula, which is a cloud of dust and gas, can span across many light years.

Content

9. Polygraph testing is accurate about two-thirds of the time.

Neutral Report

The reading passage reports that polygraph testing is accurate about two-thirds of the time.

Content

10. The basic design of the drum has remained virtually unchanged for thousands of years.

Certain Report

The reading passage asserts that the basic design of the drum has remained virtually unchanged for thousands of years.

Practice 10

First read the sentence to understand the information. Next, write a sentence that reports the content. Then compare your answers with the example answers in the Answer Key on pages 384–385.

1. Perceptions are based on larger units such as forms, figures, and contexts.

Negative Report

2. The similarity in the early developmental stages of all vertebrate embryos suggests a common ancestral form.

Neutral Report

3. In the Rococo period in Europe, architecture, sculpture, painting, and the decorative arts all exhibited a similar artistic style.

Certain Report

4. The problem with personality typologies is that they tend to disregard situational variables.

Neutral Report

5. Animal experimentation is not reliable because the underlying physiology of human beings is very different from that of lab animals.

Certain Report

6. Material aspects of culture are more readily diffused than ideas or abstractions, and even then, it is rare for something to be borrowed intact.

Doubtful Report

7. Craftsmen in colonial America used designs and techniques that were popular in England.

Certain Report

8. The experimental design for many of the studies in parapsychology is flawed.

Negative Report

9. About three billion years ago Mars changed from a hospitable planet to a frozen desert.

Doubtful Report

10. Dancing began as part of the rituals that were practiced by ancient societies.

Neutral Report

Basic Strategy: Internet iBT Integrated Essay

★**Bonus:** Internet iBT Speaking

It is important to be able to report the information from a lecture as well as from a reading passage. Both of these prompts appear in the integrated tasks on the Speaking and Writing sections.

Writing Strategy 11

Use academic language

Prefer language that provides the possibility for another point of view. Avoid words like *absolutely*, *certainly*, *definitely*, and *obviously* because they are very assertive for academic writing. Statements like *I am sure* or *I am positive* may sound aggressive. *Always* and *never* invite the reader to find an exception. Use language that allows for an impartial exchange of ideas. Four main types of words and phrases for academic writing are listed below.

Verbs	Modals	Adverbs		Adjectives
Assume	Can	Apparently	As a rule	feasible
Believe	Could	Basically	All things considered	likely
Claim	May	Essentially	For the most part	possible
Suggest	Might	Generally	In general	plausible
Tend	Would	Mainly	On the whole	probable
Think		Primarily	Perhaps	
It appears that		Probably	Somewhat	
It seems that		Usually		

EXAMPLES

Assertive

Cell phones definitely cause most accidents.

Obviously, life is easier now than it was in the past.

Class attendance must be required.

It is always important to be on time.

I am positive that a large university will offer a superior education to that of a small college.

I would never borrow money from a friend.

Academic

It appears that cell phones cause most accidents.

Life seems easier now than it was in the past.

Class attendance might be required.

It is usually important to be on time.

It is likely that a large university will offer a superior education to that of a small college.

I would probably not borrow money from a friend.

Practice 11

First read the sentence and decide whether it is too assertive. If it is okay, mark it with a check mark. If it needs to be changed, use one of the academic options to rewrite the sentence. Then compare your answers with the example answers in the Answer Key on page 386.

1. It is obvious that everyone should attend college.

2. The university administration should never assign roommates to students.

3. I am sure that paying teachers better salaries would improve their performance.

4. If I could study in another country for one year, I would probably choose Canada.

5. Tests always serve a beneficial purpose in education.

6. I tend to prefer traditional classroom instruction to new technological options.

7. I am certain that cooperation is better than competition in the classroom.

8. A large university is definitely a better choice than a small college.

9. Teachers probably assign more homework than necessary.

10. For the most part, learning should be fun.

Basic Strategy: Internet iBT Independent Essay and Institutional ITP Essay

★**Bonus:** Internet iBT Speaking

Assertive language is usually not appropriate in either academic speaking or academic writing.

Writing Strategy 12

Include a variety of sentence structures

You can add points to your score if you use different types of sentences in your essay, especially if you include compound and complex sentences. Even if your grammar is perfect, raters will not score your essay at the top range when all of the sentences are very simple and have the same structure. Be sure to consider variety and complexity when you write.

EXAMPLE ESSAY

According to the reading passage, sleep deprivation is common in our modern society. The amount of sleep required varies from person to person. One in five people fails to get enough sleep. Most people are working longer hours. Some people have two jobs. People lose sleep on a regular basis. They can suffer serious consequences. Relatively few studies have examined this important problem. The lecturer reported a research study. The research study was designed by graduate students at State University. They wanted to find out what happened to sleep-deprived college students. Researchers hypothesized that losing sleep would affect the students mentally and physically. The results confirmed the hypothesis. Sleep deprivation affected subjects in three ways. First, sleep deprivation affected their personalities. They became very irritable. For example, subjects with children lost patience more often. Small problems bothered them more than usual. Second, lack of sleep affected their cognitive processes. They made more mistakes. They performed tasks more slowly. In math tests, subjects received lower scores. They needed more time to complete them. Third, without enough sleep, subjects had physical problems. They were not as coordinated. Scores on computer games were lower. Scores were still lower with more time to finish the games. The immune systems of a significant number of subjects were depressed. They reported more sick days. They had more colds. In conclusion, getting enough sleep is important. It helps maintain good mental and physical health.

RATER COMMENTS: 3

This essay summarizes the reading passage. It is well organized, without grammatical errors. However, all of the sentences followed a similar pattern—simple sentence structure. This essay would have been excellent if the writer had used a variety of sentences, and had *demonstrated the* ability to use more complex sentences.

EXAMPLE ESSAY REVISED

According to the reading passage, sleep deprivation is common in our modern society. Although the amount of sleep required varies from person to person, one in five people fails to get enough sleep. Most people are working longer hours, and some people have two jobs. If people lose sleep on a regular basis, they can suffer serious consequences. However, relatively few studies have examined this important problem. The lecturer reported a research study, which was designed by graduate students at State University to find out what happened to sleep-deprived students. Results confirmed their hypothesis that losing sleep would affect the students both mentally and physically. Sleep deprivation affected subjects in three ways. First, sleep deprivation affected their personalities. For example, subjects became very irritable, those with children lost patience more often, and small problems bothered them more than usual. Second, lack of sleep affected their cognitive processes. They made more mistakes; moreover, they performed tasks more slowly. On math tests, subjects received lower scores, and they needed more time to complete them. Third, without enough sleep, subjects had physical problems. They were not as coordinated. Scores on computer games were lower even though subjects were provided with more time to finish them. Furthermore, the immune systems of a significant number of subjects were depressed, they reported more sick days, and they had more colds. Therefore, getting enough sleep is important because it helps maintain good mental and physical health.

RATER COMMENTS: 4.5

This essay summarizes the reading passage. It is well organized, without grammatical errors. The writer used a variety of sentences, and demonstrated the ability to use more complex sentences.

EXAMPLE SENTENCES**Series****Commas between parallel structures**

For example, subjects became very irritable, those with children lost patience more often, and small problems bothered them more than usual.

Furthermore, the immune systems of a significant number of subjects were depressed, they reported more sick days, and they had more colds.

Relative Clauses***that, which***

The lecturer reported a research study, which was designed by graduate students at State University to find out what happened to sleep-deprived students.

Compound Sentences**Addition *and*, Contrast *but*, Alternative *or***

Most people are working longer hours, and some people have two jobs.

On math tests, subjects received lower scores, and they needed more time to complete them.

Complex Sentences**Contrast: *although*, *though*, *even though***

Although the amount of sleep required varies from person to person, one in five people fails to get enough sleep.

Scores on computer games were lower, even though subjects were provided with more time to finish them.

Cause/result: *because*, *since*

Therefore, getting enough sleep is important because it helps maintain good mental and physical health.

Complex Sentences**Condition: *if*, *unless***

If people lose sleep on a regular basis, they can suffer serious consequences.

Conjoined Sentences**Addition: *moreover*, *furthermore***

They made more mistakes; moreover, they performed tasks more slowly.

Furthermore, the immune systems of a significant number of subjects were depressed, they reported more sick days, and they had more colds.

Contrast***however***

However, relatively few studies have examined this important problem.

Conclusion***therefore***

Therefore, getting enough sleep is important because it helps maintain good mental and physical health.

Practice 12

First, read the essay. Then read each set of simple sentences and combine them into one sentence. Using the cue that is provided, write a series, a relative clause, a compound, complex, or conjoined sentence. When you have completed all of the sets of sentences, compare your answers with the example answers in the Answer Key on pages 386–388. Finally, read the revised essay.

According to the reading passage, Tyrannosaurs were among the most intimidating predators. Until recently, we assumed that they hunted alone. Canadian paleontologist Philip Currie has a new hypothesis. He thinks that these large dinosaurs hunted in groups. He calls these groups *dino gangs*. This idea is not exactly new. In excavation sites in Canada, many skeletons have been found in close proximity. Other sites in Argentina also uncovered the remains of groups. The Korea-Mongolia International Dinosaur Project provided more evidence. Six Tarbosaurus of different ages were found in close proximity in bone beds. Currie and associates interpret the skeletal remains as proof of social behavior. They assert that Tyrannosaurs lived and hunted together. In contrast, the lecturer disagrees with the theory. She proposes three alternative reasons why specimens were found together. The three reasons include natural disasters. The topography of the area is a reason. Famine is a reason. Natural disasters can cause animals to run to a location of safety. For example, a flood could cause the Tyrannosaurs to move to higher ground. The topography of the area could explain the presence of many skeletons. Soft mud or quicksand could trap animals. Famine could cause the population to congregate and eventually die in sparse feeding grounds. Philips could provide evidence of groups of footprints that appeared to be those of a group of hunters. The hypothesis would be more compelling. Pack hunting is a possibility. It is not the only interpretation of the evidence.

Conjoined Sentence

Contrast: *however*

Until recently, we assumed that they hunted alone.
Canadian paleontologist Philip Currie has a new hypothesis.

Relative Clauses: *that, which*

He thinks that these large dinosaurs hunted in groups.
He calls these groups *dino gangs*.

Conjoined Sentence

Addition: *moreover*

In excavation sites in Canada, many skeletons have been found in close proximity.
Other sites in Argentina also uncovered the remains of groups.

Compound Sentence**Addition: *and***

Currie and associates interpret the skeletal remains as proof of social behavior.
They assert that Tyrannosaurs lived and hunted together.

Series: Commas

She proposes three alternative reasons why specimens were found together.
The three reasons include natural disasters.
The topography of the area is a reason.
Famine is a reason.

Complex Sentence**Cause/result: *because***

The topography of the area could explain the presence of many skeletons.
Soft mud or quicksand could trap animals.

Complex Sentence**Condition: *if***

Philips could provide evidence of groups of footprints that appeared to be those of a group of hunters.
The hypothesis would be more compelling.

Compound Sentence**Contrast: *but***

Pack hunting is a possibility.
It is not the only interpretation of the evidence.

Basic Strategy: Internet iBT Writing and Institutional ITP Essay

★**Bonus:** Internet iBT Speaking

A variety of sentence structures is also impressive on Tasks 4 and 6 in the Speaking section because you are asked to summarize and synthesize formal academic lectures. The iBT Reading section includes questions that require you to recognize the basic parts of complex sentences.