

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 351 587

CE 062 489

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 IDENTIFIERS General Motors Corporation; \*Workplace Literacy

ABSTRACT

This document, developed by Mercer County Community College (New Jersey) and its partners, offers lists of topics covered in each day of a 24-day course designed to teach General Motors employees the following skills: document information; write clear directions and instructions; outline and organize thoughts and ideas; write memos and business letters; and construct sentences, paragraphs, and short essays. In addition, the document contains an exercise on writing clear directions, a checklist for writers, and course evaluation questionnaires. References are made to handouts that are not part of the document. (CML)

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ED 351 587

# WRITING FOR MANUFACTURING PERSONNEL

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MERCER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
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CF 062 489

**OVERVIEW OF WORKPLACE LITERACY PROJECT**  
Skills for Tomorrow, NOW

The Workplace Literacy Project resulted from a Department of Education grant, plus in-kind contributions from a partnership with General Motors Inland Fisher Guide Plant, Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory, and St. Francis Medical Center. The project is an attempt to find solutions to the growing "skills gap" in industry today. More than 25 million Americans cannot read the front page of a newspaper. In addition, workers whose average ages are rising, must produce in a technological environment that may not have existed when they began working. This lack of knowledge makes it difficult to compete in a technologically changing workplace. Moreover, an increasing number of immigrants have entered the workforce with limited English communication skills. In response to this growing need, the Federal government provided a grant to Mercer County Community College and its partners to develop ways to enrich and expand employees' basic workplace knowledge. The aim of the project was also to improve the self-esteem of the participants.

Support for the project was solicited from all levels of company management and the unions. In addition, an advisory council, comprising key management and employees from each company determined the design, goals, and time-frame of the project. Each company provided a liaison person from their site, and MCCC hired a director to manage the program. Employee release time for classes was site-specific.

Participation in the program was voluntary. Information about classes was disseminated through company letters, flyers, union notices, notices included with paychecks, and open forums with supervisors and employees.

The ABLE test was used for normative pre and post testing. Other types of evaluations varied from course to course. MCCC counselors met with each student to discuss present and future educational objectives.

Courses were offered in reading, business writing, math, science, and English as a Second Language. In addition, there were workshops in problem solving, stress management, and other work survival skills. The curricula for the courses were customized for each worksite to be as job focused as possible.

It is our hope that this program will serve as a model for other organizations to empower their employees with the skills needed to succeed in the changing technological workplace, today and in the future.

## Writing G.M.

FN 908

Section 9391

This course is designed to prepare G.M. employees to use written and oral communication skills in presenting and sharing ideas and information in workplace interactions. It entails the competencies of documenting information, writing clear directions/instructions, outlining and organizing thoughts and ideas, writing memos and business letters, and constructing sentences, paragraphs, and short essays. The course also identifies and addresses common writing problems; run-on sentences and sentence fragments, ambiguity and illogical organization, stiff, stilted, dull, or wordy writing, misuse or disuse of transitional words, and common spelling errors.

## WRITTEN/ORAL COMMUNICATION

### UNIT I: LISTENING SKILLS (4 DAY UNIT)

- L1 - Listening Comprehension (Interview)
- L2 - Listening Comprehension (Listening to Article)
- L3 - Oral Presentation (Problem with Presentation & Interpretation)
- L4 - Oral Presentation (Role Playing & Active Listening)

### UNIT II: NOTES, LISTS, FORMS, LOGS, PROCEDURES, DOCUMENTATION (4 DAY UNIT)

- N1 - Filling Out Forms
- N2 - Documentation
- N3 - Procedure Writing
- N4 - Note Taking

### UNIT III: OUTLINING AND SUMMARIZING (2 DAY UNIT)

- O1 - Outlining
- O2 - Summarizing

### UNIT IV: DESCRIPTIVE WRITING (6 DAY UNIT)

- D1 - Adjectives and Sensory Words
- D2 - Prepositions
- D3 - Writing Clearly (2 days)
- D4 - Writing a Memo
- D5 - Writing a Letter or Complaint

### UNIT V: PARAGRAPH WRITING (8 DAY UNIT)

- P1 - Compare & Contrast Paragraph
- P2 - Explanatory Paragraph
- P3 - Procedure Process Paragraph
- P4 - Persuasive Paragraph

WRITING

DAY 1

L1 Listening Comprehension (Interview)

1. Icebreaker Activity:

- Partners (Interview - 10 minutes)
- Oral Introduction of Partner
- Importance of Oral Communication

2. Characteristics of good/bad listeners:

L2 Listening Comprehension (Article)

- Teacher reads "Big Plans for a Small Car."
- Students write responses to listening comprehension questions

**L3 Oral Presentation of Job Task**

- Slowly
- Clearly
- Technical words
- Sequence
- Pitch
- Rate

**1. Job Task Description**

- Other student duplicates instructions.
- Match/evaluation  
(Need small items: cups, pens, boxes, props)

**2. Brainstorming**

- Problems in presentation/interpretation



L4 Oral Presentation - Role Playing, Active Listening

1. Oral Presentation

- Role Playing (Supervisor/Employee situation)
- Write script, in pairs

2. Quality Circle

- Expressing feelings on job related topics

3. Active Listening

- Clear: Needs known
- Non-threatening

N1 Filling out Forms

1. Skills:

- Providing information (personal data, job history, etc.)
- Interpreting a form already filled out
- Application of skill - filling out a blank form

2. Use of GM forms:

- Vacation Request
- Unemployment
- Job Application

N2 Documentation (Intro to concept, Recording of facts & logs)

1. Read Procedure:

- What to do when defective parts is found

2. Write:

- Documentation of defect in part (Worker)
- Supervisors written response on how to handle defect

3. Other:

- Visual Inspection for Packers

A. Alignment of Tape

B. Bubbles in Tape

- ex: the last two inches of tape have noticeable bubbles

C. Finish on Part

- ex: the finish is smooth & dull in others

D. Complete Paint Coverage

E. Excessive Paint

F. Length, Mitze & Chisel

G. Width

H. Height

N3 Procedure Writing (Lists!! Not in paragraph form)

1. Lists of step-by-step job related task methods
2. Specific Vocabulary: (Sequence words)
3. Verbs of Activity: (related to job)
  - join, connect, adhere.....
4. Eliminating excess words (Editing)
5. Grey Manual: ((Tool Room) p. 1-2)
  - Lockout Procedure A-D
  - Radial Drill Operators, p. 5,6
  - Analysis of Written Procedures before writing their own

N4 Note Taking

1. From: Gasoline vs. Electric: The Trade Offs are Tricky
  - Content in comparison/contrast article
  - Teacher orally reads article
  - Students take notes
  - Form list pros and cons
- 2 Oral Debate in class
  - Students present points of view, Gas vs. Electric

01 Outlining

1. General Outlining Skills

A. \_\_\_\_\_ (general ideas)

- 1.     )
- 2.     )     Details
- 3.     )

B. \_\_\_\_\_

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

2. Worker writes job descriptions and then categorize them and organize them into an outline (sorting, lifting, placing, connecting)

3. Organization of Thoughts in outline form for Paragraph writing

02 Summarizing

1. What is summarizing?
2. Handout - 02
  - Listen to article, read aloud as they follow along with own copies .
  - Summarize in 3 sentences
  - Summary words (therefore, in conclusion, in ending)
  - Summarizing for paragraph/letter writing

D1 Descriptive Writing

1. Adjectives: Use of sensory words
  
2. Write a description:
  - of machine or equipment used
  - of working conditions
  - of relation with co-workers, supervisor
  - of GM cafeteria food
  - of what the "perfect" car would look and perform like



D2 Prepositions

1. Prepositional phrases:
  - Write jobs tasks using varying prepositional phrases
  - Nuances of meanings (near, next to, beside, by)
  - How are they different?
2. Role playing of worker doing a task while others write down what they are seeing.
3. Write a task that incorporates a prepositional phrase and workers perform tasks.

D3 Writing Clearly (2 day activity)

1. Effective tips include:

- Avoid jargons
- Descriptive language
- Brevity
- Sequence of ideas
- Verbosity

D4 Writing a Memo

1. Format, Purpose:
  - Time saving
  - Convenience
  - Written Record
2. Workers write memos

D5 Writing a Letter of Complaint

1. Comparison of two letters of complaint
  - cause of problem
  - method of solving it
2. Workers do their own

P1 Paragraph Writing (2 day activity)

1. Write a Compare & Contrast Paragraph

I. Topic Statement

- Point by Point
- One side at a time

P2 Writing an Explanatory Paragraph (2 day activity)

I. Topic Sentence -

- Key words of explanation (adverbs - because, when ...)
- Workers choose topic (related to job task)
- Write explanation of job place or problem
- Read aloud to another
- Switch papers

P3 Writing a Procedure or Process Paragraph (Sequence)

I. Topic Sentence

II. Transitional words

- First, second, ..., next, ..., furthermore...

1. Workers write a simple procedure of job task

2. Read aloud, see if others can follow and repeat

**P4** Persuasive Paragraph

- I. Topic Sentence with Point of View
- II. Three-Five specific details to support topic sentence  
(why)
- III. Conclusion of Paragraph
  1. Skills:
    - Persuasive words (efficient, beneficial, encouragement...)
  2. Write a persuasive paragraph explaining some plan for improvement at GM



## Writing

	most helpful				least help- ful
Listening Skills	4	3	2	1	
Writing Clear Directions	4	3	2	1	
Descriptive Writing / Writing With Detail	4	3	2	1	
How To Write Clearly	4	3	2	1	
Outlining For An Essay	4	3	2	1	
Introduction.. Conclusion	4	3	2	1	
Main Ideas.. Supporting Details (Paragraphs)	4	3	2	1	
A Checklist For Writers					
Writing Style	4	3	2	1	
Writing A Letter Of Complaint, Request, Thanks	4	3	2	1	
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Structure In Writing:					
Sentences ---	4	3	2	1	
Sentences and Sentence Fragments					
Sentence Structure					
Varying Sentence Length And Structure					
Topic Sentences and Transitional Words					
Word Use---	4	3	2	1	
Using Specific Words, Connotation					
Words Often Confused					
The Preposition					
Logical Organization---	4	3	2	1	
Essay Revision---	4	3	2	1	

## Writing Clear Directions

The purpose of this exercise is to develop good direction writing skills.

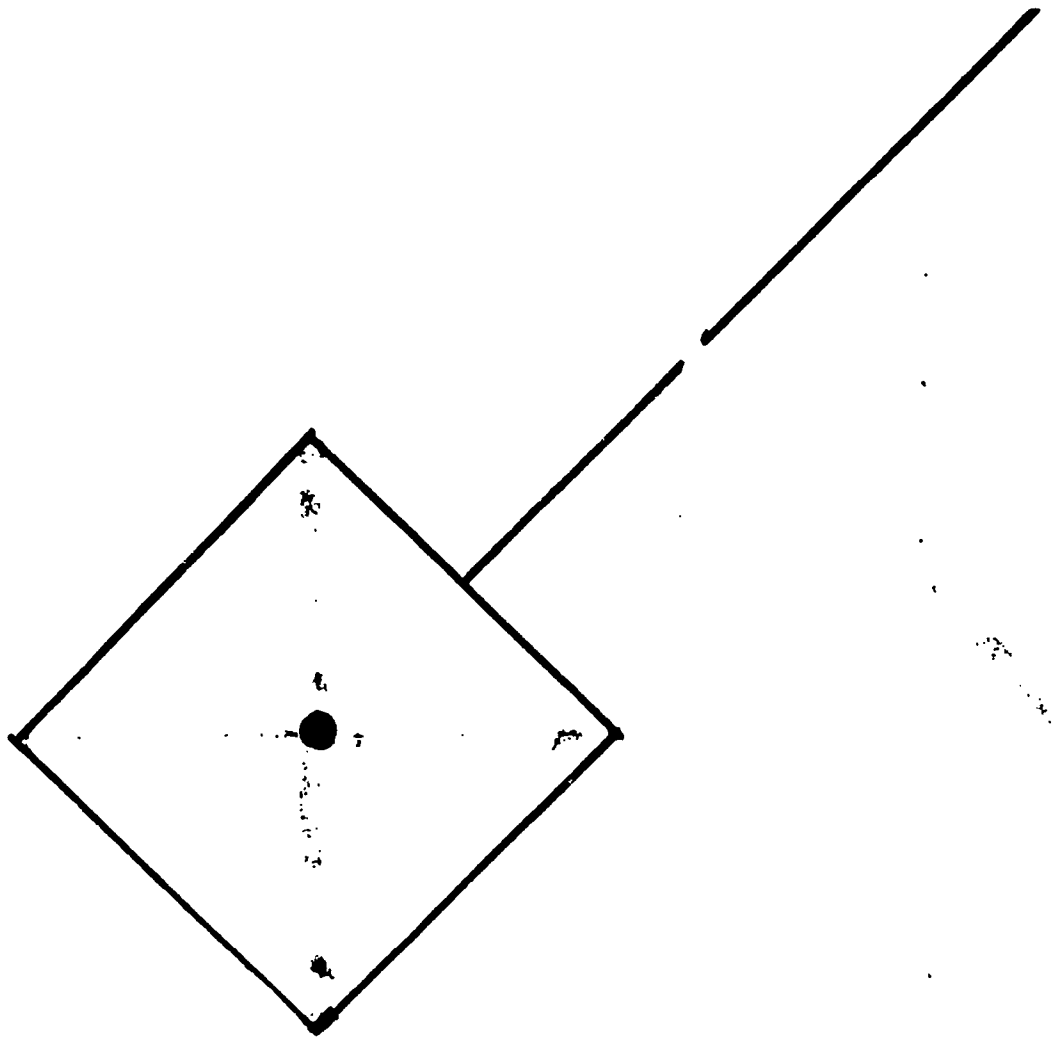
Students are presented with a diagram. They are instructed to work together in small groups to come up with very clear directions as to how to produce the identical diagram. Then the instructions are given to another group and they try to reproduce the diagram.

The next group of papers exemplifies this exercise.

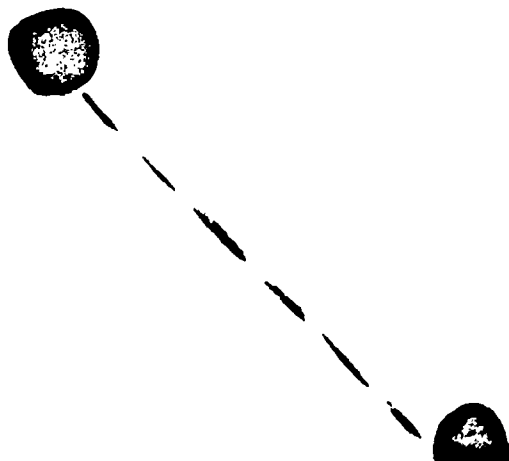
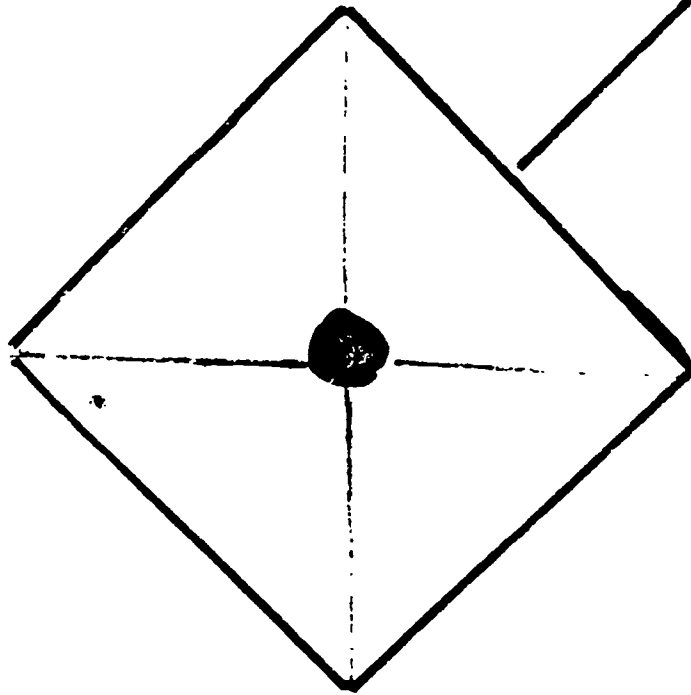
First... the instructions/ directions ( produced by the group)

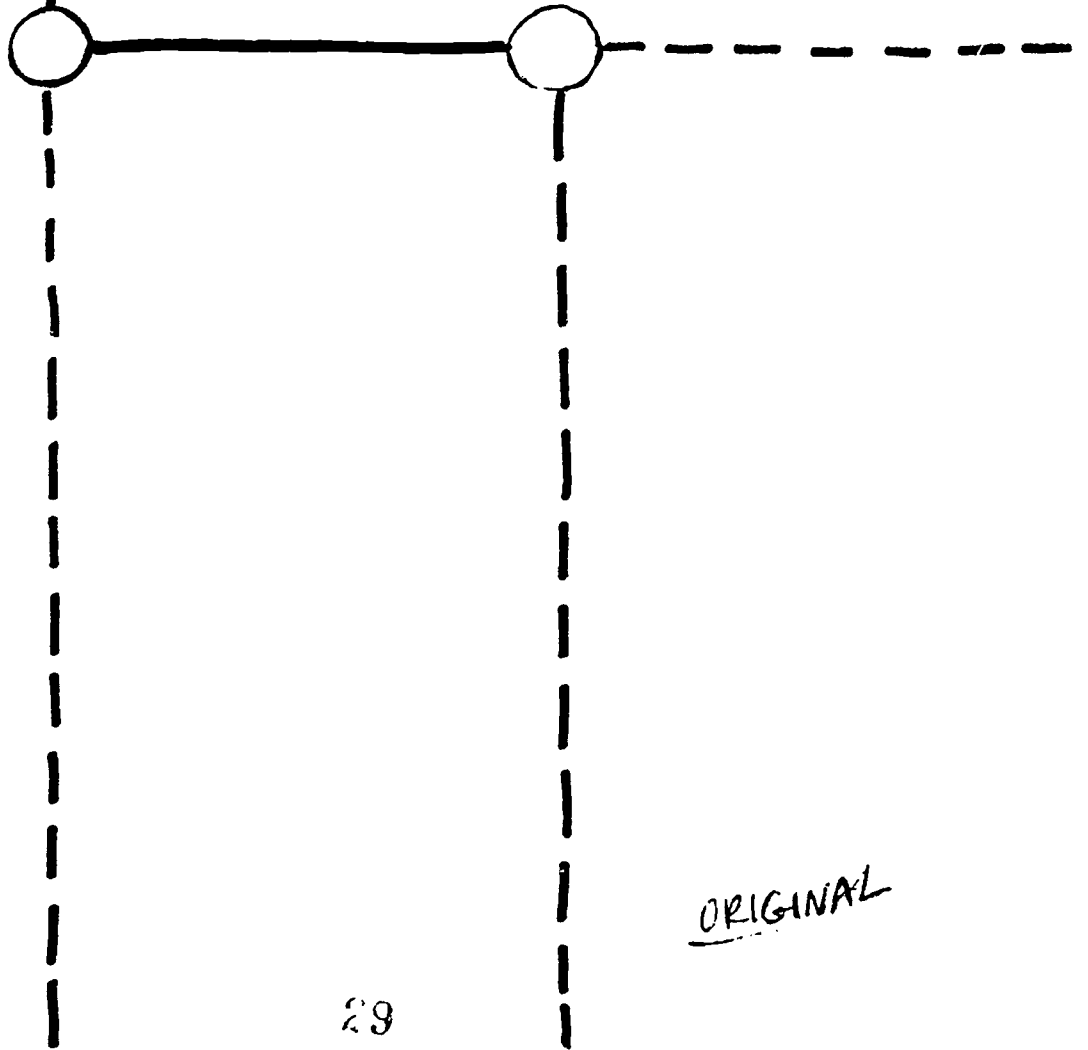
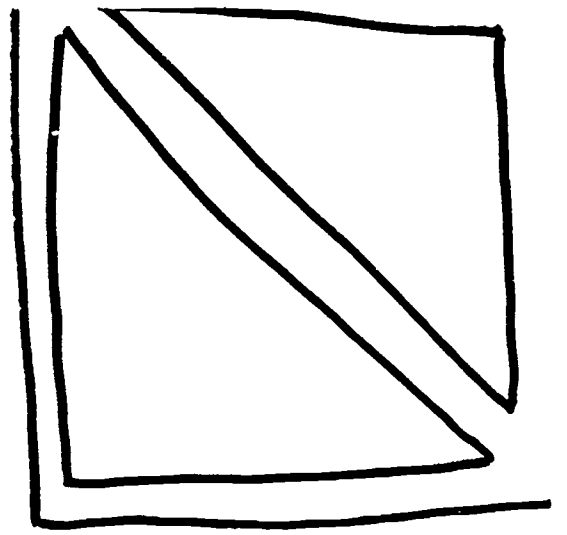
Second... the original diagram

Third... the diagram produced by the second group reading/using the directions produced by the first group

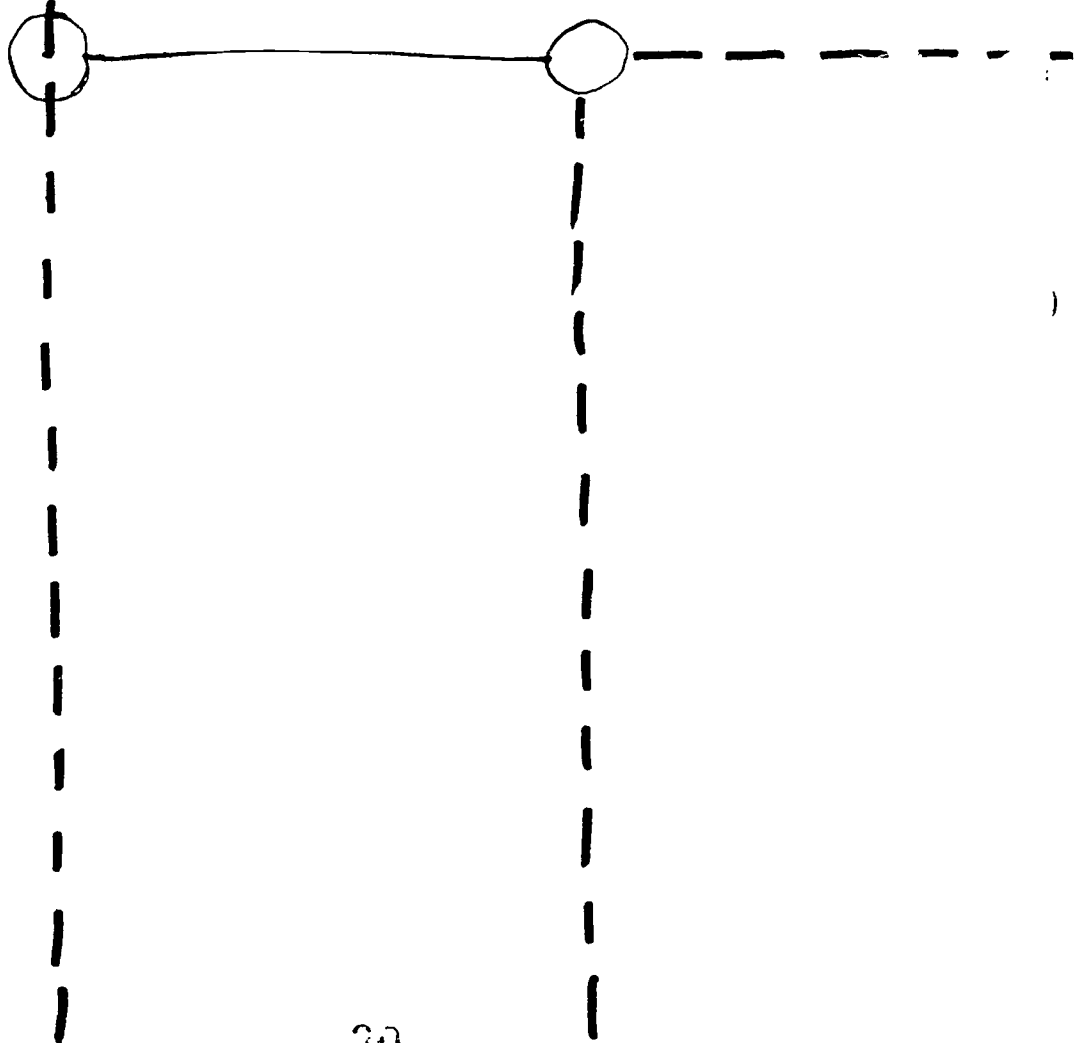
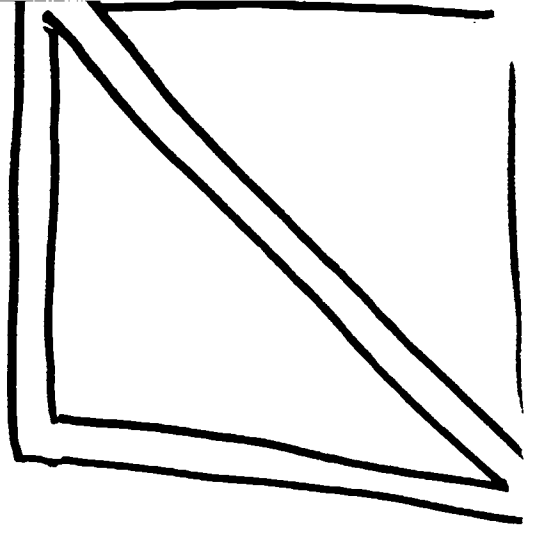


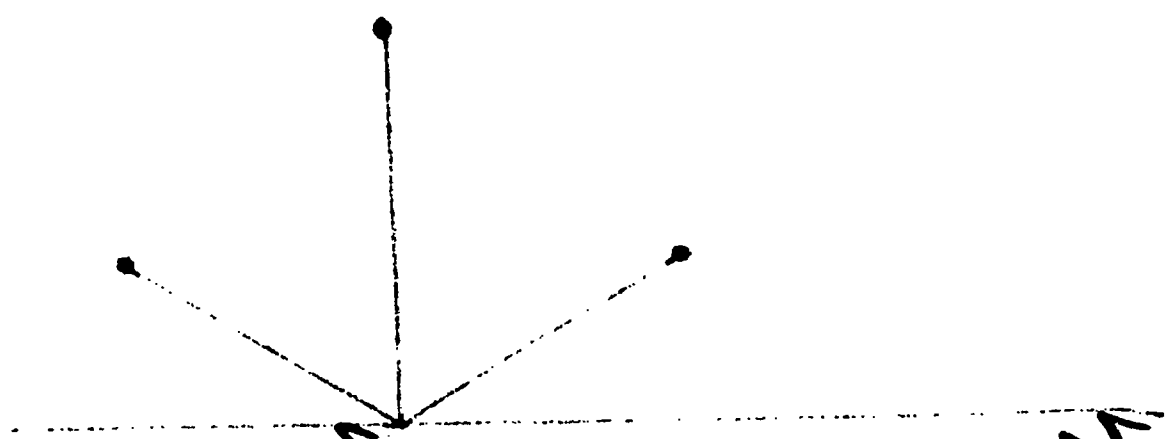
ORIGINAL



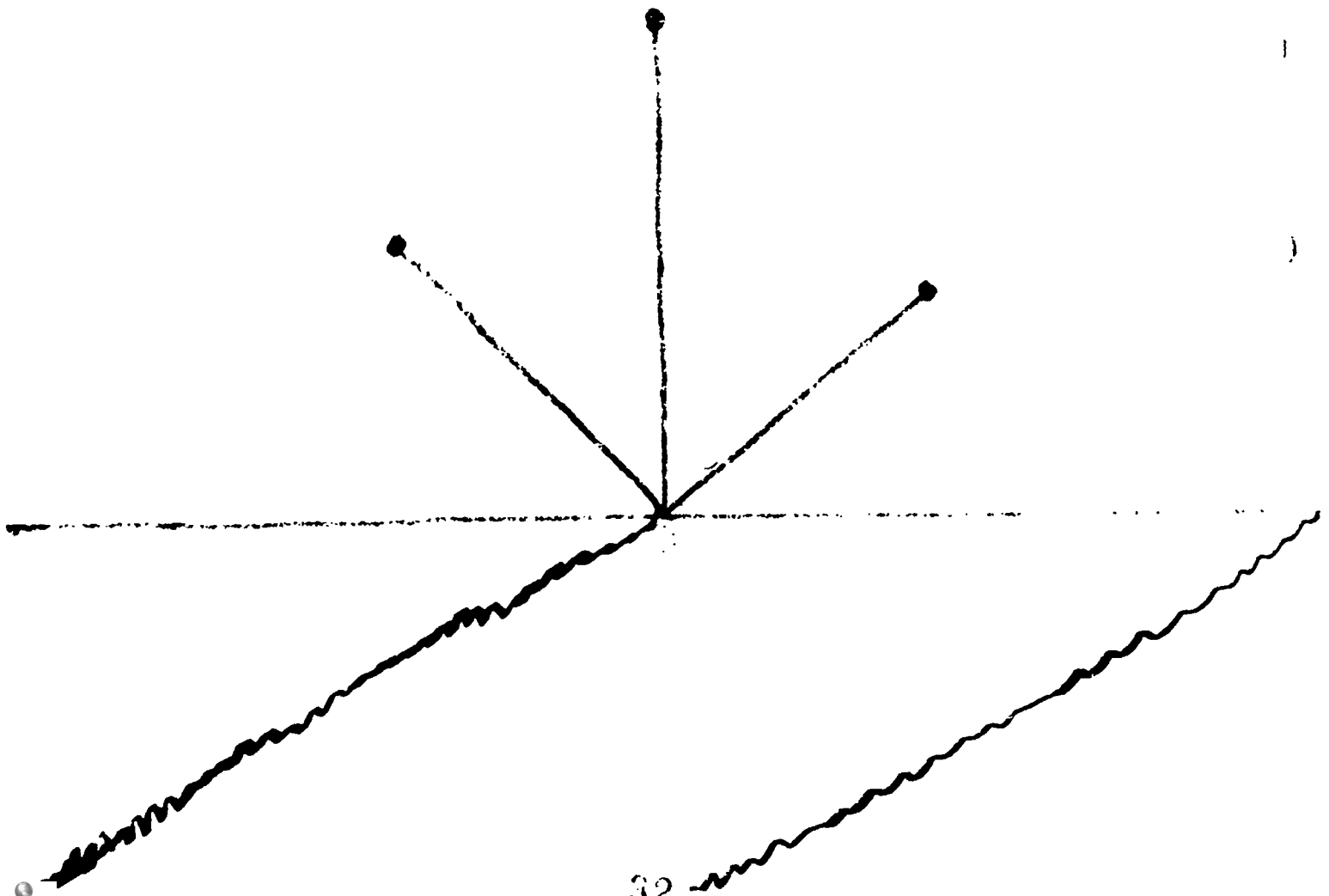


ORIGINAL





ORIGINAL





# A CHECKLIST FOR WRITERS

## TITLE

- 1. Does it grab the reader's attention?
- 2. Is it an accurate reflection of the subject to be covered?

## SENTENCES

- 1. Is each sentence; a complete sentence, a fragment, a run on?
- 2. Is there variety in sentence structure?
- 3. Is there variety in sentence length?

## PARAGRAPHS

- 1. Do all the sentences belong in this paragraph?
- 2. Is there one central idea?
- 3. Is there transitions between sentences? between paragraphs?

## INTRODUCTION

- 1. Does it give the reader an idea of what will follow?
- 2. Is it interesting + does it catch the reader's attention?

3.

## CONCLUSION

- 1. Does it "récap" what was said?
- 2. Does it take a position or point of view?
- 3. Does it leave the reader with a memorable thought?

## \* STYLE

- 1. direct
- 2. variety.
- 3. descriptive language.
- 4. "flow"

## \* SPELLING + PUNCTUATION

- 1. When in doubt, look it up!
- 2. check for capital letters, periods, commas, semicolons, colons, question mark

# WRITING STYLE

TITLE:		-	+/-	+
		POOR	FAIR	GOOD
1	clear, to the point, simple, direct			
2	variety in sentence structure + length			
3	variety in word choice, use of descriptive language			
4	good "flow" (transitions + logical ordering)			

TITLE:		POOR	+/-	GOOD
		-	FAIR	+
1	clear, to the point, simple, direct			
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4	good "flow" (transitions + logical ordering)			

**Assignment:** 5- paragraph essay...introduction, 3 main ideas with supporting details, conclusion

**Topic:** G.M. related or human interest story of your choice.

**Skills:** use of an outline

main idea backed up by supporting details

focus on writing style

focus on writing form

"flow" and transitional words

editing and revision

## Final Evaluation

### Writing

Please answer the following questions.

- 1) How do you rate the course?
  
- 2) How do you rate the instruction? the teacher?, The materials?
  
- 3) What areas of study did you find the most useful?
  
- 4) Which areas were the least useful?
  
- 5) Are there additional areas of study that you feel should be included in the course?
  
- 6) Are there areas of study that you feel would have benefitted from more time and/or attention?

- 7) Any additional Comments?

## Writing

	most helpful			least help- ful
Listening Skills	4	3	2	1
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How To Write Clearly	4	3	2	1
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Structure In Writing:				
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Sentences and Sentence Fragments				
Sentence Structure				
Varying Sentence Length And Structure				
Topic Sentences and Transitional Words				
Word Use---	4	3	2	1
Using Specific Words, Connotation				
Words Often Confused				
The Preposition				
Logical Organization---	4	3	2	1
Essay Revision---	4	3	2	1

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Anagbo

**Final Evaluation**

**Writing**

July 12, 1991

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