

# **The One- Two- Three**

**— A Formula for English Compositions**

**D. W. Cummings**

## Table of Contents

Getting Your Raw Materials	
Step A: Get Your Draft	1
Step B: Find Your Themes	2
Step C: Find Your Detail	3
Step D: Write Your Summary Sentences	4
Step E: Compose Your Master Theme and Decide on a Sequence	5
Step F: Compose Your Lead-off Sentence	7
A Formula for the First Draft	8
Pay Attention to Your First Paragraph	9
Restate Your Themes Carefully	15
Exercises	
Exercise 1	18
Exercise 2	18
Exercise 3	20
Exercise 4	22
A Checklist for the 1-2-3	23

## Introduction

The 1-2-3 is a formula for helping you get started on a writing job and for helping you get editorial control over what you have written. It works very well for short compositions. It also works for longer term papers, though with longer papers you may need to work with as many as five major themes rather than just three. Or you may need to divide your draft up first into major themes and then subdivide some of the major themes into two or more minor themes. Also, many students have found that the 1-2-3 is useful for writing essay examinations. When you use it for impromptu writing, as in an examination, instead of writing out a full draft as described in Step A, you simply jot down sketchy notes and develop your themes and detail from those notes. But the 1-2-3 was specially developed for short themes for which you have a few days to do all of the writing — that is, the kind of writing you are most often asked to do in school.

## Getting Your Raw Materials

### Step A. Get your draft.

You should plan to draft two or three times as many words as you'll need for the final paper, because later it will be much easier to cut out words that you do not need than to add new words to reach some required minimum.

If you are writing on paper, write on only one side of the sheet, because later you will be cutting the sheets into pieces and rearranging them.

If you have a clear plan of what the beginning, middle, and end of your paper should be, fine. Follow that plan. But if you don't have a clear order for the parts yet, or aren't even sure what the parts are, that's fine, too. Just start putting down ideas about your topic as they occur to you. You can straighten out the order later.

If you have a clear thesis sentence to help keep your thoughts centered, fine. But if you don't have one yet, that's okay, too. Usually the best thesis sentences emerge after you have written awhile. Most often they are things you work towards rather than start with.

Your grammar may be confused, but don't worry. You can correct your grammar later. Confused grammar is often the sign of a mind at work, struggling with thoughts that are still not clear. If you stop now to worry too much about being correct, you risk losing an important thought. The same is true of spelling and punctuation. They are very important, but not yet.

Now is the time to get down on the paper whatever it is you have in your head about your topic. You can start by asking questions about your topic and putting down the questions and the answers. Sometimes very odd ideas will come along. If so, write them down. Sometimes you may start doubting your own position or information. If so, write down your doubts. Sometimes you may find yourself guessing. Write down the guesses. You don't have to worry yet about whether what you are writing down is true or not, or even whether it is what you want to say. You can use the writing to find out what is true and what you want said.

If you can't think of the words that say what you have in your mind, try drawing pictures or diagrams. They can sometimes help the words start to come.

The only thing you really **do** have to worry about for now is getting some ideas down on the paper — ideally about two or three times as many words as you will need for the final paper.

## Step B. Find your themes.

If you are working from a paper copy of your draft, with a pencil in your hand, read through your draft, looking for and marking two different kinds of sentences. If you are using a word processor and are working from the screen copy, you can mark these sentences (in WordPerfect) by selecting them and then clicking “Redline” in the Font menu or (in Microsoft Word) by selecting them and then clicking one of the font effects or text effects in the Format, Font menu.

- ! First, you want to find and mark those sentences that summarize fairly long stretches of your draft.
- ! Second, you want to find and mark those sentences that say something that you think is very important and interesting, even though they may not summarize stretches of draft.

These two kinds of sentences are your **main points**. If you thought that you had some other points that did not get written, add them to your draft now.

After you have finished marking your draft, list all of your marked sentences on a separate sheet of paper. Or with a word processor, open a new document file, copy and paste your marked sentences into it, and save it as “Main Points.” Study this list of main points. If you can combine two or more points into one sentence, do so. Sometimes you may feel that two or more points belong together, but you can't seem to revise any of the sentences or combine them to get a good sentence that summarizes the whole group. If so, start all over writing a brand new summary sentence for the group. Use this new summary sentence to replace the group in your original list of main points.

Go over your revised list of main points and pick out your three best ones. *Best* here can mean any of a number of things:

- ! Perhaps your paper is meant to persuade your reader about the importance of your topic or point of view. If so, your three best points would be those that would be most interesting and convincing to your reader.
- ! Perhaps you have very little time to finish the paper. If so, your three best points would be those that summarize the most of your draft so that picking them allows you to use most of your original draft and thus get the paper written quickly.
- ! Perhaps it is important to you that this paper be very well organized. If so, then your three best points would be those that all connect with one another so that they can be easily organized into a unified and coherent paper.
- ! Or perhaps three of your main points just seem somehow to be the most important of the lot.

Whatever criteria you use, pick out your best three. You now have the beginnings of your three **major themes**.

### **Step C. Find your detail.**

If you are working from a paper copy, read through your draft once more with a pencil in your hand, dividing up your draft into those passages that deal with each of your three major themes. Mark the passages and label them "1," "2," or "3," depending on which of your three themes each passage seems to belong to. Mark with an "X" any passage that doesn't seem to belong with any of the three. Don't spend a lot of time worrying about your decisions: Just decide, mark, and label. You can always change your mind later if you find you've made some strange decisions.

If you are working from the screen copy on a word processor, create four new document files, titled "Section 1," "Section 2," "Section 3," and "X Outtakes." As you read through your draft, you can simply copy and paste passages into the appropriate files. But if you are working from a printed copy, get some scissors and cut up your draft, sorting it into four categories: that material that belongs to each of your three themes and that material that doesn't seem to fit anywhere as yet. Tape or staple the draft for each theme together, or tape or staple the pieces onto regular sized sheets of writing paper. This gives you three hunks of **detail** to go along with your three major themes.

Put the fourth pile of apparent misfits aside for the time being, but don't throw it out! You may see later how to fit more of it in with your themes. Perhaps you'll see connections later that you can't see now, or perhaps your themes will change slightly as you work with them.

You now have three **sections** — that is, three major themes plus their detail.

### **Step D. Write your summary sentences.**

Draft at least three different versions of sentences that summarize each of your three sections. Your original sentences can count as one version. It is worthwhile to spend a lot of time and effort on sentences that will do the most work for you in your final paper — and that is just what these sentences are, since they will state and restate your major themes. So spend some time working on them.

Each version should be a single sentence that summarizes the point you are making in that section. It should have the topic of the section as its subject and the comment as its predicate. The comment is what you say in your section about your topic. Don't settle for easy sentences like "This section is about our dog Zock," because that sentence only mentions your topic ("our dog Zock") without summarizing any of your comment about him.

A sentence like "Our dog Zock is a pest" is better because it not only names the topic (in the subject) but it also summarizes some of the comment (in the predicate). Even better would be a sentence like "Our dog Zock is a pest because he knocks over potted plants with his tail and always wants out (or in) at 2:00 a.m."

Remember: A good summary sentence includes a subject that mentions the main topic and a predicate that summarizes the comments and perhaps mentions some or all of the sub-topics of the section it is summarizing.

There are two main reasons for this step:

- ! First, as you force yourself to find new ways of summarizing your three sections, you get more and more control over your subject matter and become better able to see the connections among your major themes. Simply put, it helps you see what you're talking about!
  
- ! Second, as you will see in the formula that comes later, when you start actually composing your first draft, you will need three different versions for each of your three major themes.

## Step E. Compose your master theme and decide on a sequence.

The next step is to find a unity that will help you draft a **master theme**, a statement that can tie your three major themes together in your reader's mind. Sometimes this unity will be very easy to find.

- ! You may have started out writing about a single topic that you can use as the subject of the sentence that states your unifying master theme.
- ! You may have written in response to a specific question or problem posed by your instructor. For example, "What are the main differences between young people and old people today?" An easy way to draft a master theme is simply to rewrite the question as a statement: "There are three main differences between young and old people today: . . ." and then list the topics of your three sections.

Sometimes it is easy to find a unity and compose your master theme, and sometimes it is not. If you have trouble, as you read over your three major themes, jot down some answers to this question: "How many different ways are these three ideas alike?" Among those answers could be the hint you need to compose your master theme. And usually all it takes is a little hint to get you started.

If you find it hard to find any ways in which the three major themes are alike, concentrate on just two of them, jotting down ways in which they are alike. Then try adding the third theme, seeing whether or not it could be said to share one or more of the points that unify the first two.

Even if you can find no master unity at all, there is still hope. Think about the logical links that might exist between each two of your three themes. English contains a number of linking words, or conjunctions, but the most useful for our purposes fall into these five groups:

- ! Words that show **addition**: *and, also, likewise, besides, moreover, furthermore*
- ! Words that show **opposition**: *but, however, still, yet, nevertheless*
- ! Words that show **alternation**: *or, nor*
- ! Words that show **cause**: *because, for, since*
- ! Words that show **effect**: *therefore, thus, hence, consequently, accordingly, so.*

You may be able to see how to use one of these words to link the first major theme to the second or the second to the third, or the first to the third. When you find a word that can link two of your major themes, write it down.

Look to see if there is some necessary sequence, or order, among your three major themes and sections. Is there anything in one section that a reader needs to know in order to understand something in another section? If so, arrange the themes and sections into that order.

You can try different sequences. If no sequence seems better than the others, put the best of the three themes in third place, the worst in second place, and the second-best in first place — that is, start strong, finish strongest, and bury the weak stuff in the middle.

You now have at least a **sequence** for your themes and sections — and probably a unifying **master theme**, or thesis sentence.

## Step F. Compose your lead-off sentence.

You now need a good **lead-off sentence**, an opening sentence that establishes some link between the main thrust of your discussion and your reader's own experiences. Leadoffs come in a great variety.

Sometimes you will find one already there in your draft. If so, use it.

Sometimes you can even use your master theme, though master themes often seem too abrupt to be good leadoffs.

Usually, though, you have to work to compose a good lead-off sentence. A pattern that often works well for leadoffs is the following: "Although X is true, still Y is true."

- ! Make the "X" part of the sentence something that the reader will be likely to accept or agree with but that in some way or other opposes the main thrust of your discussion.
- ! Make the "Y" part of the sentence an abbreviated statement of your main thrust, perhaps your master theme.

Here are some examples:

"Although they say that money can't buy happiness, it surely would buy three things that are very important to me."

"Although things are always changing, there are powerful unities among even the most varied of experiences, as three seemingly unrelated episodes in my life illustrate."

Sometimes when your three major themes don't have immediately obvious connections with one another, you can ease your editorial problems by working a variation of the "Although X, still Y" pattern that actually calls attention to the seeming lack of unity:

"Although cigarettes, bamboo fly rods, and frozen turkeys may not seem to have too much in common, they have all played surprising roles in my life."

Although you shouldn't use this strategy too often, after a lead-off sentence like that, the three topics are at least all together in your reader's mind — and the reader is probably a little curious to see what the connections are among them.

## A Formula for the First Draft

### Paragraph 1:

State your lead-off sentence. Then use the fullest and best versions for each of your three major themes to state your themes in order, one sentence for each — one, two, three.

### Paragraph 2:

Use another version of your first major theme to restate it and then give its detail. Try arranging your detail so that the structure of your section imitates the structure of the sentence you use to state the theme at the beginning of the section.

### Paragraph 3:

Restate your second theme and give its detail. If there is a logical link between your first and second theme, make sure it is stated, clearly and early. Again, you can arrange your detail so that it follows the structure of the first sentence in the paragraph.

### Paragraph 4:

Restate your third theme and give its detail. Don't forget about the link and structuring your detail.

### Paragraph 5:

Either restate your first, second, and third themes, with perhaps an echo of your lead-off sentence, or use your master theme to make this final statement of your main thrust.

You now have a **first draft** and can begin polishing your organization, your paragraphs, sentences and grammar, and checking your punctuation and spelling.

## Pay Attention to Your First Paragraph

A good way to polish your organization is to look closely at your first paragraph. In the 1-2-3 formula the first paragraph is a miniature of your entire paper. So it gives you a smaller and more manageable place in which to solve larger editorial problems. If your first paragraph lacks unity and coherence, the chances are that the rest of your paper will, too. But when your first paragraph is unified and coherent, you have a guide to follow when you edit the entire paper.

And the 1-2-3 formula gives you a useful framework and set of reference points with which to focus your attention upon problems of unity and coherence. Consider this example of an opening paragraph from a student's first draft of a 1-2-3:

First Draft:

<sup>1</sup>It is said that words are cheap, but there are three very important values of words. <sup>2</sup>First, words create an experience that otherwise would not be. <sup>3</sup>Second, words tie together all the sensory impressions to make one meaningful experience. <sup>4</sup>Therefore, third, words have a direct relationship to the type of experience we have. <sup>5</sup>Words do not just accompany an experience; more often they are the experience or its primary content. <sup>6</sup>Words create order out of the chaos of experience; as a result, words can affect the kind of experience that we have.

The lead-off sentence in this first draft ("It is said that . . .") uses a variation of the "Although X, still Y" pattern to link something already in the reader's experience (in this case the old saying that "Words are cheap") with a new thought (the three ways that words are valuable to experience). Sentences two, three, and four state the three major themes. The *therefore* in sentence four even suggests a causal link between theme two (in sentence three) and theme three (in sentence four). So far, then, this first draft is a good opening paragraph for a 1-2-3.

But notice that the 1-2-3 formula calls for the first paragraph to stop after the fourth sentence. In the first draft reprinted above sentences five and six introduce material that doesn't fit into the formula and is difficult for the reader to fit into the three themes. The result is a muddle in the reader's mind.

The general strategy in such cases is to look closely at the material in such sentences and see which of it can be fit into the three themes and which should be cut out. The 1-2-3 formula can guide you in cutting out material that cannot be fitted into your three major themes. The fact that you started with two or three times as much draft as you need for your final copy makes it possible for you to follow the good editorial advice, "When in doubt,

cut it out," and the 1-2-3 formula can help you decide what to cut.

But before we start cutting, we should move any of that material in sentences five and six that seems to fit in with any of the three major themes so that it is part of that theme. The main idea is to keep related or similar material as close together as possible.

To my ears the notion that sometimes words **are** the experience or at least its primary content (in sentence five) seems to fit most closely with the notion that words can create an experience that otherwise would not be (theme one, in sentence two). So I would just move sentence five up into sentence two.

The notion that words create order out of chaos (the first half of sentence six) seems to me to fit best with theme two in sentence three, because creating order out of chaos sounds so much like making sensory impressions into one meaningful experience.

Finally, the notion that words can affect the kind of experience that we have (the second half of sentence six) seems to fit with the idea in theme three (in sentence four).

We can worry later about how to do it smoothly; for now we'll just use semicolons to hook the pieces that we are moving to their new themes:

Second Draft:

<sup>1</sup>It is said that words are cheap, but there are three very important values of words. <sup>2</sup>First, words create an experience that otherwise would not be; words do not just accompany an experience; more often they are the experience or its primary content. <sup>3</sup>Second, words tie together all the sensory impressions to make one meaningful experience; words create order out of the chaos of experience. <sup>4</sup>Therefore, third, words have a direct relationship to the type of experience we have; as a result, words can affect the kind of experience that we have.

Using semicolons to hook all that new material to them has made our three theme statements pretty awkward, but we can work that out later on. At least we now have an opening paragraph that fits the 1-2-3 formula.

Also by clearing out the muddle that sentences five and six caused, we can now see more clearly the impact of each of our three themes. Notice how weak the third theme of the second draft (in sentence four) seems to be. It is quite possible it was a sense of this weak third theme that tempted the writer to add on the extra two sentence in the first place.

Now is a good time to reconsider the sequence of themes. There does not seem to be any necessary logical sequence for them. Readers don't have to know any one before they can

understand the others. But (to my ear, at least) theme one seems to be the strongest, and theme three seems to be the weakest. Following the advice in Step D of the 1-2-3, we might try opening with what in the second draft is theme two (in sentence three), then go to the weakest of the three (theme three in sentence four), and then finish with what is now theme one (in sentence two). By doing that we start with a strong theme, end with our strongest theme, and bury our weakest theme in the middle:

#### Third Draft:

<sup>1</sup>It is said that words are cheap, but there are three very important values of words. <sup>2</sup>First, words tie together all the sensory impressions to make one meaningful experience; words create order out of the chaos of experience. <sup>3</sup>Second, words have a direct relationship to the type of experience we have; as a result, words can affect the kind of experience that we have. <sup>4</sup>And, third, words create an experience that otherwise would not be; words do not just accompany an experience; more often they are the experience or its primary content.

Now we have three themes and a good sequence for them. The next problem is to make our statement of the three themes more precise and smooth, and to see if we can show more clearly how they fit into one another. As I look at theme one, I want to make the following changes (deleted material is crossed out; rewritten material is printed against a grey background):

#### Fourth Draft (Theme 1):

First, ~~because~~ words ~~help us~~ tie together all ~~the~~ ~~our~~ sensory impressions, ~~to make one meaningful experience;~~ words ~~help us~~ create ~~meaningful~~ order out of the chaos of ~~our~~ experience.

This revision seems to me to be an improvement because rather than stringing the ideas together with semicolons, like beads on a string, it shows how the ideas affect and fit into one another.

As I look at theme two, I want to make the following revisions:

#### Fourth Draft (Theme 2)

~~Thus it is,~~ second, ~~that~~ words ~~have a direct relationship to the type of experience that we have;~~ as a result, words can ~~directly~~ affect the kind of experience that we have.

The main problem here is that everything after the semicolon just repeats what was said in the first half of the sentence. The revision eliminates the repetition and tries to compress the best of the two main clauses into one.

At this point, we notice that there can be a causal link between the first and second themes, so we want to mark that relationship, at least for the time being. *Therefore* would work here, but so would *So* or *Thus* or *For this reason* or even *Not too surprisingly then*. For now we will try *Thus it is . . . that*.

Also, now that we have the statement of the second theme cleaned up, we begin to notice that the theme itself is very vague. It would be good to look over the detail supporting this theme to see if there is something there that could be added to this first statement of the theme to make it more specific and concrete, perhaps an example or two.

As I look at the third theme, the following revisions suggest themselves:

Fourth Draft (Theme 3):

And, third, ~~words~~ at times words can even **be** an experience or its primary content, and thus they can create ~~an~~ experiences that otherwise would not be. ~~words do not just accompany an experience, more often they are the experience or its primary content.~~

The phrase "words do not just accompany an experience" is a pretty good phrase, but it seems to clutter up the point this theme is trying to make, so out it goes: "When in doubt, cut it out." Since theme three is the strongest of the three and is getting the emphasis of final position, phrases like *at times* and *can even be* are useful to heighten the sense that this theme is asserting something special about the quality of words.

If we put our three revised themes together with the lead-off sentence, we get the following revision for our opening paragraph:

Fifth Draft:

It is said that words are cheap, but they have three very important values. First, because words help us tie together all our sensory impressions, words help us create meaningful order out of the chaos of our experience. Thus it is, second, that words can directly affect the type of experience that we have. And third, at times words can even **be** an experience or its primary content, and thus they can create experiences that otherwise would not be.

The last few revisions in the fifth draft attempt to do two main things:

First, they replace the word *words* where possible with the pronoun *they*, for pronouns help give a sense of coherence.

Second, they try to get better control over the way the word *experience* is used, to distinguish it from mere impressions.

The fifth draft of this opening paragraph is still not one of the greatest paragraphs ever written in the English language, but it uses the 1-2-3 formula to create a sense of unity and coherence among the three themes that was not there in the first draft.

If the writer were now careful to see that the three sections of the paper as a whole follow the organization of the first paragraph, it would be fairly easy to achieve unity and coherence in the paper as a whole.

The way to have the paper follow the organization of the first paragraph is to do the following things:

- ! Be sure that your paper develops the three themes that are stated in your first paragraph.
- ! Be sure that your paper develops them in the same order they are stated in the first paragraph.
- ! Be sure to link the sections of the paper with the same kinds of linking words that you used in the first paragraph to link the three sentences that state your themes.

## Restate Your Themes Carefully

After you edit your opening paragraph, the next problem is to edit the sentences that restates your three themes later in the paper. The sentences that you composed earlier, in Step E of the formula, may be just perfect, but most of the time you will find now that they need some editing and polishing.

The following is the opening paragraph from a student's 1-2-3:

<sup>1</sup>Although playing a musical instrument and performing in a rodeo are very different things, they are surprisingly similar, too. <sup>2</sup>The differences between the two include such things as the kinds of equipment you use, the extent to which you can practice, and the kinds of risks you take. <sup>3</sup>However, they are alike in that in each case you are doing something at which you can keep getting better. <sup>4</sup>Also, they both can lead to a great sense of personal accomplishment and personal satisfaction.

The student's original version for restating theme one at the beginning of the second paragraph was as follows:

(a) The differences between being a musical performer and a rodeo performer include kinds of equipment, amount of practice, and kinds of risk.

Notice that there would be only two sentences separating sentence 2 in the first paragraph and sentence (a), so the repetition would be too obvious to the reader and would sound dull and mechanical. The sentence that begins paragraph two must contain the same basic idea as does sentence 2 in paragraph one, but it also must contain some new information, some information that adds something new to the discussion..

We call information that has been mentioned in previous sentences **old information**, and we call information that is being mentioned for the first time **new information**. Readers of English expect that sentences will almost always have some new information in them. And they expect that the old information usually will come in the first part of the sentence and that new information will come later in the sentence, toward the end.

So one way to keep our restatement from sounding dull and mechanical would be to keep the restated, or old, information in the first part of the sentence and to include some new information in the latter part of the sentence. For our restatement we should repeat some of the key words from sentences 1 and 2 of paragraph one, words like *differences, music, instrument, perform, rodeo, equipment, practice, risk*. Then we could put specific examples in the second half of the sentence. For instance,

(b) The differences in equipment, practice, and risk between being a musical performer and a rodeo performer are nicely illustrated by contrasting my adventures playing the flute with those of my

fiancé, who is a rodeo bronc rider.

A sentence like that provides enough old information to make the restatement clear while it adds enough new information that the sentence moves the discussion along rather than just being dead repetition.

But when it comes time to edit the sentence that restates theme two at the beginning of the third paragraph, the situation is different: There are several sentences between this restatement of theme two and its original statement in the first paragraph. So this new sentence can well be much closer in its wording and structure to sentence 3 of the first paragraph.

Also, if we look closely at the first paragraph, we notice that the boundary between theme one and theme two is an important boundary in the argument of the paper: It marks the place where the discussion shifts from the differences between playing the flute and riding rodeo broncs to the similarities between them. Notice how the following sentence addresses these issues:

(c) However, the similarities between the music hall and the rodeo arena are even more remarkable than the differences, as, for instance, in the way both my fiancé and I find ourselves getting better at our chosen ways of performing, be it playing the flute or riding the broncs.

When it comes time to edit the restatement of theme three at the beginning of the fourth paragraph, there would be even more distance between this restatement of the theme and its original statement in the opening paragraph. So the restatement must repeat more of the old information from the original statement than was the case with the restatements of themes one and two. This repeated old information helps make it clear to the reader that this is indeed a restatement of the third major theme of the paper.

(d) Though they are alike by being activities at which we can keep getting better, playing the flute and riding broncs are alike in a more important way because they can both lead to a great sense of personal accomplishment and personal satisfaction.

Notice that sentence (d) actually contains no new information: The first half summarizes what was said in the preceding paragraph, and the second half repeats, almost word for word, theme three as it was stated in the first paragraph. But since the information in the first half was just discussed and that in the second half hasn't been mentioned for quite a long time, the information in the second half seems to the reader to be "newer" than does that in the first half. So the sentence fits the pattern of old information followed by new (or at least "newer") information.

Notice that sentence (d) is a **transition** sentence, linking the upcoming discussion of theme three with the previous discussion of theme two. Sentence (d) does this linking by taking something out of the end of the preceding paragraph (the idea that playing the flute and

riding rodeo broncs are activities in which you can constantly get better) and it works that into the first part of the next paragraph. This is a very useful strategy to remember. It is like using words as if they were glue. You find something at the end of the preceding paragraph that can be echoed at the beginning of the next paragraph, and you put a little bit of this “glue” on each side of the joint between the two paragraphs.

Notice, too, that sentence (d) is a variation of the “Although X is true, still Y is true” pattern. This pattern is just as useful for transition sentences as it is for lead-offs.

So remember the following guidelines when you are editing the sentences that restate your themes:

- ! Don't be afraid to repeat key words and phrases.
- ! But remember that statements of a theme that are close together do not need a great deal of repetition for the reader to recognize that they are two statements of the same idea, while statements that are further apart need more repetition of key words and phrases so the reader can see the connection.
- ! Remember that English readers expect nearly all sentences to have some old information and some new information, and they expect the old information to come first in the sentence.
- ! Remember the trick of writing transition sentences that “glue” two paragraphs together by putting something from the preceding paragraph at the beginning of the next paragraph.
- ! Remember the “Although X is true, Y is still true” pattern for transition sentences that restate your themes.

## Exercises

### Exercise 1

The following is a very short 1-2-3 written by a student writer. In the first paragraph identify the sentences that state the three themes. Then identify the sentences that repeat the themes in the other four paragraphs.

Television plays an important part in our lives as it educates and entertains us. Television is used as a means for communication and education in our modern world. It is also a good source of entertainment. In fact, I use television more for entertainment purposes than for education.

The primary function of television is communication and education. It allows us to see what is happening all over the world. Not only does television reveal the news, also informs us about other things. It offers us newscasts, how-to-do-it shows, and special programs about the sciences, the arts, and history.

Not only is television used for communication and education, it used for entertainment as well. It entertains us with talk shows, situation comedies, police and adventure stories, and movies. It allows us to stay at home, relax, and enjoy all of these things in the privacy of our own homes.

I personally use television more for entertainment than for communication and education. I spend the majority of my television time watching situation comedies and mysteries. I spend very little time watching newscasts and even less watching how-to-do-it shows and other educational programs.

As you can see, television can be used to gain information and to learn, but it can also be used just to entertain oneself and to relax. A lot of people, like me, use television more for entertainment than for education.

This 1-2-3 is very short in part because it has no examples. Write some sentences that you can add to it that give examples of different kinds of television programs.

### Exercise 2

The following is another 1-2-3 written by a student in response to an assignment about hidden fears. Again identify the sentences that state and restate the three main themes.

Although a fun-filled day on the beautiful ocean in a sailboat, a luxurious trip in a first-class seat in a Boeing 747, and a warm, soft bed all seem alluring, the way things appear and what they actually are can be quite different. The quiet, tranquil ocean can make me feel helpless and frightened. So can a beautiful jet airplane that I cannot understand or control. Lying awake in my soft, safe bed at night, I often imagine getting attacked, and that terrifies me.

A warm, sunny day in a boat on the ocean sounds delightful, but it is an awesome experience for me. I feel that I have no control over the vast ocean and what lies under its surface. I feel helpless on the enormous, powerful ocean. It can be calm and placid one minute and then without warning turn into a violent, foaming sea. A deceptive fog can roll in without warning. Under the calm surface there are sea creatures I have no control over. They lurk under the boat, just out of sight, prowling back and forth, stalking us.

Just as a sunny day on the ocean seems pleasant, so does a soft, cushiony seat on a jet airplane. But a trip on a 747 holds terror for me. I don't understand how a jet airplane can fly through the air and arrive safely at its destination. The billowy white clouds outside my window seem harmless, but they can conceal the side of a mountain. One moment the ride is smooth and peaceful, and then suddenly the plane is rocking violently back and forth, rising and falling as we hit air pockets. As the seatbelt light blinks on, my heart begins pounding. I can't understand how a small, cloth strap with a silver buckle will save my life in a crash. As the plane dips below the clouds preparing to land, I clutch my sweaty hands together and lean my head back and close my eyes. Just as the plane touches down, the engines let out a deafening scream as they reverse and the plane miraculously touches its wheels safely on the ground.

Like this safe feeling I get when I get back on the ground is

the warm and secure feeling I should get lying in my bed. But as night falls and I lie awake in my soft, cuddly bed snuggled up to my feather pillow, disturbing thoughts creep into my mind: thoughts of a strange man entering my room, a large, scary man with a knife who will hurt me. I lie awake hugging my pillow, searching the darkness for any movement, any strange sounds. But finally my eyes close, and I drift off to sleep. In the morning my fears have disappeared, and I am ready for another day.

A cuddly bed, a flight on a sleek jet, a serene ocean are not what they seem to be. They are a terrifying dark night, a horror-filled ride miles high in the sky, and a powerful and unknown sea. They are all genuine fears of mine.

This 1-2-3 is interesting for the way the writer has “glued” some paragraphs together by including words in the beginning sentence of a paragraph that refer back to things that were discussed in the preceding paragraph. An example of this linking is the clause “Just as a sunny day on the ocean seems pleasant” at the beginning of the third paragraph. Identify other examples of this linking in this paper.

### **Exercise 3**

The following is the first draft of a 1-2-3 written by a Japanese student. It is a good first draft, but its first paragraph does not fit the 1-2-3 formula, and the body of the paper could also be changed here and there to make it work better. Read it carefully and do the following four things:

1. Identify what you think are the three main themes of the paper.
2. Write a new first paragraph that uses some of the first paragraph in the draft below but that follows the 1-2-3 formula.
3. Make sure that the three main themes get restated as they should in the body of the paper.
4. Make any changes in the details of the paper that you think make it into a better 1-2-3.

#### How to Make a Perfect Pie Crust

A pie is one of the most popular desserts in the United States. Some restaurants serve excellent pies while some don't.

A pie crust requires only four ingredients: flour, shortening, salt, and water. The recipe is simple: Mix them together and bake. Making a good pie crust requires a lot of practice. Several techniques underlie baking a perfect pie crust.

The first technique is to measure the ingredients accurately. Each recipe varies, but good recipes have a perfect combination of the amounts of all the ingredients.

The second technique is mixing the ingredients. There are two parts in the mixing process. The first part is cutting the shortening into the flour. I have found that a pastry blender does the best job. Put the flour and shortening into a bowl. Push the blender straight down and right before it reaches the bottom of the bowl, twist it quickly. Continue this process until half of the dough becomes as small as peas. It is important not to blend the flour and shortening too much, for if you do, the pie crust will not be flaky.

The next part of the mixing process is adding water to the dough. When water is worked into the flour, a substance called gluten develops. Gluten is a form of starch that helps make the crust flaky. To form the right amount of gluten, the water should be very cold and the amount of water should be just right. Warm water makes the dough too sticky by forming too much gluten. Too little water won't develop enough gluten and make the pie crust tough. You should carefully examine the dough as you add the water, and you should stop adding it as soon as the dough comes together into a single ball.

The third technique is rolling out the dough. When rolling out the dough, do not press the roller down too hard, or the gluten will break down and the pie crust will not be flaky. Do not stretch out the dough by pulling and never knead the dough. Pulling and kneading can develop too much gluten. Place the rolled-out dough carefully on a pie pan so that you don't stretch or break it. The dough is now ready to be baked.

Making a perfect pie crust consists of careful measuring, mixing, and rolling processes. What makes a good pie crust is the

baker's technique and attention to detail.

Although the writer's description is quite detailed, there are some details that seem to be important but are not in the paper. What details are missing, and where would you add them?

#### **Exercise 4**

The following is some rough draft written by a student about camping in the United States. Its themes are neither well identified nor clearly stated. Read the draft carefully and decide what you think the three themes are. Write some sentences that state the themes and follow the 1-2-3 formula so that you have a new draft of a 1-2-3.

Camping has proven to be an excellent way to relax. The number of campers has grown steadily for the last several years. All types of people are campers; it is not a thing that only certain types of people enjoy. They may find different ways to camp, but most are in search of a comfortable and relaxed weekend. Beginning with people of the elite group, one finds expensive motor homes and travel trailers. These are generally equipped with bathrooms, showers, air-conditioning, a built-in bar, and of course an automatic dishwasher. Moving on, one will find smaller trailers and travel homes that are still quite extravagant. These types lack the dishwasher and rely on four dependable hands to do the dishes. But they probably have a radio and television set just like the bigger, more expensive rigs. Moving down from this, one finds the tenters. Here you can observe people who really appreciate the outdoors, or those who don't want to mess the the cost and maintenance of a larger rig. Tenters protect themselves from animals and uncooperative weather with a simple piece of cloth. The luxuries of home are left behind, and they rely on nature for their relaxation and fun.

## A Checklist for the 1-2-3

	U
<b>Paragraph One</b>	
The first sentence is a good lead-off sentence.	
The second sentence states the first theme.	
The third sentence states the second theme.	
The fourth sentence states the third theme.	
The second theme is clearly linked to the first.	
The third theme is linked to the second or the first.	
There are only four sentences in the paragraph.	
<b>Paragraph Two</b>	
The first sentence restates the first theme.	
The first sentence links the first and second paragraphs.	
All of the other sentences support theme one.	
<b>Paragraph Three</b>	
The first sentence restates the second theme.	
The first sentence links the second and third paragraphs.	
All of the other sentences support theme two.	
<b>Paragraph Four</b>	
The first sentence restates the third theme.	
The first sentence links this paragraph with the earlier ones.	
All of the other sentences support theme three.	
<b>Paragraph Five</b>	
This paragraph restates, or at least echoes, the three themes.	
This paragraph echoes the lead-off sentence.	