

# Something New Essay

English 12

Mr. Monsen

**Directions:** Complete steps 1-13 in your notebook.

**Step 1: Brainstorm** ideas for your Something New Essay by completing the activities below:

- 1) List ten new things that you learned in the past year (the more unique and interesting the topic the better)
- 2) Rank the top five most interesting topics from your list
- 3) Choose one of the topics off the list you just created and explain a little about what you learned about this topic
- 4) Choose another topic off the list you just created and explain a little about what you learned about that topic

**Step 2: Read** the “Something New Essay Scenario, Directions, and Grading Criteria” below. **Then, study the rubric** for this piece so you understand how you will be graded.

## **Something New Essay Scenario, Directions, and Grading Criteria**

**Read This Scenario:** Every summer, I get into my RV with my family and travel around the country. More often than not, I am intrigued and excited by all the new things, no matter how simple they may be, that I learn along our journey. I think to myself that I would love to share some of these new things that I have learned with my students. I truly believe that knowledge is power, and the more things you learn in life, the better off you are in many ways. As a result, that caused me to come up with this writing assignment. So, when you are done reading the directions and grading criteria for this assignment below, read the sample essay I wrote on the back of this page and use it as a guide.

**Directions:** Write a 400-500 word informative essay where you explain something new that you learned in the past year of your life - the more unique the topic, the better. Keep the grading criteria below in mind when writing your essay.

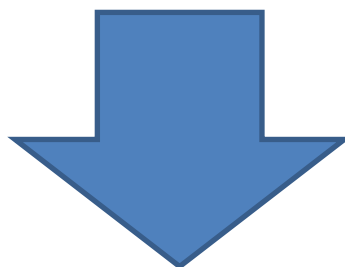
**Grading Criteria:**

- The language (words you use) and sentences structure should be representative of that of a high school senior
- Essay must have a clear focus (not drift from topic to topic or off topic at all)
- Essay must be organized clearly (not one long paragraph)
- Essay must be virtually free of grammar and spelling errors

	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Language/Sentence Structure</b>	Language is sophisticated and sentence structure is excellent	Some use of sophisticated language and sentence structure is good	Uses sophisticated language at times and basic sentence structure	Little sophisticated language used and sentence structure is weak	Below average language/vocabulary and sentence structure hurts comprehension of material
<b>Focus</b>	Essay has a laser-like focus	Essay is very focused	Essay is focused for the most part	Essay somewhat focused	Essay is not focused at all
<b>Organization and Development</b>	Essay is well developed and organized into successful paragraphs	Essay is developed and organized into paragraphs	Essay is somewhat developed and organized	Essay is unorganized and hard to understand	Essay is completely unorganized and unreadable
<b>Spelling/Grammar</b>	Essay has virtually NO errors	Very few mistakes in spelling, grammar, and punctuation	Some mistakes	Many mistakes. Essay difficult to read	Essay is unreadable due to number of errors in spelling, grammar/punctuation

\_\_\_\_\_ **X5** = \_\_\_\_\_ **(Final Grade)**

**Step 3: Read** the sample Something New Essay on the next page.



## The Power of Wind

By Mr. Monsen

Imagine driving along a mind-numbingly straight road where all there is to see for hundreds of miles are corn fields and... wind turbines. Doesn't sound like a likely match, but the Midwest states of the United States have made this pairing a common sight along many highways and backroads that intersect our nation's heartland.



Wind turbines have become a useful tool for creating energy, while many still complain about their ugly presence ruining the natural beauty of a landscape. These turbines create a form of energy called Wind Energy. Considered too unpredictable by many, too difficult to manage, and too costly to set up, wind turbines harness wind energy that is actually created by the sun. Solar radiation unevenly heats the Earth's surface, causing hot air to rise and cool air to replace it. As a result, you get wind and wind energy. Someone came up with the idea of creating these "turbines", which look like huge rotating fans, and putting them around the country, mostly in the Midwest and West, where winds are more prevalent, to create a renewable source of "clean" energy for our world.

There are many benefits to wind energy. The two most important benefits are the facts that wind energy is a green energy source (no pollution) and it's renewable (never runs out). That alone should be enough. However, as with anything new and different, there are opposing opinions, and some people think wind energy isn't worth the effort. Many think wind is too unpredictable and the cost to set up the turbines is too much. Some even feel that the threat to wildlife, particularly birds and other flying creatures, that comes with these turbines means we shouldn't even consider using them.

On one hand, I personally think wind energy is a great idea, especially because of its ability to reduce pollution in our world. On the other hand, I don't know if I'm ready to look at these wind turbines sitting in the Atlantic Ocean off our Long Island beaches, as has been proposed for years now. I feel very selfish for even saying that too. With that in mind, I do believe that wind energy will make its way into our society over the next twenty or so years. The United States aims to produce at least 20 percent of its electricity by wind power by 2030, so I guess we have no choice.

One wind turbine can generate enough electricity to power 600 U.S. homes. They may not be pleasing to the eye, but their advantages can't be denied. The next time I am driving through Iowa's cornfields and I see wind turbines filling the scenery, I will think to myself, maybe they are worth a try.

**Word Count:** 457

**Step 4:** Copy the Something new Essay Outline below into your notebook:

**Something New Essay  
Outline**  
(Informative Essay)

- I. Effective Lead**
  - Grab the reader's attention
- II. Explain the event/thing you are talking about**
  - In detail, explain the event/thing you learned
- III. Give your view/opinion on the event/thing you are talking about**
  - Give your view and explain why you feel the way you do or think this is something worth writing about
- IV. Wrap It Up**
  - Pull everything together neatly and memorably

**Step 5: Research** your topic and find facts and as many details as you can to include in your essay. The more unique the detail you find, the better it is and the more interesting your essay will be. *When you find enough information to include in your essay, you should then write the introduction of your essay.*

**Step 6: Complete** Parts I-IV of the “Sentence Variety – Front Loaded and End Loaded Sentences” section below:

**Sentence Variety – Front-Loaded and End-Loaded Sentences**

**Part I – Defining the Skill:** Read the definition and example for each sentence type below and then copy them into your notebook.

**Front-Loaded Sentences**

**Definition** – A front-loaded sentence has the main point at the beginning. In a **front-loaded sentence**, the main point comes early in the sentence and a modifying phrase comes at the end. Front-loaded sentences seem to resemble the way we speak, with thoughts coming as they occur to us. They are far more common.

**Main Point**

**Modifying Phrase/Clause**

**Example** - The fire alarm went off, *making a loud clanging noise, startling everyone, and causing some people to knock over their chairs.*

## **End-Loaded Sentences**

**Definition** – An end-loaded sentence has the main point at the end. In an **end-loaded sentence**, the punch line is saved for the end, while the modifying phrase comes first. These types of sentences are less common, harder to write, and harder to understand, but, if not overused, emphatic.

**Modifying Phrase/Clause**

**Example** – *Because she knows the filing system, has more experience than the rest of the team, and can get into work at a moment's notice*, Sarah will be in charge of the office for now on.

**Main Point**

## **Why Use these Types of Sentences?**

It provides sentence variety for your reader! Readers like this and, therefore, stay engaged.

**Part II – Recognizing the Skill:** Use the information you just acquired in Part I to identify each sentence below as either a Front-Loaded Sentence (FL) or an End-Loaded Sentence (EL). Answer these in your notebook.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Although I sincerely regret having to tell you this and really hope that you will understand, I'm afraid to inform you that I've broken your favorite antique vase.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ The Internet provides an endless source of entertainment, because of the variety of websites, fun games, entertaining videos, and Wikipedia.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Because of the annoying ringing alarm, the knowledge that I'll have to unearth myself from my covers, and the realization that I have to go to school again, I find waking up to be one of the most unpleasant parts of the day.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ The speaker sent forth a passionate plea to the audience, making use of dramatic language, extended metaphors, and pauses for emphasis.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ With two raw blisters and now unable to carry my pack due to two broken ribs and broken collar bone, I stared at my dead cellphone.

**Part III – Practice Using the Skill:** Create Front-Loaded Sentence and End-Loaded Sentences from the phrases given to you. Do this in your notebook.

**Create a Front-Loaded Sentence:**

she decided to study English  
even though she was interested in music.

**Create an End-Loaded Sentence:**

Bill started to write his composition  
even though he wasn't really sure what the topic was

**Create a Front-Loaded Sentence:**

using great care  
Tom cut a piece of metal

**Create an End-Loaded Sentence:**

without my knowledge and my consent  
they completed the task.

**Part IV – Applying the Skill to Our Writing:** Write the first ten sentences of your Something New Essay in your notebook. Follow the guidelines below when writing these ten lines:

- Start in an interesting manner
- Use the outline in your notes as guide
- Use both a Front-Loaded and an End-Loaded Sentence within those first ten lines.

**Step 7:** Copy the “Combining Sentences Notes” below and **then complete the practice.** Lastly, **check** your **answers** using the Answer Key.

## Combining Sentences Notes

### What are Conjunctions?

Conjunctions are words that link other words or phrases together.

***Example:** I like cooking and eating, but I don't like washing dishes afterward. Sophie is clearly exhausted, yet she insists on dancing till dawn.*

Conjunctions allow you to form complex, elegant sentences and avoid the choppiness of multiple short sentences.

**Practice:** Combine each of these three pairs of sentences using the coordinating conjunctions listed below. Use each conjunction only one time and not all will be used.

*and, but, or, so, yet, nor*

1. Some students stay on the sidewalks. Some students cut across the grass.
2. Students have to park far from their classrooms. They are often late for class.
3. Trash cans have been placed all over campus. Students still throw garbage on the ground.

## Answer Key

1. Some students stay on the sidewalks, **and** some students cut across the grass.
2. Students have to park far from their classrooms, **so** they are often late for class.
3. Trash cans have been placed all over campus, **yet** students still throw garbage on the ground.

**Step 8:** Complete the “Parallel Structure Quiz” below in your notebook:

**Directions:** Number 1-10 in your notebook. Label this “**Parallel Structure Quiz**”. Now, read each sentence and write the word or phrase that best replaces the underlined part and creates Parallel Structure.

- 1 Learning a new language as an adult is more difficult than to learn one as a child.  
 learning  
 to learning  
 no change
- 2 Every morning, I run two miles, walk one mile, and half a mile on the bike.  
 half a mile.  
 bike half a mile.  
 no change



- 3 There are two ways to get a promotion: working hard or make friends in high places.
- work hard
  - to working hard
  - no change
- 4 Many college students have the same goals: playing hard, doing well in classes, and a job after graduation.
- after graduation, a job.
  - finding a job after graduation.
  - no change
- 5 The man walked down the street, stopped at a shop window, and was fixing his tie.
- fixed his tie.
  - to fix his tie.
  - no change
- 6 The chef chopped the parsley, peeled the tomatoes and cut the zucchini into cubes.
- was cutting the zucchini into cubes
  - cubed the zucchini
  - no change
- 7 People often try to avoid eye contact with others, whether riding on a bus, strolling through a shopping mall, or when they are in line at a supermarket.
- waiting in line at a supermarket
  - in a supermarket line
  - no change

- 8 When trying to impress a prospective employer, people should pay attention to their clothing, their posture, and that they don't use too much slang.
- if they use too much slang
- their speech
- no change
- 9 Critics argue that the television show trivializes violence, glamorizes drug use and premarital sex.
- encourages premarital sex
- was encouraging premarital sex
- no change
- 10 The bedroom was filled with old newspapers and radios that don't work.
- radios that are broken
- broken radios
- no change

### Parallel Structure Quiz Key

1. learning
2. bike half a mile
3. work hard
4. finding a job after graduation
5. fixed his tie
6. cubed the zucchini
7. waiting in line at the supermarket
8. their speech
9. encourages premarital sex
10. broken radios

Each question is worth 10 points. Count how many you got wrong, and multiply that number by 10, and then minus that number from 100. That is your score. Write your score in your notebook.

**Step 9:** Read the “Introductory Commas Notes and Example” below **and then copy** the those notes and example into your notebook. **Then complete** the “Introductory Commas Practice”.

**Introductory Commas Notes:** Introductory commas come after introductory phrases. These introductory phrases set the stage for the main action of the sentence.

**Example:** *To stay in shape for competition,* athletes must exercise every day.

**Introductory Commas Practice:** Add the missing introductory comma to each sentence below. Just write the word that comes before AND the word that comes after the missing comma.

1. To give Jane a good look at the university Mr. Benson drove up for the Day on Campus.
2. As I mentioned the rules can be broken occasionally.
3. Having decided to eat only natural foods he had to give up all his favorite junk food snacks.
4. To estimate the costs he consulted a repairman by phone.
5. Making up his mind quickly Jared ordered lasagna while we were still reading the menu.

**Introductory Commas Answer Key:**

1. university, Mr.
2. mentioned, the
3. foods, he
4. costs, he
5. quickly, Jared

**Step 10:** Copy the +/- chart below into your notebook. *Use the directions below the chart to revise your Something New Essay.*

+	-
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**Directions for revising the Something New Essay:** Write down all the things that you think are good about your essay in the + column and all the things that you think need work in the – column. Then, answer the questions below.

**What is the best part about this essay?**

**Which part of this essay could use improvement?**

**Did you notice any mistakes that were made frequently throughout the essay?**

**Are there any skills I used that really helped the essay? Or are there any that were missed that would help the essay?** *See the list of skills we learned for this piece below:*

**Use any of these skills in your Something New Essay**

### **Front-Loaded and End-Loaded Sentences**

Sentences that put the main point at either the beginning or the end of a sentence for effect.

### **Parallel Structure**

The sentence "I like running, fishing, and to ski" lacks parallel structure. The similar ideas are running, fishing, and to ski, the three things you like to do. A more graceful and readable way to write them is to use parallel structure: "I like running, fishing, and skiing."

### **Commas After Introductions**

Use a comma after an introductory word or phrase.

#### **Introductory word example:**

Therefore, we need to move ahead to find peace.

#### **Introductory phrase example:**

Finding no reason to stay home, Clara went to the nearest restaurant for dinner.

### **Semi-colon**

There has been another terrorist attack in Paris; six are known dead. (the semi-colon connects two closely related ideas and shows a relationship between them.)

### **Colon**

You will need these supplies: glue, scissors, and paste. (Use a colon when listing items).

### **Ellipsis**

Use three dots... called ellipsis points when looking to create a sense of pause or to emphasize an idea, or to omit (leave out) something, like in long quoted material where you don't need the entire quote in a research paper.

### **Sentence Length Variety**

Have a variety of sentence lengths (short, medium, long) to create a rhythm in your writing.

### **Combining Sentences Using Conjunctions**

Use conjunctions like and, but, or, and yet to make choppy, shorter sentences into longer, more elaborate ones.

**Step 11: Write the Rough Draft of your Something New Essay in your notebook.**

**Step 12: Proofread the Rough Draft of your Something New Essay in your Notebook.**

**Step 13: Type up the Final Copy of your Something New Essay and submit it to Google Classroom by the deadline.**

