1 INTRODUCTION TO THE ESSAY

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES: GREEN LIVING



"I feel more confident than ever that the power to save the planet rests with the individual consumer."

Denis Hayes (1944–)

About the Author:

Denis Hayes is an environmental activist. He was the main organizer of the first Earth Day in 1970.

Work with a partner. Read the quotation about protecting the environment. Then answer the questions.

1 What does Hayes mean when he says that the individual consumer can save the planet?

2 What are some things that people do every day that are harmful to the environment?

3 What is something that you could do to help the environment?

1 PREPARE YOUR IDEAS

A Connect to Academic Writing

In this unit, you will learn skills for writing clear, well-organized academic essays. While some of the skills you will use may be new, others are not. Writing essays requires you to explain and organize your ideas in a clear and logical way. You do this in everyday life, too. For example, you use similar skills to consider the advantages and disadvantages of two different careers or to describe an experience you have had in your life.

B Reflect on the Topic

In this section, you will choose a writing prompt and reflect on it. You will develop these ideas throughout the unit and use them to practice skills that are necessary to write your essay.

The writing prompt below was used for the Student Model essay on pages 20–21. After reflecting on her topic, the student decided to make a list to generate ideas. This helped her think of a possible thesis statement.

STUDENT MODEL

WRITING PROMPT: There are many programs and laws that cities have introduced to reduce pollution. These include banning plastic bags, starting bike-share programs, and creating green spaces. Choose one program or law that you are familiar with and give reasons why it is good for people and communities.

Reasons for a Bike-Share Program
more freedom
no looking for parking!
never get stuck in traffic
save money
convenient to travel around city
feel safer because more people everywhere
fun – I go more places

Possible thesis statement: A bike-share program is good for a city and people because it saves money and the city is safer and more fun.

ACTIVITY

1.1 Notice

Work with a partner. Discuss how someone's life would change if he or she rode a bike rather than drove a car.

ACTIVITY 1.2 Apply It to Your Writing

YOUR TURN

Follow the directions to reflect on your topic.

A Choose a prompt:

- Choose a product that is not good for the environment, such as plastic bags or paper towels. Write three reasons why people should stop using them.
- Describe a green place, such as a park, where you live. Describe how people use the space.
- Imagine that your town or city wants to start a program to improve the city, such as a bike-sharing program, a car-sharing program, or a program to create more green spaces. Choose one and tell how it would affect the quality of life.
- A topic approved by your instructor

B Complete the following tasks:

1 Reflect on the topic and make a list.

2 Write a possible thesis statement.

3 Compare lists and possible thesis statements with a partner.

Possible thesis statement: .....

2 EXPAND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

In this section, you will learn academic language that you can use in your academic essay. You will also notice how a professional writer uses this language.

A Academic Vocabulary

The words below appear throughout the unit. Many are from the Academic Word List. Using these words in your writing will make your ideas clearer and your writing more academic.

basis (n)	cooperation (n)	source (n)	supply (n)
community (n)	scope (n)	sufficient (adj)	transition (n)

ACTIVITY **2.1 Focus on Meaning**

Match the words in bold with their definitions. Write the letters.

A

..... 1 The **scope** of a problem such as pollution is large. It involves many complex social, economic, and scientific issues.

..... 2 We want the recycling program to succeed, so the entire **community** must participate.

..... 3 The government and the citizens are working on ways to solve the problem of air pollution. This **cooperation** is necessary.

..... 4 There is **sufficient** research that recycling is effective. It is has been shown to reduce negative effects on the environment.

a the people in a particular area or who share interests or background

b enough

c the range or area of something

d the process of people working together



B

..... 1	Making the **transition** from oil to solar energy is expensive because people have to buy equipment.	a origin
..... 2	Solar energy is a good **source** of power because it comes from the sun.	b the process of change
..... 3	The **supply** of oil in the world is limited, and we will run out of it one day.	c the facts or beliefs that support a claim or idea
..... 4	The **basis** for the argument is that recycling reduces land pollution.	d the amount of something that is available for use

B Academic Collocations

Collocations are words that are frequently used together. Research tells us that the academic vocabulary in Part A is commonly used in the collocations in bold below.

ACTIVITY 2.2 Focus on Meaning

Work with a partner. Circle the correct meanings.

1 "Simple living" includes a **wide scope** of actions. These actions range from recycling to growing your own food. **Wide scope** means

a a small range. b a large range.

2 Car sharing helps people in a community get to know each other better, and it gives them a **sense of community.** A **sense of community** is

a the feeling of being connected to others. b the feeling of pride.

3 The **water supply** in the community has improved in recent years. However, many people still do not have enough clean, safe water. The **water supply** is

a the water available to a community. b the water that is sold in stores.

4 There is a **limited supply** of oil in the world. However, there is plenty of solar energy because it comes from the sun. A **limited supply** is

a poor quality of something. b an amount of something that is not large.

5 We can improve the environment every day. For example, we can save energy **on a daily basis** if we unplug appliances and turn off lights when we leave the house each day. **On a daily basis** means

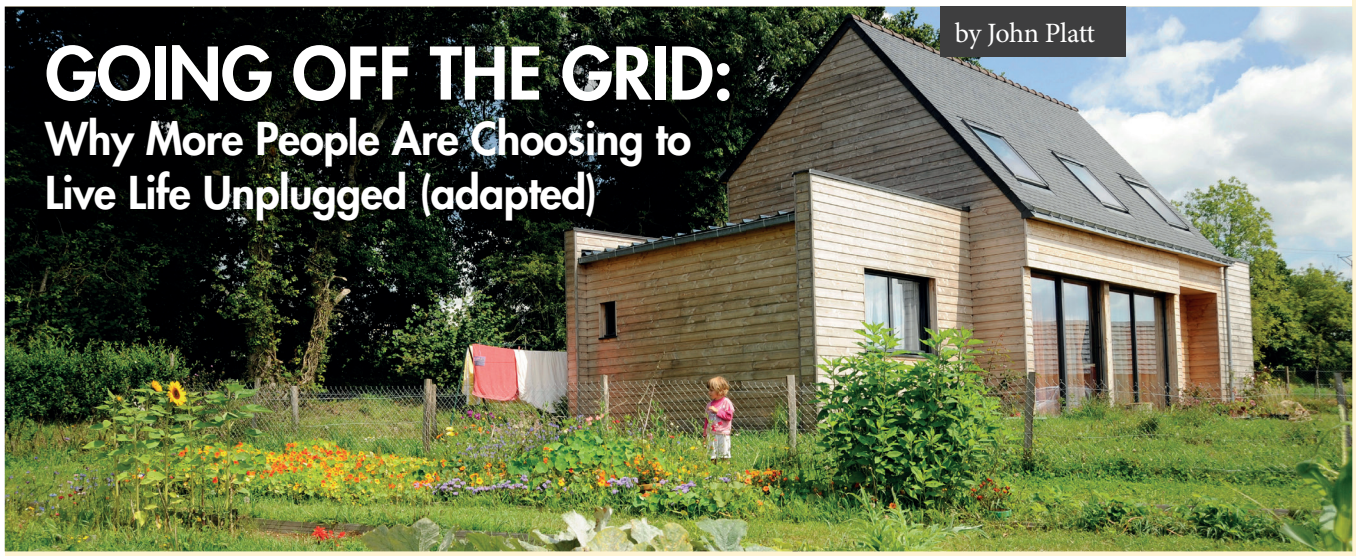
a occasionally. b every day.

C Writing in the Real World

The author of "Going Off the Grid: Why People Are Choosing to Live Life Unplugged" uses features of academic essays to present his ideas in an organized way that is convincing and interesting.

Before you read, answer these questions: Look at the title. What do you think it means to "live life unplugged"? Why do you think some people want to live very simply?

Now read the article. Think about your answers to the questions above as you read.



GOING OFF THE GRID:
Why More People Are Choosing to Live Life Unplugged (adapted)

by John Platt

1 Imagine living off the land. See yourself growing your own food, producing your own energy, and getting away from the consumption economy[1] that influences so many of our decisions. For more and more people, this simple lifestyle, called off-grid living, has become a real option. Although statistics on Americans who choose off-grid living are unavailable, trends suggest that the number is increasing. Some people do it to be self-reliant[2] or more in touch with nature. Others do it on the **basis** that there is a limited **supply** of traditional energy, such as oil. Still others do it because it is the best financial option available to them. For people who want to get away from today's consumerist society or help protect the environment, living off-grid can be an attractive option.

2 Although a desire to go green isn't always the top reason for people going off-grid, the lifestyle has many environmental benefits. For one thing, most off-grid homes or communities are in places where nature plays an important part of their everyday lives. Many people in these communities want to make sure they treat their environment with respect. And they want the choices that they make on a daily basis to help the environment rather than hurt it. In these communities, people often convert from oil to solar power for regular home heating or bike rather than drive to reduce the use of gasoline. Making the **transition** from traditional energy to a renewable **source** may take getting used to at first, but many in off-grid communities are willing to sacrifice for the chance to make a positive impact on the environment.

[1]**consumption economy:** economy that relies on consumer spending
[2]**self-reliant:** capable of relying on oneself rather than others



3 For others, living off-grid is a rejection of consumerism.[3] "Going off the grid is not a game," says Nick Rosen, founder of the Off-Grid website. "It is real life and a real choice for real people." And many of these people are starting to ask themselves, "How much do we really need?" They reject overly large homes in favor of small homes based on the idea that we are less happy when we have a lot more than we need. They feel overconsumption leads to being less grateful for what we do have. And doing something like buying a smaller home also fits into the environmentally friendly lifestyle because smaller homes require less energy for heating and cooling.

4 For others, going off-grid is an economic necessity because they have faced economic hardships,[4] and many have lost their own homes. They end up living a more eco-friendly[5] lifestyle because they need to reduce electric bills or grow their own food to survive. Rosen reports, "A lot of the people I met when I was traveling around the States writing my book were people who had to hand back the keys to their properties and find a new lifestyle. In one case they bought some land on eBay and moved themselves into a trailer. And they find themselves living a more ecological lifestyle just by the fact that they're generating their own electricity and growing their own food, but they were motivated by financial matters rather than by a more pure desire to tread more lightly[6] on the planet." So, financial concerns also play a role in many people's decision to live off the grid.

5 The **scope** of the off-grid movement is not fully known. However, we do know what motivates many off-grid **community** members – the desire to protect the environment, to be self-reliant, to embrace simple living, and sometimes to live more economically. For many of these members, the benefits outweigh the inconveniences of giving up some of the features of a modern life – using as much oil and electricity as you want or buying prepackaged food. Living off the grid might not be for everyone, but the lifestyle of people who do so certainly gives us all something to consider.

[3]**consumerism:** culture where people focus a lot on buying things
[4]**economic hardships:** economic suffering
[5]**eco-friendly:** good for the environment
[6]**tread more lightly:** speak or behave carefully to avoid upsetting anyone or causing harm

ACTIVITY 2.3 Check Your Understanding

Answer the questions.

1 What are the main reasons people want to live in off-grid communities?
2 How would you explain the benefits of off-grid living to someone who has never heard of it before?
3 How would you feel about living in an off-grid community?

ACTIVITY 2.4 Notice the Features of Essay Writing

Answer the questions.

1 Look at the first two sentences in the introductory paragraph. How does the author get the reader's attention?
2 In which sentence in the introductory paragraph does the writer tell us what he will discuss in the rest of the essay?
3 Look at paragraphs 2, 3, and 4. What is their purpose?

3 STUDY ACADEMIC WRITING

In Section 1, you saw how the writer of the Student Model essay reflected on her topic. In this section, you will analyze the final draft of her academic essay. You will learn how to structure your ideas for your own essay.

A Student Model

Read the writing prompt again and answer the questions.

WRITING PROMPT: There are many programs and laws that cities have introduced to reduce pollution. These include banning plastic bags, starting bike-share programs, and creating green spaces. Choose one program or law that you are familiar with and give reasons why it is good for people and communities.

1 Read the title of the essay. What will the writer discuss?

2 What reasons might the writer mention?

Read the essay twice. The first time, think about your answers to the questions above. The second time, answer the questions in the Analyze Writing Skills boxes. This will help you notice key features of academic essays.

STUDENT MODEL

The Positive Impact of Bike-Share Programs

1 In my **community**, people talk about the smog[1] more than they talk about the weather. Recently, the mayor urged people to give up their cars and use public transportation or the new bike-share program to decrease air pollution. I use the bike-share program a lot to get to school and work, and I really like it. I heard on the news that it is working well and that there are fewer cars on the streets. I know that sometimes cars are a necessity, but the problem of smog is serious because it has a negative effect on people's health and the quality of life[2] in the city. A bike-share program is good for cities and the people who live there because it is a convenient way to travel, it improves life in the city, and it makes people healthier.

2 First, a bike-share program is easy for people to use. Commuters who travel to the city can ride around and go wherever they want. They do not have to rely on the schedules of buses and trains. Driving a car is also difficult because of traffic. In addition, bike stations are everywhere, so it is usually easy to find and park a bike. One problem sometimes is that the **supply** of bikes is less than the demand[3] for them. That was a problem in my city. However, we now have an app that tells where there are available

[1]**smog:** smoke that is mixed with fog (thick cloud)
[2]**quality of life:** amount of comfort and satisfaction that someone feels about their life
[3]**demand:** number of people who want to have something

1 Analyze Writing Skills

In paragraph 1, the first sentence gets the reader interested in the topic of the essay. Circle the type of sentence that it is.

a a question

b an interesting statement

c a quotation

2 Analyze Writing Skills

In paragraph 1, underline the sentence that gives the three ideas, or points, that the writer will discuss in the essay.

3 Analyze Writing Skills

In paragraph 2, underline the two sentences that explain and support why a bike-share is easy for people to use.

bikes, so people do not have to spend time searching for one. Therefore, the bike-share program is more convenient than buses and other kinds of transportation.

3 In addition, a bike-share program makes a city more enjoyable and safer. If many people use bikes, there are fewer cars and less traffic and noise. People feel comfortable when they travel around, so they spend more time enjoying the city. Maybe it will attract more tourists, and this is good for the city, too. Also, when there are many people around, the city feels less dangerous. I come home from work late at night. When there was no bike-share, I felt a little scared when I walked home. Now I see more people riding bikes in my neighborhood, and I feel less afraid. The bike-share has made the city more comfortable and fun.

4 The best reason for having a bike-share is its positive effects on people's health. When people bike on a daily **basis**, they exercise their whole body every day. I ride at least five miles a day, so I know my heart and lungs are strong. Also, biking is a good **source** of energy. I work and go to school, but I still feel energetic. I think it is because I use the bike-share. Finally, exercise can reduce stress, too, and students who work and go to college often feel a lot of stress. Clearly, a bike-share improves people's health.

5 In conclusion, a bike-share program not only helps the environment, it makes a city easier to get around, makes a city more pleasant, and makes people feel and look better. I think that bike-share programs are an amazing way to get back our blue skies and to enjoy our lives.

4 Analyze Writing Skills

In paragraph 3, underline the two words that introduce the idea that the writer will discuss in the paragraph. Then circle the purpose of the two words.

a to introduce an opinion
b to explain an idea
c to introduce the next idea

5 Analyze Writing Skills

Circle the sentence below that best expresses the topic of paragraph 4.

a Biking gives people energy.
b Some people lose weight when they use the bike-share regularly.
c Biking improves people's health.

6 Analyze Writing Skills

What is the purpose of the first sentence in paragraph 5?

a to introduce a new idea
b to give the writer's opinion
c to remind the reader of the writer's main points in the essay



ACTIVITY 3.1 Check Your Understanding

Answer the questions.

1 What is the essay about?

2 Which reason is the most convincing or important in your opinion? Explain.

3 How do you feel about bike-share programs?

ACTIVITY 3.2 Outline the Writer's Ideas

Complete the outline for "The Positive Impact of Bike-Share Programs." Write the thesis statement. Then use the phrases in the box.

coming home from work – feel safer	exercises whole body
easy to find and park a bike	fewer cars, less traffic and noise
easy to use	reduces stress

STUDENT MODEL

ESSAY OUTLINE

I. Introductory paragraph

Thesis Statement

Body Paragraph 1

II.

Supporting Idea 1 — A. Commuters – can ride and go everywhere

Detail — 1. Do not have to rely on bus/train schedules

Detail — 2. Car – too much traffic

Supporting Idea 2 — B. Bike stations are everywhere

Detail — 1.

Detail — 2. One problem – supply

Detail — 3. App – to find bikes

Body Paragraph 2	III. City more enjoyable and safer
Supporting Idea 1	A.
Detail	1. Feel comfortable traveling
Detail	2. Spend more time enjoying city
Detail	3. Attract tourists
Supporting Idea 2	B. City feels less dangerous
Detail	1.
Body Paragraph 3	IV. Positive effects on health
Supporting Idea 1	A.
Detail	1. I ride 5 miles a day
Supporting Idea 2	B. Good source of energy
Detail	1. My experience – feel energetic
Supporting Idea 3	C.
	V. Concluding paragraph

B The Essay in Academic Writing

Writers use the essay structure to communicate their ideas clearly and convincingly. There are several types of essays that you will review in this book, including comparison and contrast, cause-effect, and argumentative. Academic essays typically have the following structure:

1 An **introductory paragraph** that explains the topic and the writer's purpose in writing. It includes:
   - a hook
   - background information
   - a thesis statement

2 **Body paragraphs** (usually 2–4 paragraphs) that develop the writer's main points. Each body paragraph includes:
   - a topic sentence
   - supporting sentences and details
   - a concluding sentence

3 A **concluding paragraph** that restates the thesis statement and provides a final comment. It includes:
   - a restatement of the thesis
   - an insight, an opinion, a recommendation, a prediction, or a call to action

ACTIVITY 3.3 Notice

Circle the answers.

1 Which of the following does an introductory paragraph include?

a a topic sentence b a prediction c a thesis statement

2 In which paragraph(s) does the writer explain the main points of the essay?

a introductory paragraph b body paragraphs c concluding paragraph

3 In which paragraph(s) does the writer say something he or she has learned or wants the reader to do?

a introductory paragraph b body paragraphs c concluding paragraph

THE INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH

The **hook** is usually the first one or two sentences in an introductory paragraph. It makes the reader interested in reading the essay. Writers use different types of **hooks**.

Hooks can be:

- **A thought-provoking question**

  What's more important, having the convenience of plastic water bottles or having a healthy, clean environment?

- **A request to reflect on or visualize a situation to help the reader make a personal connection to the issue**

  Think about how much paper and plastic you throw away in one day. Multiply that amount by 365 days in the year. Think about how many rooms it all would fill.

- **A relevant or memorable quotation**

  Former U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, "A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people."

- **A surprising statistic**

  According to the Environmental Protection Agency, Americans throw away roughly 32 million tons of plastic each year.

- **An interesting and relevant observation**

  On every college campus, you see many students walking around with plastic water bottles.



3.4 Notice

Work with a partner. Discuss these questions.

1 Look at the professional author's essay on pages 18–19. What kind of hook did the author use? Do you think it was effective? Why or why not?

2 Look at the Student Model essay on pages 20–21. What kind of hook did the writer use? Do you think it was effective? Why or why not?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In an introductory paragraph, **background information** is information on the topic that sets up the reader for the thesis statement. It explains the topic in a way that makes the thesis statement seem logical. For example, if a writer's thesis is "A bike-share program is good for cities and the people who live there because it is a convenient way to travel, it improves life in the city, and it makes people healthier," then the background information should introduce bike-share programs in a way that shows that bike-share programs have advantages.

Some types of background information are:

- a general explanation of the topic
- historical information on the topic
- a personal story that relates to the topic
- relevant data and statistics

Read the following student paragraphs. Notice the type of background information each one contains.

Student Paragraph 1

What's more important, having the convenience of plastic water bottles or having a healthy, clean environment? According to the Environmental Protection Agency, Americans threw away roughly 32 million tons of plastic in 2012. This has a large impact on the environment. It takes more than 17 million barrels of oil to produce the energy to make and deliver these bottles. Furthermore, burning oil and other fossil fuels is a main cause of pollution.

Relevant data and statistics

Student Paragraph 2

Did you know that shipping an apple 3,000 miles from California to New York hurts the environment? Most of the produce we buy in grocery stores is not grown locally. Instead, it is produced in one area and then shipped hundreds and often thousands of miles to another area. The trucks that carry the produce use a lot of oil for fuel. This oil causes carbon emissions that pollute our air. Buying produce that comes from local farmers is an effective way to use less oil and create less pollution.

General explanation of the topic



ACTIVITY

3.5 Notice

Work with a partner. Discuss these questions.

1 Look at the introductory paragraph of the professional author's essay on pages 18–19. What kind of background information did the author use? Do you think it was effective? Why or why not?

2 Look at the introductory paragraph of the Student Model essay on pages 20–21. What kind of background information did the writer use? Do you think it was effective? Why or why not?

ACTIVITY 3.6 Apply It to Your Writing

YOUR TURN

Look at the list that you created in Section 1 on page 15. Use your brainstorm ideas to write some background information for your topic.

THE THESIS STATEMENT

The **thesis statement** in an essay:

- is usually the last sentence in the introductory paragraph
- tells the reader what ideas will be developed in the body of the essay

The thesis statement has two parts: a topic and a point of view. The point of view often states the individual ideas or points that the writer will develop in the essay. Below is an example of a thesis statement that states the points. The points are numbered.

POINT OF VIEW

TOPIC 1 2 3

Bringing your own bag to the store saves trees, reduces waste, and saves money.

Sometimes the thesis statement is more general. This means that the writer does not actually state the individual points. However, it is still clear what he or she will write about. The thesis statement below is an example of this. We know the writer will discuss benefits related to the environment and to riders, but we do not know the exact benefits.

POINT OF VIEW

TOPIC

Taking public transportation benefits both the environment and riders.

ACTIVITY 3.7 Notice

Look at the professional author's essay on pages 18–19 and the Student Model essay on pages 20–21. Find the thesis statement for each one. Do the thesis statements state the points that will be developed?

FACTS VS. POINTS OF VIEW

It is important to remember that a thesis is not a statement of fact that everyone agrees on. A point of view is debatable. People may not agree with the specific ideas. They may have a different point of view. Compare the two thesis statements for the following prompt:

WRITING PROMPT: What are the benefits of using solar power?

Thesis Statement 1: Solar power saves money, is a renewable source of energy, and reduces global warming.

Thesis Statement 2: Solar power is an important part of photosynthesis and the water cycle process.

Note that Thesis Statement 1 is debatable. The writer must support the point of view with explanation, facts, and examples. Thesis Statement 2 is a fact. It is not debatable, so it cannot be developed further like a point of view can. As a result, it is not a good thesis statement.

ACTIVITY 3.8 Evaluate Thesis Statements

Work with a partner. Read the topics. Circle the thesis statements that include a debatable point of view.

1 **Topic:** Prefabricated homes
   a Prefabricated homes are built in one location and then moved to another location.
   b Prefabricated homes benefit the environment and the people who live in them.
2 **Topic:** Solar power
   a Solar power can reduce our use of dangerous sources of power, such as nuclear energy.
   b The supply of power from the sun is unlimited.
3 **Topic:** Community gardens in city neighborhoods
   a Community gardens benefit the environment and help build a sense of community.
   b Many cities have community gardens.
4 **Topic:** Car sharing
   a Car sharing should be mandatory in cities in order to reduce air pollution.
   b Car sharing is one way to share the cost of gasoline.

ACTIVITY 3.9 Apply It to Your Writing

YOUR TURN

Think about what you have learned. Revise the possible thesis statement that you wrote on page 15. Then share it with a partner.

.....

.....

.....

.....

BODY PARAGRAPHS

Body paragraphs present the main points of an essay. Each body paragraph logically and thoroughly explains, describes, or argues one aspect of the thesis statement.

A body paragraph includes:

- **a topic sentence** that states one aspect of the thesis. A good topic sentence clearly connects to the thesis by reusing or paraphrasing key words. The underlined words below connect to the words "makes people healthier" in the thesis statement of the Student Model essay.

  The best reason for having a bike-share is its positive effects on people's health.

- **supporting sentences** that give specific information about the main idea. Writers also include sentences that offer **details**, or more information about the ideas in the supporting sentences. The information that writers give in their supporting sentences and details includes explanations, examples, and facts.

  When people bike on a daily basis, they exercise their whole body every day. I ride at least 5 miles a day, so I know my heart and lungs are strong. Also, biking is a good source of energy.

- **a concluding sentence** that ties all the ideas in the paragraph together. Writers signal the conclusion by starting this sentence with a word or phrase such as *clearly*, *for these reasons*, *therefore*, or *in brief*.

  Clearly, a bike-share program improves people's health.

ACTIVITY 3.10 Notice

Read the body paragraph from the Student Model essay on pages 20–21. Double underline the topic sentence. Underline the supporting sentences. Circle the concluding sentence.

First, a bike-share program is easy for people to use. Commuters who travel to the city can ride around and go wherever they want. They do not have to rely on the schedules of buses and trains. Driving a car is also difficult because of traffic. In addition, bike stations are everywhere, so it is usually easy to find and park a bike. One problem sometimes is that the supply of bikes is less than the demand for them. That was a problem in my city. However, we now have an app that tells where there are available bikes, so people do not have to spend time searching for one. Therefore, the bike-share program is more convenient than buses and other kinds of transportation.

ACTIVITY 3.11 Practice Writing Topic Sentences

Read the thesis statements. Write topic sentences for the body paragraphs.

1 **Thesis statement:** Community gardens benefit cities by improving air quality, providing healthy food, and teaching children valuable skills.

.....

...... Many urban areas have pollution because of the carbon emissions from cars. This pollution can cause asthma and other breathing problems. The green plants in gardens make oxygen. This oxygen makes it easier for everyone to breathe. Clearly, cleaner air is one benefit of community gardens.

2 **Thesis statement:** Biking to work instead of driving reduces air pollution, saves money, and makes people healthier.

.....

...... Cars are very expensive to maintain, while bikes are easy to maintain. For example, if a car engine breaks, it can cost hundreds of dollars to repair. On the other hand, if the chain on a bike breaks, it costs a lot less to fix. Gas and insurance for cars are expensive, too, but bikes do not need them. Bikers often have to register their bikes, but this does not usually cost very much. There is no doubt that biking to work costs less.

3.12 Apply It to Your Writing

YOUR TURN

Look at the thesis statement that you revised in Activity 3.9 on page 28. Write a topic sentence for one of the body paragraphs. Then share it with a partner.

3.13 Practice Writing Supporting Sentences

Work with a partner. Read the essay prompt. Write three drawbacks of bike-share programs.

WRITING PROMPT: Many communities in the United States have started bike-share programs. People use the bikes to get around and return them to bike lots that are located in convenient places around town. What are the possible drawbacks of using a bike from a bike share program?

Advantage 1: .....

Advantage 2: .....

Advantage 3: .....

3.14 Practice Writing a Thesis Statement

Write a thesis statement based on your ideas from Activity 3.13.

Thesis statement: .....

3.15 Practice Writing Topic Sentences

Write topic sentences for three body paragraphs based on your thesis statement in Activity 3.14 and your ideas from Activity 3.13. Use the expressions in the box.

another drawback is	first,	finally,

Body Paragraph 1 Topic Sentence: .....

.....

Body Paragraph 2 Topic Sentence: .....

.....

Body Paragraph 3 Topic Sentence: .....

.....

ACTIVITY 3.16 Write Supporting Sentences

Work with a partner. Choose one of your topic sentences from Activity 3.14. Think of supporting sentences and details for it and write a paragraph.

CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH

The concluding paragraph reminds the reader of your thesis by restating it and then ends with an interesting comment, recommendation, or prediction. A conclusion never adds new information or ideas to your essay.

The first sentence in the concluding paragraph usually begins with a transition phrase such as the following: *in conclusion*, *in short, in sum*, and *to conclude*.

***In conclusion**, biking instead of driving has many benefits.*

The final **comment** is often:

- **an insight or opinion:** *I have more respect for people who choose off-grid living because they are committed to it even though it is difficult and inconvenient sometimes.*
- **a prediction:** *These changes require cooperation, but if everyone biked or took public transportation just three days a week, most communities would be cleaner and healthier places to live.*
- **a recommendation:** *Instead of spending money on new roads and buildings, communities should create more parks and green spaces.*
- **a call to action:** *Consumers must demand that their city officials pass laws banning plastic bags.*

ACTIVITY 3.17 Notice

Read the concluding paragraph of the Student Model essay on pages 20–21. What kind of comment is it?

HOW TO RESTATE THE THESIS STATEMENT

Good writers paraphrase their thesis statement in the conclusion instead of repeating it word for word. Notice how the writer of the Student Model essay used synonyms for "convenient," "improves life," and "makes people healthier" in restating the thesis statement:

Thesis statement: *A bike-share program is good for cities and the people who live there because it is a convenient way to travel, it improves life in the city, and it makes people healthier.*

Concluding sentence: *In conclusion, a bike-share program not only helps the environment, it makes a city easier to get around, makes a city more pleasant, and makes people feel and look better.*

Remember to restate the points in the same order as they appeared in the thesis statement.

ACTIVITY 3.18 Practice Choosing Restatements of the Thesis Statement

Work with a partner. Choose the best restatement for each thesis statement.

1 **Thesis statement:** Consumers can reduce their use of energy on a daily basis by unplugging appliances, turning off lights when not in a room, and washing clothes with warm water.

   a In short, unplugging appliances, turning off lights when not in a room, and washing clothes in warm water are three ways that consumers can reduce their use of energy on a daily basis.

   b In conclusion, shutting off lights when no one is there, unplugging appliances when you're not using them, and using warm water to wash clothes are ways we can all help to cut down on energy use.

   c To conclude, disconnecting appliances, shutting off lights in rooms when no one is there, and using warm water to wash clothes are ways that everyone can reduce energy consumption.

2 **Thesis statement:** Eliminating plastic bags reduces water pollution, produces less garbage, and saves communities money.

   a In short, if there were no plastic bags, there would be less water pollution, less litter, and more money for communities.

   b In conclusion, if plastic bags are eliminated, it would save communities money, reduce litter, and decrease water pollution.

   c To conclude, eliminating plastic bags reduces water pollution, produces less garbage, and saves communities money.

ACTIVITY 3.19 Practice Restating a Thesis Statement

Restate the thesis statement below. Keep the original meaning, but use different words.

Thesis statement: Biking rather than driving to work helps people to get in shape, save money, and reduce stress.

Restatement: .....

.....

4 SHARPEN YOUR SKILLS

In this section, you will learn the writing and grammar skills that will help make your writing more sophisticated and accurate.

A Writing Skill: Thesis Statements and Writing Prompts

A good thesis statement answers the writing prompt. That may seem obvious, but sometimes writers can become confused if they do not fully understand the prompt. As a result, their thesis statements do not match the writing prompt.

One way to make sure that your thesis statement answers the writing prompt is to repeat key words from the prompt in your thesis statement. Read the examples below. Notice how Thesis Statement 2 repeats key words, making it a better thesis statement.

WRITING PROMPT: Consumers spend thousands of dollars each year on **bottled water** even though they know plastic is **damaging the environment**. What are some ways to **persuade** the **public** to use **fewer plastic products**?

Thesis Statement 1: People could use **fewer plastic products** if the government taxed plastic and talked to people about the negative effects of it.

Thesis Statement 2: Taxing **plastic bottles**, explaining how **plastic damages** the **environment**, and offering **consumers** alternatives to **plastic products** will **persuade the public to use** fewer of them.

ACTIVITY 4.1 Choose Thesis Statements

Work with a partner. Choose the best thesis statements. Discuss the reasons for your choices.

1 **WRITING PROMPT:** Green spaces, such as parks and community gardens, are considered good for cities for many reasons. How do they improve the lives of residents in a city?

   a Green spaces are nice for cities because people can enjoy nature, they can relax and play games, and they can hear concerts and go to other events.

   b Green spaces improve the lives of residents in a city because these spaces help people enjoy nature, they reduce air pollution, and they build a sense of community among people.

   c Green spaces are good for people because these places are relaxing and beautiful, they are fun to go with friends and family, and they reduce air pollution in the city.

2 **WRITING PROMPT:** Many people have habits that are bad for the environment. For example, they drive everywhere, they keep the lights on even when they leave a room, they keep the TV on even when they are not watching it, or they use paper towels or sponges instead of reusable cloth towels for cleaning. Choose a habit that you have that you know is not very good for the environment and give three reasons why it would be difficult to give it up.

a I use a lot of electricity every day because I often keep the TV on, I usually keep electric appliances plugged in all the time, and I usually keep lights on in rooms when I am not in them.

b I know driving everywhere is bad for the environment but it would be difficult for me to give it up because I hate to walk, I love driving, and I hate taking public transportation.

c Buying bottled water is bad, but I cannot stop it because I do not like carrying bottles around, I like fresh water, and I recycle the bottles so it is not damaging the environment.



B Grammar for Writing: Infinitives

An infinitive is *to* + the base form of a verb. It can follow verbs, nouns, or adjectives.

Below are some common structures with infinitives.

COMMON STRUCTURES WITH INFINITIVES	
1 An infinitive follows verbs such as the following: *attempt, decide, need, plan, want*	VERB + INFINITIVE *They **want to protect** the environment.*
2 To make an infinitive negative, put *not* before it.	*The city is asking the public **not to use** plastic bags for groceries.*
3 An infinitive can also follow certain nouns such as the following: *ability, chance, energy, opportunity, time, way*	NOUN + INFINITIVE *Off-grid living is a good **way to live** simply.*
4 An infinitive of purpose answers the question *why.*	*Some people go off the grid **to save** money.* (Why do some people go off the grid? To save money.) *Some people go off the grid **to help** the environment.* (Why do some people go off the grid? To help the environment.)

ACTIVITY

4.2 Practice Infinitive Forms

Work with a partner. Complete the sentences with the infinitive forms of the verbs in the box.

be	create	heat
cost	enjoy	protect

1 Many people use green cleaning products ..... their health.
2 Community gardens help ..... a sense of belonging.
3 Solar power uses the sun ..... homes.
4 Organic fruits and vegetables tend ..... more than regular produce.
5 Parks in cities give residents the chance ..... the beauty of nature.
6 Off-grid living gives people a way ..... more connected to nature.

Avoiding Common Mistakes

Research tells us that these are the most common mistakes that students make when using infinitives in academic writing. Avoid these mistakes when you write your essay in Section 5.

1 Use correct word order with the negative form of an infinitive.

The city decided ~~to not~~ not to switch to a renewable energy source.

2 Remember that some verbs – for example, *avoid*, *require*, *finish*, *keep*, *discuss*, and *consider* – require a gerund.

Many governments avoid ~~to explore~~ exploring new energy sources because of financial concerns.

3 Do not confuse the preposition *for* with the infinitive *to* when the meaning is "in order to."

Cooperation is necessary ~~for~~ to ensure the success of zero-waste programs.

ACTIVITY 4.3 Editing Task

Find and correct five more mistakes in the paragraph below.

Some people want ~~living~~ to live in very small houses because these homes use fewer natural resources. Because they are small, it costs less for heat these homes. Also, they use less electricity than large houses because it costs much less per month for supply electricity to a small house than to a large house. This is because small houses have fewer rooms, fewer electrical outlets, and less need for light fixtures than larger houses. Small houses use less water, too. Finally, they tend to not be on large lots. Therefore, they do not have large gardens that require to water. The decision to not have a lot of space means that owners of small homes not only reduce energy consumption, but save valuable resources and money as well.

C Avoiding Plagiarism

Academic writing has special challenges. One of the challenges for writers is recognizing and avoiding plagiarism.



Q

I got my first essay back from my instructor. I worked really hard on it, so I thought I'd get a good grade. I was so surprised when I saw a big, red X at the top of the paper! When I asked my instructor about it, she said I had plagiarized it. I don't understand what I did wrong! Help! What is plagiarism?

Gitta

A

Dear Gitta,

Plagiarism is using someone else's exact words or ideas in your writing, and not naming the original writer or book, magazine, video, podcast, or website where you found them. Maybe you copied the exact words or images from some of these places and didn't include the source references.

Most schools in North America have an academic integrity policy. This policy is an agreement that members of an academic community sign. When you sign this agreement, you promise to be honest in how you present your ideas. That means you promise that you won't plagiarize another person's work.

Yours truly,

Professor Wright

RECOGNIZING PLAGIARISM

In order to avoid plagiarizing, you must first recognize it. Read the original text from author Emily Sohn's article "Revving Up Green Machines."

ORIGINAL TEXT: "In the United States alone, 17 million new cars hit the road in 2004. But the freedom to travel anywhere, anytime in a car or truck comes at a price. It's not just the cost of gasoline, insurance, and repairs. Automobiles are a major source of pollution. Most cars burn gasoline, which releases carbon dioxide gas into the air, along with other particles and pollutants."

Now read the paragraphs by students who used the information in the original text. Student A plagiarized it, and Student B did not.

Student A (plagiarized text)	Student B (did not plagiarize text)
I believe that we need to reduce the number of cars. In the United States alone, 17 million new cars hit the road in 2004. Automobiles are a major source of pollution. Most cars burn gasoline, and it releases carbon dioxide into the air.	Use of gasoline-powered cars is a problem in the world. According to Emily Sohn, there were 17 million new cars in America. She says there is a price to traveling freely in cars. She states, "It's not just the cost of gasoline, insurance, and repairs." Pollution is also a cost.
This student: • copied and pasted the underlined sentences from the original source. • did not cite, in other words, give the author's name or title and page number (if there is one) of the article from which the information came.	This student: • wrote the ideas in her own words. • cited her source, in other words, gave the name of the author of the article in which she found the information. • used quotation marks when she used the author's *exact words*.

ACTIVITY 4.4 Practice

Read the original text. Then read the paragraphs by Student A and Student B. Check (✓) the student who plagiarized. Discuss your reasons with a partner.

ORIGINAL TEXT: "Landfills and garbage dumps are full of plastic. But scientists are working on a new generation of plastics that are better for the environment. Some are made from natural materials, like parts of corn or sugar plants. These are called bioplastics. Already, Earth-friendlier plastics are being used to make water bottles, gift cards, forks, and more." (Adapted from the article "Planting Seeds for Better Plastic," by Emily Sohn)

☐ **Student A:** According to Sohn, scientists can use plants to make special new plastics. That means they are natural, so they are not so bad for the environment. Now, many common products are being made from these new plastics.

☐ **Student B:** There is a lot of plastic in garbage dumps. Scientists are working on a new generation of plastics that are better for the environment. Some are made from natural materials. These are called bioplastics. They are being used to make many new products.

ACTIVITY 4.5 Practice

Rewrite one of the plagiarized sentences from Activity 4.4 in your own words.

.....

.....

5 WRITE YOUR ESSAY

In this section, you will follow the writing process to complete the final draft of your essay.

STEP 1: BRAINSTORM

Work with a partner. Follow the steps below to brainstorm ideas for your essay.

1 Before you start, notice how the writer of the Student Model essay brainstormed. She wrote a lot of ideas. She included some of the ideas from the list that she made in Section 1 on page 14. Then she circled the three points that she thought were the strongest.

STUDENT MODEL

Reasons for a Bike-Share Program

more freedom
no looking for parking
never get stuck in traffic
save money
convenient to travel around city
get more exercise
feel safer because more people everywhere
city – more fun
no worry about bus schedules
BUT supply can be a problem – app!
can go anywhere
fun – I go more places
reduce stress
better health

2 Write the ideas that you wrote in Section 1 on page 15 in the space below. Include ideas from the Your Turns throughout the unit. Brainstorm more ideas.

3 Circle the three strongest points in support of your thesis and write them below.

1 .....

2 .....

3 .....

STEP 2: DO RESEARCH

If your topic requires research, see page 261 for advice on how to find information.

STEP 3: MAKE AN OUTLINE

Making an outline helps you organize your ideas. Complete the outline below with your ideas from the previous steps.

ESSAY OUTLINE

I. Introductory paragraph

Thesis Statement

Body Paragraph 1

II.

Supporting Idea 1

A.

Detail

1.

Supporting Idea 2

B.

Detail

1.

Body Paragraph 2

III.

Supporting Idea 1

A.

Detail

1.

Supporting Idea 2

B.

Detail

1.

Body Paragraph 3

IV.

Supporting Idea 1

A.

Detail

1.

Supporting Idea 2

B.

Detail

1.

V. Concluding paragraph

STEP 4: WRITE YOUR FIRST DRAFT

Now it is time to write your first draft. Here are some suggestions on how to get started:

1 Use your outline, notes, and the sentences you wrote in the Your Turns and in Step 3 on page 41.
2 Focus on making your ideas as clear as possible.
3 Remember to add a title.

After you finish, read your essay and check for basic errors:

1 Check that all sentences have subjects and verbs.
2 Go through and look at every comma. Is it correct? Should it be a period?
3 Check that you have used a comma after dependent clauses with *Although/While/Because*, etc., when they start a sentence.
4 Make sure your thesis statement and topic sentences are clear.

STEP 5: WRITE YOUR FINAL DRAFT

Before you write your final draft, do the following:

1 After you receive feedback on your first draft, review it carefully. Fix any errors.
2 Make a note of errors that were most frequent (wrong verb tense, using commas instead of periods, etc.). Try to avoid them as you write.
3 Review the Academic Vocabulary and Collocations from this unit. Are there any that you can add to your essay?
4 Turn to page 262 and use the Self-Editing Review to check your work one more time.
5 Write your final draft and hand it in.