



# English II - ELL

## Week 4

## **English II, Week 4**

### **Crafting an Explanatory Essay**

For this week, you will complete a culminating task by drafting an essay using the first three weeks' assignments. Include an introductory paragraph, at least two body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Treat this essay as a timed writing, as a first draft, broken up over a few targeted tasks. As a reminder, the essay prompt is as follows:

**In Sherry Turkle's article "The Flight from Conversation," she makes the claim that we are allowing technology to have a negative effect on our personal lives and relationships. Write an explanatory essay analyzing how Turkle supports this claim. Consider her diction, rhetorical devices, and other persuasive strategies.**

Complete the tasks in the following sequence.

#### **Task 1: Page 33-34 (20 minutes) - Crafting an Introductory Paragraph**

- On page 33, use the sentence frame supports in question 6 to check your thesis statement from week 3. Rework your thesis statement to improve it.
- Review an introductory paragraph (if needed) using the supports (A - N - T) in question 7 to review an effective introductory paragraph.
- On page 8, create an attention-getting statement and write your introductory paragraph.

#### **Task 2: Page 34-35 (45 minutes) - Crafting Body Paragraphs**

- On page 34, complete question 9 by first selecting your quotes (textual evidence) for analysis.
- You can use the practice titled "Language and Writer's Craft: Embedding Questions" to help you work on your craft as a writer (page 35).
- Complete at least two body paragraphs that analyzes how Turkle builds her argument. Remember that the prompt is explanatory, not argumentative.

#### **Task 3: Page 35-36 (45 minutes) - Crafting a Conclusion and Review**

- On page 35, complete question 10, considering how you will wrap up this essay. Write your concluding statement or paragraph.
- On page 36, use the self-review questions to look back over your essay, treat this as a self-review (unless you have a classmate that you could digitally share the document with for peer review).
- Make any changes to your draft and then use the questions in number 12 for self-analysis.
- Take a few minutes to look back at grammar to make any final edits in number 13.

*Using this outline, write an essay on "The Flight from Conversation"*

- I. Summary of the text
  - a. What is the text about?
  - b. Who is the author? Who is she writing to (who's the audience)?
  - c. What kind of style does she use? Formal? Informal? School-like? Newspaper?
  - d. What is her main idea and how does she support it (your thesis)?
- II. Word choice and Tone
  - a. describe the words from the chart in question one
  - b. What tone does she use? Serious? Joking? Teaching?
  - c. Give an example of a sentence that proves her tone
  - d. Summarize the way her tone helps her point
- III. Supports for her ideas
  - a. What is the evidence that she gives that people are using too much tech?  
List one sentence.
  - b. Rewrite this sentence in your own words.
  - c. What is another sentence that she includes as evidence for her point?
  - d. Rewrite this second sentence
  - e. What do both of them tell us about the main idea?
- IV. Conclusion
  - a. What kinds of words did she use?
  - b. What kind of tone did she have?
  - c. What support did she have?
  - d. what should people learn from reading her text?

## My Notes

## As You Read

- Look for the claim (the main argument the author is making) of the text and write down, then place stars next to statements that support it.
- Make a list of unknown words and phrases. Try to figure out the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.

## About the Author

Sherry Turkle, PhD (b. 1948), a graduate of Harvard, is a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). She is a licensed clinical psychologist and has a joint doctorate in sociology and psychology. Professor Turkle is interested in the relationships between people and technology.



## Op-Ed

## The Flight from Conversation

by Sherry Turkle, PhD

- 1 We live in a technological universe in which we are always communicating. And yet we have sacrificed conversation for mere connection.
- 2 At home, families sit together, texting and reading e-mail. At work executives text during board meetings. We text (and shop and go on Facebook) during classes and when we're on dates. My students tell me about an important new skill: it involves maintaining eye contact with someone while you text someone else; it's hard, but it can be done.
- 3 Over the past 15 years, I've studied technologies of mobile connection and talked to hundreds of people of all ages and circumstances about their

## Vocabulary aides

mere = just, doing it for that reason

executives= the people in charge of a company

plugged-in lives. I've learned that the little devices most of us carry around are so powerful that they change not only what we do, but also who we are.

4 We've become **accustomed** to a new way of being "alone together." Technology-**enabled**, we are able to be with one another, and also elsewhere, connected to wherever we want to be. We want to **customize** our lives. We want to move in and out of where we are because the thing we value most is control over where we focus our attention. We have gotten used to the idea of being in a **tribe** of one, loyal to our own party.

5 Our **colleagues** want to go to that board meeting but pay attention only to what interests them. To some this seems like a good idea, but we can end up hiding from one another, even as we are constantly connected to one another.

6 A businessman laments that he no longer has colleagues at work. He doesn't stop by to talk; he doesn't call. He says that he doesn't want to interrupt them. He says they're "too busy on their e-mail." But then he pauses and corrects himself. "I'm not telling the truth. I'm the one who doesn't want to be interrupted. I think I should. But I'd rather just do things on my **BlackBerry**."<sup>1</sup>

7 A 16-year-old boy who relies on texting for almost everything says almost **wistfully**, "Someday, someday, but certainly not now, I'd like to learn how to have a conversation."

accustomed = used to, thinking of it as normal

enabled = with the power

customize = make them special and different based on our personalities

tribe = group of people who live together

colleagues = people who work together

Blackberry = an older version of cell phones

wistfully = a little sad, missing something



8 In today's workplace, young people who have grown up fearing conversation show up on the job wearing earphones. Walking through a college library or the campus of a high-tech **start-up**, one sees the same thing: we are together, but each of us is in our own bubble, furiously connected to keyboards and tiny touch screens. A **senior partner** at a Boston law firm describes a scene in his office. Young **associates** lay out their suite of technologies: laptops, iPods

start-up = a new business

senior partner = an important lawyer in the firm

associates = the people who work in the law office

<sup>1</sup> A *Blackberry* was a wireless, handheld, communication device released in the early 2000s.

cockpits = the front of the plane where the controls are

keep at bay = staying away from something/someone

Reference to a children's story, "Goldilocks and the 3 bears"

shortchange = don't give back the right amount, esp money.

discrete = not obvious

Shakespeare's quote means we get eaten by what we were going to eat

diminished = made smaller

self-reflection = thinking about how we affect others and how we are really feeling

muse = think about

confide = tell a secret

## GRAMMAR & USAGE

### Semicolon

Writers use a semicolon to join independent clauses when two or more clauses are of equal importance. In paragraph 11, notice the sentence "Human relationships are rich; they're messy and demanding." In this sentence, the two independent clauses are about two aspects of human relationships.

**kinetic:** active

**nuance:** subtle distinction

**velocity:** speed

and multiple phones. And then they put their earphones on. "Big ones. Like pilots. They turn their desks into cockpits." With the young lawyers in their cockpits, the office is quiet, a quiet that does not ask to be broken.

9 In the silence of connection, people are comforted by being in touch with a lot of people—carefully kept at bay. We can't get enough of one another if we can use technology to keep one another at distances we can control: not too close, not too far, just right. I think of it as a Goldilocks effect.

10 Texting and e-mail and posting let us present the self we want to be. This means we can edit. And if we wish to, we can delete. Or retouch: the voice, the flesh, the face, the body. Not too much, not too little—just right.

11 Human relationships are rich; they're messy and demanding. We have learned the habit of cleaning them up with technology. And the move from conversation to connection is part of this. But it's a process in which we shortchange ourselves. Worse, it seems that over time we stop caring, we forget that there is a difference.

12 We are tempted to think that our little "sips" of online connection add up to a big gulp of real conversation. But they don't. E-mail, Twitter, Facebook, all of these have their places—in politics, commerce, romance, and friendship. But no matter how valuable, they do not substitute for conversation.

13 Connecting in sips may work for gathering discrete bits of information or for saying, "I am thinking about you." Or even for saying, "I love you." But connecting in sips doesn't work as well when it comes to understanding and knowing one another. In conversation we tend to one another. (The word itself is kinetic; it's derived from words that mean to move, together.) We can attend to tone and nuance. In conversation, we are called upon to see things from another's point of view.

14 Face-to-face conversation unfolds slowly. It teaches patience. When we communicate on our digital devices, we learn different habits. As we ramp up the volume and velocity of online connections, we start to expect faster answers. To get these, we ask one another simpler questions; we dumb down our communications, even on the most important matters. It is as though we have all put ourselves on cable news. Shakespeare might have said, "We are consum'd with that which we were nourish'd by."

15 And we use conversation with others to learn to converse with ourselves. So our flight from conversation can mean diminished chances to learn skills of self-reflection. These days, social media continually asks us what's "on our mind," but we have little motivation to say something truly self-reflective. Self-reflection in conversation requires trust. It's hard to do anything with 3,000 Facebook friends except connect.

16 As we get used to being shortchanged on conversation and to getting by with less, we seem almost willing to dispense with people altogether. Serious people muse about the future of computer programs as psychiatrists. A high school sophomore confides to me that he wishes he could talk to an artificial

intelligence program instead of his dad about dating; he says the A.I. would have so much more in its database. Indeed, many people tell me they hope that as Siri, the digital assistant on Apple's iPhone, becomes more advanced, "she" will be more and more like a best friend—one who will listen when others won't.

17 During the years I have spent researching people and their relationships with technology, I have often heard the sentiment "No one is listening to me." I believe this feeling helps explain why it is so appealing to have a Facebook page or a Twitter feed—each provides so many automatic listeners. And it help explain why—against all reason—so many of us are willing to talk to machines that seem to care about us. Researchers around the world are busy inventing sociable robots, designed to be companions to the elderly, to children, to all of us.

18 One of the most haunting experiences during my research came when I brought one of these robots, designed in the shape of a baby seal, to an elder-care facility, and an older woman began to talk to it about the loss of her child. The robot seemed to be looking into her eyes. It seemed to be following the conversation. The woman was comforted.

19 And so many people found this amazing. Like the sophomore who wants advice about dating from artificial intelligence and those who look forward to computer psychiatry, this enthusiasm speaks to how much we have confused conversation with connection and collectively seem to have embraced a new kind of delusion that accepts the simulation of compassion as sufficient unto the day. And why would we want to talk about love and loss with a machine that has no experience of the arc of human life? Have we so lost confidence that we will be there for one another?

20 We expect more from technology and less from one another and seem increasingly drawn to technologies that provide the illusion of companionship without the demands of relationship. Always-on/always-on-you devices provide three powerful fantasies: that we will always be heard; that we can put our attention wherever we want it to be; and that we never have to be alone. Indeed our new devices have turned being alone into a problem that can be solved.

21 When people are alone, even for a few moments, they fidget and reach for a device. Here connection works like a symptom, not a cure, and our constant, reflexive impulse to connect shapes a new way of being.

22 Think of it as "I share, therefore I am." We use technology to define ourselves by sharing our thoughts and feelings as we're having them. We used to think, "I have a feeling; I want to make a call." Now our impulse is, "I want to have a feeling; I need to send a text."

23 So, in order to feel more, and to feel more like ourselves, we connect. But in our rush to connect, we flee from solitude, our ability to be separate and gather ourselves. Lacking the capacity for solitude, we turn to other people but

sentiment = feeling/idea

appealing = something we want to do

sociable = friendly

haunting = scary

collectively = as a group  
embraced = accepted  
delusion = a wrong idea  
stimulation = giving a feeling  
sufficient = enough

arc = the path  
confidence = faith

drawn = want to use  
illusion = trick, something not real

fidget= can't sit still

reflexive impulse = doing something without thinking

flee = run from  
solitude = being alone

capacity = ability

fragile = weak, hurt easily

don't experience them as they are. It is as though we use them, need them as spare parts to support our increasingly **fragile** selves.

**24** We think constant connection will make us feel less lonely. The opposite is true. If we are unable to be alone, we are far more likely to be lonely. If we don't teach our children to be alone, they will know only how to be lonely.

**25** I am a **partisan** for conversation. To make room for it, I see some first, **deliberate** steps. At home, we can create **sacred** spaces: the kitchen, the dining room. We can make our cars "device-free zones." We can demonstrate the value of conversation to our children. And we can do the same thing at work. There we are so busy communicating that we often don't have time to talk to one another about what really matters. Employees asked for **casual** Fridays; perhaps managers should introduce conversational Thursdays. Most of all, we need to remember—in between texts and e-mails and Facebook posts—to listen to one another, even to the boring bits, because it is often in unedited moments, moments in which we **hesitate** and **stutter** and go silent, that we **reveal** ourselves to one another.

**26** I spend the summers at a cottage on Cape Cod, and for decades I walked the same **dunes** that Thoreau<sup>2</sup> once walked. Not too long ago, people walked with their heads up, looking at the water, the sky, the sand and at one another, talking. Now they often walk with their heads down, typing. Even when they are with friends, partners, children, everyone is on their own devices.

**27** So I say, look up, look at one another, and let's start the conversation.

### Making Observations

- Review the claim you underlined. Do you find yourself agreeing with this claim?
- Which starred supporting evidence stands out to you and why?

<sup>2</sup> *Henry David Thoreau* (1817–62) was an American writer and philosopher credited with helping to develop Transcendentalism—a system of thought that valued nature, experience, and intuition above religion, science, and reason.



## My Notes

5. Revise the following vague assertion into a thesis by replacing the phrase “a variety of strategies” with some specific strategies Turkle uses and the word “claim” with Turkle’s belief regarding the effect of technology on human relationships:

*In “The Flight from Conversation,” Turkle uses a variety of strategies to support her claim.*

6. Now, use these sentence frames to get started on your own thesis. Then, consult your teacher for help in selecting the best thesis for your essay. Your teacher may suggest some revisions before allowing you to move on.

Turkle uses \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_  
to argue that \_\_\_\_\_

Turkle makes use of rhetorical devices such as \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
and \_\_\_\_\_ to illustrate \_\_\_\_\_

Turkle supports her claim that \_\_\_\_\_  
through evidence such as \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
and \_\_\_\_\_

### Craft the Introduction

7. An introduction generally includes three parts (ANT): (A) attention getter; (N) necessary information such as the author, title, genre, situation, or context; and (T) a thesis. Use brackets to label the ANT elements of the following introduction.

People often assume that connection enables communication. However, Sherry Turkle argues that connection makes it hard to communicate. In her article “The Flight from Conversation,” Turkle claims that although technology enables people to connect on superficial levels, it is also causing people to lose their abilities to have meaningful conversations. Turkle uses figurative language, allusions, and personal anecdotes to illustrate how tech connections are continuously allowing people to hide from one another behind their devices. By the end of her argument, this combination of strategies convinces the reader that people need to become more aware of their isolation and try to do something about it.

8. Now, note some attention-getting ideas for your essay here, such as describing a scene where someone is distracted from social interaction due to technology.

### Compose Body Paragraphs and Incorporate Quotations

The body paragraphs (minimum of two to three) should each focus on a separate persuasive strategy of Turkle's and its intended effect on the reader. For example, if you've named three strategies in your thesis, each strategy should get its own body paragraph.

Embed direct quotations = this means that you should take sentences from the article and use them in your own essay. You should find a sentence from the article that supports your ideas and put it into quotation marks, "like this." Then you need to explain why you picked that sentence

9. **Embed direct quotations** from Turkle's article into each body paragraph. Remember to sandwich each quotation between your own points. Each quotation should be introduced, stated, and then analyzed. List some quotations (three to four) you plan to use here along with your reasons for choosing them.

## LANGUAGE & WRITER'S CRAFT: Embedding Quotations

When writers quote directly from other sources, they must surround the borrowed words with quotation marks. This signals to readers that the words are from another writer. For example, you could quote an important line from the argument you are analyzing:

Sherry Turkle states, "Texting and e-mail and posting let us present the self we want to be."

Sometimes, however, a quotation includes words quoted from a different source or words already in quotation marks. You still use double quotation marks around the entire quote, but the quotation marks inside the quote become single quotation marks:

Turkle asserts that our addiction to technology has caused us to lower our expectations for communication and that "Shakespeare might have said, 'We are consum'd with that which we were nourish'd by.'"

**PRACTICE** Using these guidelines, use the following quotations from Sherry Turkle's "The Flight from Conversation" in sentences, paying attention to proper punctuation:

- A 16-year-old boy who relies on texting for almost everything says almost wistfully, "Someday, someday, but certainly not now, I'd like to learn how to have a conversation."

- Human relationships are rich; they're messy and demanding.

### Write the Conclusion

- 10.** The conclusion should echo the ideas introduced earlier without repeating them directly. Also, the conclusion should answer the question, "So what?" It's a chance to comment on the significance of Turkle's argument and how she crafted it. You might consider the question *What does the text want readers to believe, feel, or do, and how successfully does it accomplish this purpose?* Note some ideas for your conclusion here.

### My Notes

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