

ScholarSkills

When you are analyzing any text, there are at least three central or important questions that must be answered:

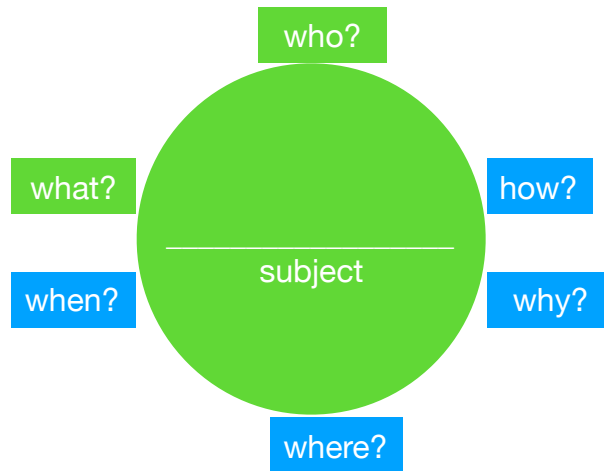
1. Who or what is the writer mostly talking about? In other words who or what is the writer's subject? To put it even more simply: which person, place, thing, or idea is the writer talking about?
2. What is the writer saying about that subject? In other words, what is the writer saying about that person, place, thing, or idea?
3. How does the writer choose and arrange words and groups of words to communicate important ideas clearly? In other words, how does the writer answer the question that every writer (including you) must answer: "What goes where and why?"

Skimming and Scanning the passage: Step One

To begin answering these questions, you must look carefully and quickly at the title of the passage and any introductory material that is given about the passage. Then, you must look over the entire passage quickly to get a basic idea of who or what the writer is talking about. This process is called skimming or scanning the passage.

Question Creation: Step Two

Once you have a basic sense of who or what the passage is mostly about, place that subject in the center of the circle below, and begin to create questions about that key person, place, thing, or idea.



Now use being, action, and helping verbs to create important questions about this subject. These are questions that the writer may have answered in the passage, or they're questions that you think are important to ask and answer about the subject.

For example: Put the subject in the blank below and create the following question:

- Who or what is (or are) _____?
- What
- When
- Where
- Why
- How

**Read the passage carefully: Step Three**

Now that you have asked those critical questions, read the passage with those questions in mind. Look for the answers to some or all of those questions as you read the passage carefully.

After you have finished reading the passage, see if you can answer any or all of the original questions that you created in the pre-reading stage. Please note that those questions were designed to organize your thinking about the passage, and to help you read with greater concentration and understanding. But the writer may or may not have answered all of those questions. In some cases, it may be helpful to do some research about the topic to try to answer some of your key questions. This research may provide important background knowledge and context for reading the passage with greater understanding.

**Analyze your answers: Step Four**

Review your answer to the first important question: Who or what is (or are) _____?
subject

Next, analyze your answer by asking and answering the first three Sentence Analysis Questions on your Sentence Smart Chart. You can use your pre-filled Sentence Analysis Sheet to do.

Next, analyze your answers to any of the original questions that you asked and were able to answer based on the passage or background information. This grammatical analysis allows you to separate your answers into subject and predicate sections. Each subject and predicate section can then be “interviewed” and expanded into more sentences and more complex sentences. This is what you will be doing in step five.

Grow your sentences!

**Expand and combine your sentences: Step Five**

Now that you have analyzed your answers to the first questions, it's time to expand those answers by seeing if there are any adverb or adjective questions that you can ask and answer based on the information that you've read in the passage. Be careful: These adverb and adjective questions must produce factual answers. These answers must be in the passage or in the background information that you have researched about the subject. You should not create any answers that are not supported by the passage or by background information. Your goal is to look for related ideas in the passage that can be embedded or added to your original basic sentences about the subject of the passage. These ideas can be added to your original

sentences by creating adverbial answers that begin with subordinating conjunctions and adjectival answers that begin with relative pronouns. For example, students can add more information to the subject of a sentence by placing relative pronouns such as “who,” “which,” and “that” immediately after subject nouns or pronouns or after nouns and pronouns in the predicate. “That” and “who” are normally placed after person-nouns, and “which” is placed after things and ideas. When these relative pronouns are placed after subject or predicate nouns, they create adjectival clauses which allow the writer to cultivate and combine ideas within sentences. By adding adjectival and adverbial words, phrases, and clauses, writers can develop more ideas about the subject and the predicate of each sentence and expand these ideas to create more sentences or richer complex and compound sentences. The writer’s goal is to keep developing thoughts and connecting those thoughts to each other so that the reader gains a clear, coherent, and complex understanding of the main idea—and all the supporting ideas—that the writer is seeking to communicate.

To summarize, use transitional words, subordinating and coordinating conjunctions, appositives, and relative pronouns to create compound and complex sentences which reveal the logical connections within and between your sentences. These adverbs, adjectives, and conjunctions will help you to continue developing the idea in your first basic sentences until you have a series of connected ideas that can now become a complete, coherent paragraph. Use the following sentence starters and sentence connectors to develop the idea that you expressed in your first sentence which by now may have become a topic sentence for a paragraph. A comprehensive guide to conjunctions and other transitional terms is included in the reference section attached to this document.

- For example,
- Since
- If
- Because
- When
- Therefore
- However



Review, edit, and revise your paragraph: Step Six

Review, edit, and revise your paragraph by applying your knowledge of grammatical structures to your writing. The following six self-editing steps are the keys to ensuring that you have created coherent, well written paragraphs and essays:

Step One: Check for complete sentences by asking yourself the following questions:

Have I expressed my ideas in complete sentences? Does each statement have a subject-verb relationship that makes complete sense? In other words, is each statement a complete thought? Does each statement have a subject and a predicate that makes sense? Is each subject connected to a verb? If you find incomplete thoughts or fragments, then turn them into sentences by creating a statement with a subject-verb relationship that makes complete sense.

Step Two: Make sure that your sentences are either combined or separated properly.

Check for any group of words that have subject-verb relationships. These groups of words, as you already know, are called clauses. Make sure that independent clauses (complete thoughts) are properly separated with periods or combined with commas and coordinating conjunctions, or colons, or semicolons. You may also choose to create complex sentences by using subordinating conjunctions to combine two independent clauses into a dependent-independent clause relationship.

Step Three: Make sure that the subject verb relationship within each sentence is clear and easy for the reader to identify.

Ask yourself: Is it easy for me or anyone else to clearly identify the subject-verb relationship in each of my clauses and complete sentences? Will the reader find it easy to ask and answer the following questions about each sentence or clause: Who or what is the subject of this group of words? And what is the writer saying about the subject? If you can answer these questions quickly, then perhaps it will also be easy for the reader to do so. You may want someone else to try to ask and answer those questions about each of your clauses or sentences to see how easy—or difficult—you have made it for the reader to follow your thoughts.

Step Four: Make sure that you have created logical relationships (or connections) within and between your sentences.

It's important for the reader to know how the ideas within and between your sentences are related to each other. For example, the terms you choose such as therefore, but, when, or however, can help the reader to understand whether you are illustrating a cause and effect or contrast relationship within and between your sentences. Check your complex or compound sentences to make sure that you have used the correct conjunction to connect your clauses. Then check to see whether you can add a transitional word such as therefore, or however between sentences to show how the ideas in each sentence are connected to others.

Step Five: Check your punctuation and spelling.

Make sure that you used periods, commas, semicolons, colons, and question marks properly. Then double check your spelling. Finally make sure that your verb endings are correct.

Step Six: Review your entire paragraph.

Make sure that your paragraph has a topic sentence which expresses the main idea of that paragraph. Then check to see if you have supported or developed that main idea with complete sentences.

Coordinating Conjunctions
And, but, for, nor, or, so, yet:

Combine independent clauses with a comma and one of these conjunctions.

- 1 F = for
- 2 A = and
- 3 N = nor
- 4 B = but
- 5 O = or
- 6 Y = yet
- 7 S = so

Subordinating Conjunctions that express concession

though
although
even though
while

Subordinating Conjunctions that express condition

if
only if
unless
until
provided that
assuming that
even if
in case (that)
lest

Conjunctions that express comparison

than
rather than
whether
as much as
whereas

Subordinating Conjunctions that express time

after
as long as
as soon as
before
by the time
now that
once
since
till
until
when
whenever
while

Subordinating Conjunctions that express reason or cause

because
since
so that
in order (that)
why

Relative Pronouns

that
what
whatever
which
whichever
who
whoever
whom
whomever
whose

Conjunctions that express manner

how
as though
as if

Conjunctions Place

where
wherever

Correlative Conjunctions

They are always used in pairs and show the relationship between ideas expressed in different parts of a sentence. When joining singular and plural subjects, the subject closest to the verb determines whether the verb is singular or plural.

as . . . as
just as . . . so
both . . . and
hardly . . . when
scarcely . . . when
either . . . or
neither . . . nor

if . . . then
not . . . but
what with . . . and
whether . . . or
not only . . . but also
no sooner . . . than
rather . . . than

Conjunctive Adverbs

They are often used as a linking device between ideas. They show logical relationships expressed in clauses, sentences or paragraphs.

These are similar to And

also
besides
furthermore
likewise
moreover

These are similar to But

however
nevertheless
nonetheless
still
conversely
instead
otherwise
rather

These are similar to so

accordingly
consequently
hence
meanwhile
then
therefore
thus

Ask these questions in the following order:

Where is the verb?
Look for the action word. If there's no action word, look for the being words:
am, is, are, was, & were, be, being, been.

Place these questions before the verb and ask:

Who, or What (verb)?
(answer: Subject)

Place these questions after the verb and ask:

(verb) who or what?
(Answer: object, complement)
(verb) to whom or for whom?
(answer: indirect object)

Place these questions after any verb and ask:

(verb) where?
(verb) when?
(verb) why?
(verb) how?
(answer: adverb)

Place these questions before any noun and ask:

what kind of?
which?
how many?
(answer: adjective)

ScholarSkills Definitions of the Parts of Speech

A **noun** is a naming word: nouns name persons, places, things, or ideas.

A **pronoun** takes the place of a noun.

A **verb** is an action, being, or helping word.

A **subject** is a word or group of words that answers the question: who or what verb?

The **predicate** is a word or group of words that tells us what the subject is doing or being.

An **object** is a word or group of words that answers the question: verb who or what?

An **indirect object** is a word that answers the question verb to whom or for whom?

A **subject complement** is a word or group of words that answers the question “verb who or what?” when the verb is a linking word.

When the complement is an adjective it is called a **predicate adjective**.

When the complement is a noun or pronoun it is called a **predicate nominative**.

An **adverb** is a word or group of words that answers the following questions: verb where? verb when? verb why? verb how?. Adverbs also answer “how?” and “to what extent?” about adjectives and other adverbs.

An **adjective** is a word or group of words that answers the following questions: what kind? which one? how many nouns?

A **phrase** is a group of words without a subject-verb relationship.

Prepositions are words which begin phrases that end with a noun or pronoun and act like adverbs or adjectives.

Conjunctions connect. They help us to create and understand the relationships between words and groups of words in sentences.

Coordinating conjunctions (FANBOYS—For,And,Nor,But,Or,Yet,So) connect words and help to create compound sentences.

Subordinating conjunctions create dependent clauses and complex sentences.

A **clause** is a group of words with a subject-verb relationship.

Dependent clauses are incomplete thoughts.

Independent clauses are complete sentences.