A note to instructors

Dear Colleagues:

I tell my students on the first day of class, *Everything you need to become a successful writer in any college course is in A Writer’s Reference; become friends with it. Buy it, and bring it to each class.* I give the students specific reasons — questions to answer or problems to solve — to open the handbook and see how the book is designed for them. Questions are a natural part of learning how to write, so I want students to start asking questions and learning how to find the answers in their handbook. One of my repeated queries in class is, *Where in your handbook will you find the answer to that question?*

The following are first-week activities designed to introduce your students to *A Writer’s Reference* and to help them develop the habit of using their handbook to answer all their writing questions. These activities — scavenger hunts, open-book quizzes, and more — will also promote collaboration; your students can work together as fellow writers while learning to navigate their handbook. The more comfortable they become using their handbook, the more confident and successful they will become as college writers.

With all good wishes,

Nancy Sommers
Scavenger Hunt #1
Finding answers to common writing questions

Work with a classmate to locate specific content in *A Writer’s Reference* — content that you’ll need as an academic writer.

1. You have a good idea for your first paper, but you're not sure how to draft an introduction to hook readers or how to draft a conclusion to end your paper. Where in *A Writer’s Reference* will you find strategies for drafting an introduction and drafting a conclusion?

2. Your first assignment calls for an effective thesis statement. Where in *A Writer’s Reference* will you find advice about drafting a thesis statement?

3. On your first paper, you receive feedback that your paragraphs are unfocused and need clearer topic sentences. Where in *A Writer’s Reference* will you find advice to help you write clear topic sentences and unify your paragraphs?

4. You've been asked to format your paper using MLA format. Where in *A Writer’s Reference* will you find examples of MLA essay formatting?

5. You are writing a researched argument and want to use a YouTube video as one of your sources. Where in *A Writer’s Reference* will you find a model for citing a video in MLA style?

6. You are writing a research paper and are uncertain how to punctuate quotations. You wonder whether the punctuation goes inside or outside the quotation marks. Where in *A Writer’s Reference* will you find instructions for punctuating quotations?

7. In a psychology class, you’ve been assigned to write a research paper using APA style. Where in *A Writer’s Reference* will you find the directory to APA in-text citation models?

8. In a communications course, you've been assigned to write an annotated bibliography for your research project. Where in *A Writer’s Reference* will you find guidelines for preparing an annotated bibliography?

9. You have been assigned to give an oral presentation in your criminal justice class. Where in *A Writer’s Reference* will you find advice on preparing a speech?
10. You have a question about an assignment and want to write an e-mail message to your professor. You want to be respectful and aren’t sure what tone and style to use when writing to a professor. Where in *A Writer’s Reference* will you find a sample e-mail message and advice about writing professional e-mail messages?
Scavenger Hunt #1
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Work with a classmate to locate specific content in A Writer’s Reference — content that you’ll need as an academic writer.

1. You have a good idea for your first paper, but you’re not sure how to draft an introduction to hook readers or how to draft a conclusion to end your paper. Where in A Writer’s Reference will you find strategies for drafting an introduction and drafting a conclusion?
   Strategies for drafting an introduction, pages 15–16 (C2-a); strategies for drafting a conclusion, page 20 (C2-c)

2. Your first assignment calls for an effective thesis statement. Where in A Writer’s Reference will you find advice about drafting a thesis statement?
   Pages 9–12 (C1-c)

3. On your first paper, you receive feedback that your paragraphs are unfocused and need clearer topic sentences. Where in A Writer’s Reference will you find advice to help you write clear topic sentences and unify your paragraphs?
   Pages 43–45 (C5-a)

4. You’ve been asked to format your paper using MLA format. Where in A Writer’s Reference will you find examples of MLA essay formatting?
   Pages 59–60 (C6) and 465–70 (MLA-5b)

5. You are writing a researched argument and want to use a YouTube video as one of your sources. Where in A Writer’s Reference will you find a model for citing a video in MLA style?
   Page 451 (MLA-4b)

6. You are writing a research paper and are uncertain how to punctuate quotations. You wonder whether the punctuation goes inside or outside the quotation marks. Where in A Writer’s Reference will you find instructions for punctuating quotations?
   Pages 309–11 (P5-e)

7. In a psychology class, you’ve been assigned to write a research paper using APA style. Where in A Writer’s Reference will you find the directory to APA in-text citation models?
   Page 473
8. In a communications course, you've been assigned to write an annotated bibliography for your research project. Where in *A Writer's Reference* will you find guidelines for preparing an annotated bibliography?
   Pages 386–89 (R3-e)

9. You have been assigned to give an oral presentation in your criminal justice class. Where in *A Writer's Reference* will you find advice on preparing a speech?
   Pages 113–19 (A5)

10. You have a question about an assignment and want to write an e-mail message to your professor. You want to be respectful and aren't sure what tone and style to use when writing to a professor. Where in *A Writer's Reference* will you find a sample e-mail message and advice about writing professional e-mail messages?
    Page 68
Scavenger Hunt #2
Using the handbook’s menus

Each of the following sentences breaks the rule that it expresses. Using either the brief main menu inside the front cover of the handbook or the detailed menu inside the back cover, find the section in A Writer’s Reference that explains the principle. Then fix the problem.

Work in small groups. The first group with the correct handbook sections — and with five correctly edited sentences — wins.

1. A verb have to agree with its subject.

2. Each pronoun should agree with their antecedent.

3. About sentence fragments. Academic writers should avoid them.

4. Don’t write a run-on sentence, you must connect independent clauses with a comma and a coordinating conjunction or with a semicolon.

5. When dangling watch your modifiers.
Scavenger Hunt #2
Using the handbook’s menus

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Work in small groups. The first group with the correct handbook sections — and with five correctly edited sentences — wins.

1. A verb have to agree with its subject.
   
   **G1. A verb has to agree with its subject.**

2. Each pronoun should agree with their antecedent.
   
   **G3. Each pronoun should agree with its antecedent.**

3. About sentence fragments. Academic writers should avoid them.
   
   **G5. Academic writers should avoid sentence fragments. [possible revision]**

4. Don’t write a run-on sentence, you must connect independent clauses with a comma and a coordinating conjunction or with a semicolon.
   
   **G6. Don’t write a run-on sentence; you must connect independent clauses with a comma and a coordinating conjunction or with a semicolon. [possible revision]**

5. When dangling watch your modifiers.
   
   **S3. When you are writing, watch for dangling modifiers. [possible revision]**
Scavenger Hunt #3
Finding answers to common questions about comma usage

The comma was invented to help readers. What happens when commas are missing or are used inappropriately? Work in small groups to evaluate the following sentences. Identify the section in *A Writer’s Reference* that explains the relevant comma rule, and then revise each sentence for correct comma use.

1. After you shave Grandma would like to see you in the kitchen.
2. Join us Professor Sandaram to celebrate the opening of the STEM tutoring center.
3. It was a careless, ill-informed, policy.
5. Ozone depletion as far as research shows doesn’t work this way.
Scavenger Hunt #3
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The comma was invented to help readers. What happens when commas are missing or are used inappropriately? Work in small groups to evaluate the following sentences. Identify the section in *A Writer’s Reference* that explains the relevant comma rule, and then revise each sentence for correct comma use.

1. After you shave Grandma would like to see you in the kitchen.
   
   P1-b. *After you shave, Grandma would like to see you in the kitchen.*

2. Join us Professor Sandaram to celebrate the opening of the STEM tutoring center.
   
   P1-g. *Join us, Professor Sandaram, to celebrate the opening of the STEM tutoring center.*

3. It was a careless, ill-informed, policy.
   
   P2-d. *It was a careless, ill-informed policy.*

   
   P2-e. *Pixar’s film *Inside Out* offers an animated lesson in preteen psychology.*

5. Ozone depletion as far as research shows doesn’t work this way.
   
   P1-f. *Ozone depletion, as far as research shows, doesn’t work this way.*
Scavenger Hunt #4
Using the glossary of usage

Work in small groups to explore the glossary of usage. For each italicized word, cite the page in the glossary that will help you evaluate whether the word is used correctly. Edit any sentences containing incorrect usage.

1. This afternoon I plan to lay out in the sun and work on my tan.

2. Please ask the professor if she will except late papers.

3. Our college lets first-year students choose between three different housing options.

4. I’m eager to talk to the student which sat next to me in my psychology class.

5. The students couldn’t effect the school’s decision to raise tuition.
Scavenger Hunt #4
Using the glossary of usage

Work in small groups to explore the glossary of usage. For each italicized word, cite the page in the glossary that will help you evaluate whether the word is used correctly. Edit any sentences containing incorrect usage.

1. This afternoon I plan to lay out in the sun and work on my tan.
   Page 167. This afternoon, I plan to lie out in the sun and work on my tan.

2. Please ask the professor if she will except late papers.
   Page 159. Please ask the professor if she will accept late papers.

3. Our college lets first-year students choose between three different housing options.
   Page 162. Our college lets first-year students choose among three different housing options.

4. I’m eager to talk to the student which sat next to me in my psychology class.
   Page 172. I’m eager to talk to the student who sat next to me in psychology class.

5. The students couldn’t effect the school’s decision to raise tuition.
   Page 159. The students couldn’t affect the school’s decision to raise tuition.
Editing Activity
Using *A Writer’s Reference* to revise an introduction and a thesis statement

Here is an introductory paragraph written by a student in a first-year composition class. Read the sections in *A Writer’s Reference* about drafting and revising a thesis statement and about drafting an introduction (C1-c and C2-a). Work with a partner to evaluate the student’s paragraph, using the advice in your handbook. What two or three recommendations would you make to the writer to help him revise his or her thesis statement and introduction?

When a cell phone goes off in a classroom or at a concert, we are irritated, but we are not endangered. When we are on the road, however, irresponsible cell phone users are more than irritating. Many of us have witnessed drivers dialing and chatting, weaving between lanes, and nearly running down pedestrians. Scientific research confirms the danger of using cell phones while driving. And common sense tells us that it is not possible to drive an automobile at high speeds, dial numbers, and carry on conversations without significant risks. What should we do about this national problem?
Editing Activity

Using *A Writer’s Reference* to revise an introduction and a thesis statement

Here is an introductory paragraph written by a student in a first-year composition class. Read the sections in *A Writer’s Reference* about drafting and revising a thesis statement and about drafting an introduction (C1-c and C2-a). Work with a partner to evaluate the student’s paragraph, using the advice in your handbook. What two or three recommendations would you make to the writer to help him revise his or her thesis statement and introduction?

[Many revisions are possible.]

When a cell phone goes off in a classroom or at a concert, we are irritated, but we are not endangered. When we are on the road, however, irresponsible cell phone users are more than irritating. Many of us have witnessed drivers dialing and chatting, weaving between lanes, and nearly running down pedestrians. Scientific research confirms the danger of using cell phones while driving. And common sense tells us that it is not possible to drive an automobile at high speeds, dial numbers, and carry on conversations without significant risks. What should we do about this national problem?

Pages 9–12 (C1-c) and 15–16 (C2-a). The introductory paragraph is too broad and unfocused, and it doesn’t spark curiosity. The paragraph would benefit from the writer using one of the strategies for drafting an introduction, such as offering a startling statistic or a vivid example (see page 16). The thesis needs to be an answer to a question, not the question itself — and the writer needs to take a specific position.
Open Book Quiz #1
Composing and revising (Tab C)

Circle the correct answer to each of the following questions. You may use your handbook, A Writer's Reference, if you need help.

1. Which of the following strategies would not work in an introduction?
   a. Provide background information
   b. Ask a question
   c. Define a key term
   d. Suggest a related topic for future study

2. When you step back to examine your decisions as a writer, you are practicing ________.
   a. peer review
   b. reflection
   c. revision
   d. clustering

3. Analyzing your ________ involves thinking about how best to appeal to readers and considering their potential objections to your ideas.
   a. audience
   b. purpose
   c. genre
   d. research

4. Which of the statements below is true for the following draft thesis statement? *The two best-selling video game systems, selling more than 150 million units each, are Sony’s PlayStation 2 and Nintendo’s DS Handheld.*
   a. Since this sentence is a question, it would not serve as an appropriate thesis statement for a college essay.
   b. Since this sentence is a fact, it would not serve as an appropriate thesis statement for a college essay.
   c. Since this sentence is too broad, it would not serve as an appropriate thesis statement for a college essay.
   d. This sentence would serve as an appropriate thesis statement for a college essay.

5. Which of the statements below is true for the following draft thesis statement? *Although Amazon changed the retail landscape in America in important ways, smaller start-up retailers with mobile innovations will cut into Amazon’s profits because of the speed at which they can deliver a product.*
   a. Since this sentence is a question, it would not serve as an appropriate thesis statement for a college essay.
   b. Since this sentence is a fact, it would not serve as an appropriate thesis statement for a college essay.
   c. Since this sentence is too broad, it would not serve as an appropriate thesis statement for a college essay.
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c. Since this sentence is too broad, it would not serve as an appropriate thesis statement for a college essay.
d. This sentence would serve as an appropriate thesis for a college essay.

6. Which of the statements below is true for the following draft thesis statement? *In order to improve the environment, Americans should recycle more.*
   a. Since this sentence is a question, it would not serve as an appropriate thesis statement for a college essay.
   b. Since this sentence is a fact, it would not serve as an appropriate thesis statement for a college essay.
   c. Since this sentence is too broad, it would not serve as an appropriate thesis statement for a college essay.
   d. This sentence would serve as an appropriate thesis for a college essay.

7. Which of the statements below would be a successful topic sentence for the following paragraph?

   *First, increased perspiration could be a telltale sign of lying. Polygraph machines actually measure perspiration. A second giveaway relates to the touching of the face and nose. A person who is lying will experience an increase in itching in the nose due to adrenaline. Finally, a quick and fleeting “microexpression,” such as the drawing upward of the eyebrows, could suggest that someone is not being truthful.*

   a. Physical signs can suggest whether or not a person is lying.
   b. Physical signs can suggest whether or not a person is telling the truth.
   c. Law enforcement uses advanced technology to detect lying.
   d. A psychologist can detect lying roughly 90 percent of the time.

8. Which of the following would you examine if you were asked to revise globally?
   a. Punctuation
   b. Sentence structure
   c. Spelling
   d. Organization
Open Book Quiz #1
Composing and revising (Tab C)

Circle the correct answer to each of the following questions. You may use your handbook, A Writer's Reference, if you need help.

1. Which of the following strategies would not work in an introduction?
   a. Provide background information
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2. When you step back to examine your decisions as a writer, you are practicing _____.
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   c. Since this sentence is too broad, it would not serve as an appropriate thesis statement for a college essay.
   d. This sentence would serve as an appropriate thesis for a college essay.

5. Which of the statements below is true for the following draft thesis statement? Although Amazon changed the retail landscape in America in important ways, smaller start-up retailers with mobile innovations will cut into Amazon’s profits because of the speed at which they can deliver a product.

© 2015 Bedford/St. Martin’s
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b. Since this sentence is a fact, it would not serve as an appropriate thesis statement for a college essay.
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   c. **Since this sentence is too broad, it would not serve as an appropriate thesis statement for a college essay.**
   d. This sentence would serve as an appropriate thesis for a college essay.

7. Which of the statements below would be a successful topic sentence for the following paragraph?

   *First, increased perspiration could be a telltale sign of lying. Polygraph machines actually measure perspiration. A second giveaway relates to the touching of the face and nose. A person who is lying will experience an increase in itching in the nose due to adrenaline. Finally, a quick and fleeting “microexpression,” such as the drawing upward of the eyebrows, could suggest that someone is not being truthful.*
   
a. **Physical signs can suggest whether or not a person is lying.**
   b. Physical signs can suggest whether or not a person is telling the truth.
   c. Law enforcement uses advanced technology to detect lying.
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   b. Sentence structure
   c. Spelling
   d. **Organization**
Open Book Quiz #2
Argument, critical reading, and research (Tabs A, R, and MLA)

Circle the correct answer to each of the following questions. You may use your handbook, *A Writer’s Reference*, if you need help.

1. Writing a summary involves ______.
   a. understanding an author’s ideas
   b. judging an author’s ideas
   c. Both a and b
   d. Neither a nor b

2. Writing an analysis involves ______.
   a. understanding an author’s ideas
   b. judging an author’s ideas
   c. Both a and b
   d. Neither a nor b

3. The following is an example of a logical fallacy: *Since EnergyPartners gives 12 percent of its profits to environmental charities, the company should be successful in selling its new home thermostat system.* Which type of fallacy does this statement demonstrate?
   a. *Post hoc*
   b. *Straw man*
   c. *False analogy*
   d. *Non sequitur*

4. The following sentence demonstrates an appeal to readers’ ______:
   *After all, since one in three urban residents lacks access to a nearby park or natural area, city schoolchildren will benefit from outdoor education units in their school curriculum.*
   a. *ethos* (credibility)
   b. *logos* (logic)
   c. *pathos* (emotion)

5. Which of the following needs no citation because it is common knowledge?
   a. Coca-Cola is one of the most recognizable brands worldwide.
   b. The contoured Coca-Cola bottle, though created in 1916, was not trademarked until 1977.
c. In the carbonated soft drink market, Coca-Cola boasted 42 percent market share in 2014.
d. Coca-Cola was sued for misleading consumers about the dietary benefits of its Vitaminwater brand.

6. A way of thinking that prevents a person or group from being objective or impartial is called _______.
a. sexism  
b. bias  
c. scholarship  
d. focus

7. Identify the signal phrase in the following sentence: Genetic testing isn’t widely offered for cancer patients, but oncology specialist Dr. David Solit shares his hope that “it will be at some point” (45).
a. Genetic testing isn’t widely offered for cancer patients  
b. oncology specialist Dr. David Solit shares his hope that  
c. “it will be at some point” (45)  
d. There is no signal phrase in the sentence.

8. Read the following original source and a student paraphrase of the source. Is the paraphrase acceptable or plagiarized?
   **Original:** Women’s literacy in Afghanistan is among the lowest in the world — about 14 percent. However, a change has taken place. Previously, only 3 percent of girls went to school; now about 36 percent receive education (ungei.org).
   **Student paraphrase:** According to ungei.org, women’s literacy in Afghanistan is nearly the lowest worldwide — about 14 percent. However, a change has occurred. Only 3 percent of girls went to school in the past; now about 36 percent receive schooling (ungei.org).

a. The paraphrase is plagiarized because the writer has just used synonyms and has not varied the sentence structure.
b. The paraphrase is plagiarized because the writer has not cited the source of the information.
c. The paraphrase is acceptable.
Open Book Quiz #2

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   *After all, since one in three urban residents lacks access to a nearby park or natural area, city schoolchildren will benefit from outdoor education units in their school curriculum.*

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   a. *Coca-Cola is one of the most recognizable brands worldwide.*
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   a. The paraphrase is plagiarized because the writer has just used synonyms and has not varied the sentence structure.
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   c. The paraphrase is acceptable.
Open Book Quiz #3
Grammar and punctuation (Tabs G and P)

Circle the correct answer to each of the following questions. You may use your handbook, *A Writer’s Reference*, if you need help.

1. Identify the sentence fragment.
   a. I cried.
   b. When my aunt told me she was moving back to Lebanon.
   c. Both a and b are sentence fragments.
   d. Neither a nor b is a sentence fragment.

2. Identify the sentence in which the subject and verb do not agree.
   a. The bridge program helps high school seniors transition to college.
   b. The students in the bridge program were nominated by their high school guidance counselors.
   c. The students in the bridge program is successful because they have academic mentors.
   d. A mentor for bridge students provides support and information.

3. Which of the following sentences is clearer because it has no problems with pronoun reference?
   a. Making online math enrichment more like a game with points and badges may motivate learners in grades 1–5. The change in format could foster enthusiasm for math in middle school and beyond.
   b. Making online math enrichment more like a game with points and badges may motivate learners in grades 1–5. This could foster enthusiasm for math in middle school and beyond.
   c. Both a and b have problems with pronoun reference.
   d. Neither a nor b has a problem with pronoun reference.

4. The following is a run-on sentence: *Previously, distracted driving was thought to be a factor in 14 percent of teen car accidents, a new study puts that figure at nearly 60 percent.* Which of the following choices is an acceptable edit?
   a. Previously, distracted driving was thought to be a factor in 14 percent of teen car accidents. A new study puts that figure at nearly 60 percent.
   b. Previously, distracted driving was thought to be a factor in 14 percent of teen car accidents, but a new study puts that figure at nearly 60 percent.
   c. Previously, distracted driving was thought to be a factor in 14 percent of teen car accidents; a new study puts that figure at nearly 60 percent.
   d. All of the above are acceptable.
5. In which of the following sentences is a comma needed before “her neighbor”?
   a. She often told her neighbor she had seen coyotes in the field.
   b. After watching out her back window for weeks to catch a glimpse of the animal that was eating the blueberries right off the bush, she was astonished to discover that the culprit was her neighbor.
   c. While she dressed her neighbor waited downstairs.
   d. None of the sentences needs a comma before “her neighbor.”

6. Identify the sentence in which the comma is (or the commas are) unnecessary.
   a. Arman saw the accident, and he called for help.
   b. Arman saw the accident, and rushed to the scene.
   c. Arman saw the accident, called for help, and rushed to the scene.
   d. The commas are necessary in all of the sentences.

7. Identify the sentence in which the apostrophe is used correctly.
   a. The NHL’s Montreal Canadiens have won more championships than any other NHL team.
   b. Hockey player’s trained on synthetic ice generally have improved leg strength.
   c. The team saw it’s chances of winning slip away in the third period.
   d. Womens’ ice hockey programs are growing nationally.

8. Which of the following sentences needs quotation marks?
   a. The tutor asked me to tell him my main idea.
   b. The tutor asked, “What is your main idea?”
   c. The tutor said that my main idea wasn’t clear.
   d. All of the sentences need quotation marks.
Open Book Quiz #3
Grammar and punctuation (Tabs G and P)

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4. The following is a run-on sentence: Previously, distracted driving was thought to be a factor in 14 percent of teen car accidents, a new study puts that figure at nearly 60 percent. Which of the following choices is an acceptable edit?
   a. Previously, distracted driving was thought to be a factor in 14 percent of teen car accidents. **A new study puts that figure at nearly 60 percent.**
   b. Previously, distracted driving was thought to be a factor in 14 percent of teen car accidents, but a new study puts that figure at nearly 60 percent.
   c. Previously, distracted driving was thought to be a factor in 14 percent of teen car accidents; a new study puts that figure at nearly 60 percent.
   d. **All of the above are acceptable.**
5. In which of the following sentences is a comma needed before “her neighbor”?
   a. She often told her neighbor she had seen coyotes in the field.
   b. After watching out her back window for weeks to catch a glimpse of 
      the animal that was eating the blueberries right off the bush, she was 
      astonished to discover that the culprit was her neighbor.
   c. While she dressed her neighbor waited downstairs.
   d. None of the sentences needs a comma before “her neighbor.”

6. Identify the sentence in which the comma is (or the commas are) 
   unnecessary.
   a. Arman saw the accident, and he called for help.
   b. Arman saw the accident, and rushed to the scene.
   c. Arman saw the accident, called for help, and rushed to the scene.
   d. The commas are necessary in all of the sentences.

7. Identify the sentence in which the apostrophe is used correctly.
   a. The NHL’s Montreal Canadiens have won more championships 
      than any other NHL team.
   b. Hockey player’s trained on synthetic ice generally have improved leg 
      strength.
   c. The team saw it’s chances of winning slip away in the third period.
   d. Womens’ ice hockey programs are growing nationally.

8. Which of the following sentences needs quotation marks?
   a. The tutor asked me to tell him my main idea.
   b. The tutor asked, What is your main idea?
   c. The tutor said that my main idea wasn’t clear.
   d. All of the sentences need quotation marks.