

# Weeks 6 & 7: Original Creative Essay--The Birds Speak

## Overview of Original Creative Writing Assignment

You will be writing an original creative essay about a bird created on Day Five of Creation over the next two weeks. **You will research to find information, but you will write your paper creatively in the first person.** This will be a fun project!

### I. TOPIC OF ESSAY

This creative writing assignment is one in which you will **inform your readers in a creative way.** You may choose one of the following birds that were created on Day Five of Creation or choose a different bird:

- A. Wandering albatross
- B. Common puffin
- C. Falcon
- D. Osprey
- E. Turkey
- F. Kiwi
- G. Thrush
- H. Finch
- I. Parrot

### II. NUMBER OF PARAGRAPHS IN THE BODY OF YOUR ESSAY

- A. **Basic:** 5 paragraph body
- B. **Extension:** 6 paragraph body

**Note:** (Basic Students will write 7 total paragraphs and Extension students will write 8 total paragraphs for this essay.)

### III. SENTENCES PER PARAGRAPH

All students will write 7-10 sentences per paragraph.

### IV. OPENING PARAGRAPH

All students will write an Opening Paragraph.

### V. CLOSING PARAGRAPH

All students will write a Closing Paragraph.

### VI. SOURCES

All students will be using sources -- according to the number and type needed based on your level. You may use an encyclopedia, an online source, a book, or other.

### VII. QUOTATIONS WITHIN YOUR ESSAY

Students will not be using **quotations** unless the student desires.

**Your entire paper will be written in the first person--speaking from the bird's point of view.** Since the entire paper will be written as though the bird is speaking, no quotation marks will be needed. (The entire paper will be "quoted" already.)

### VIII. WRITE ON/ADDITIONAL SKILLS

You will learn/further develop the following additional skills:

- A. **Research and Outlining**
- B. **Color-Coded Research**
- C. **CC Coding Instructions**

**Note:** This Overview Box, which is provided at the beginning of each assignment, is here to give students (and teachers) an at-a-glance look at the entire composition project. Each step of each lesson is assigned and detailed throughout the week(s).

# Lesson A. Research and Study Skills: Choose Your Topic

This week you will be writing an Informative Creative Essay about a bird. You probably remember that birds were created by God on Day Five of the creation story. You may or may not want to include that tidbit in your essay (in your Opening or Closing Paragraph, for example).

This is called an Informative Creative Essay because it will be **informative--informing your reader--but you will inform in a creative way.**

1. You will write it **from the bird's point of view.**
2. That is, you will **“talk” in your essay as though you are the bird**, rather than an outsider telling an informative essay about the bird.

**<> A-1. Read and study the Sample Outline and Sample Essay provided** (Box A-1-1 and A-1-2). Notice how the notes were turned into an essay in the first person (as opposed to a report that sounds more like an encyclopedia entry)--even though the notes look “factual.”

**<> A-2. Choose a bird from the list or a different one altogether. Write the bird you chose below.**

**My bird:** \_\_\_\_\_

**<> A-3. Choose a source that has enough information for you to be able to write a five or six paragraph body about the bird of your choice.** Encyclopedias and animal almanacs are good sources for this type of information.

# Sample "Outline"

## Bald Eagle

### Topic of Paragraph A: Habitat

- Range includes almost all of North America including most of Canada and Northern Mexico
- Lives near rivers, lakes, & oceans w/ +++ of fish
- Roost → hardwood & coniferous trees
- Prefers areas w/ low densities of human population
- Was on the brink of extinction → early 20th century
- Now = stabilized

### Topic of Paragraph B: Feeding

- Mostly feeds on fish such as trout & salmon
- To find prey, eagle glides over water & grabs fish
- Rips apart fish with claws
- Feeds on carcasses of dead animals as big as whales
- Also eats small mammals, other sea birds, & reptiles

### Topic of Paragraph C: Appearance/Size

- Appearance does not vary much
- Brown with white tail & white head
- Large yellow hooked beak
- Body very feathered/ legs = unfeathered
- Feet yellow
- 28-42 centimeters long
- Wingspan 69-96 inches
- Females can weigh 12 lbs
- Males can weigh 9 lbs

### Topic of Paragraph D: Human Relationship

- USA national bird
- Popular in American lore
- Keeps distance from humans
- Humans strongly protected them
- In 20th century = verge of extinction
- 1918, U.S. & Canada signed Migratory Bird Treaty
- 1940, Bald Eagle Protection Act instated in the U.S.
- Bird = now safe

### Topic of Paragraph E: Birth/Mating

- Mates for life
- Makes the biggest nest of North American birds
- Nest can be up to 13 ft. deep
- Lays 1 to 3 eggs per year
- All 3 eggs rarely survive, which is part of being endangered
- Baby eagles = eaglets
- Eaglets hatch after about 35 days in the egg

Box A-1-1

## American Symbol

I flew past the mountainous terrain, searching the ground for dinner. The breeze whipped below my outstretched wings, allowing me to glide effortlessly. As the river approached, I swooped lower, using my keen eyesight to look for ripples in the water indicating that fish were underneath. There it was. In an instant, I was in a dive, approaching the water at breakneck speed. My extended talons grabbed the salmon, snatching it from the shallow edge. **(Opening Paragraph)**

Bald eagles, such as myself, live all over North America, including most of Canada and Northern Mexico. My favorite habitats are near bodies of water, including rivers, lakes, and oceans. This makes it easier for me to find food from day to day. I tend to roost in hardwood and coniferous trees. I am not comfortable around people and, thus, prefer areas with low densities of human population. In the late twentieth century, we bald eagles were on the verge of extinction in the continental United States. Since then, our population has slowly begun to stabilize. **(PoB-A: Habitat)**

As mentioned previously, I feed mostly on fish. Trout and salmon are among the list of my favorites. After catching a salmon, I hold it with one talon and rip it apart with the other. You might even find carcasses as big as whales on my menu! When I can't catch one of these foods, I will eat small mammals, other sea birds, and various reptiles. **(PoB-B: Feeding)**

The appearance of us bald eagles doesn't vary too much. Most look like me with a brown body and white tail and head. And, of course, we each have a large yellow hooked beak. Although my body is aptly feathered, my legs are bare. My feet are also yellow. We "baldies" are among the largest birds in North America, ranging in length from 28-42 centimeters. We also have a billowing wingspan between 69 and 96 inches in length. Unlike you humans, female bald eagles often weigh more than males. The typical female weighs around twelve pounds, while a normal male weighs roughly nine pounds. **(PoB-C: Appearance/Size)**

But our biggest claim to fame in this country is that we are the national bird of the United States. For centuries, we have been part of the lore for the United States. As I have already mentioned, we bald eagles try to keep our distance from humans. That being said, we have been strongly protected by our human counterparts for nearly a hundred years. In the early twentieth century, we were on the verge of extinction. In 1918, the United States and Canada signed the Migratory Bird Treaty. And then in 1940, the Bald Eagle Protection Act was instated in the United States. Both of these incentives went a long way toward saving us. **(PoB-D: Human Relationship)**

One thing many people admire about us is that once we find a mate, we mate for life. Together we "love birds" build some of the largest nests in North America for our eaglets. The nests can be up to thirteen feet deep. Every year the female will lay between one and three eggs, though it is rare for all of them to survive, which is part of the reason we were endangered. Our babies hatch after about thirty-five days in the egg. **(PoB-E: Firth/Mature)**

My majestic flight has been an inspiration to many. My independence and beauty in soaring appropriately symbolize the American spirit. From time to time, I will see hikers in the sparse countryside, trying desperately to catch a glimpse of me. They never seem to be disappointed even by a mere sighting. I guess that is why one patriotic song reads, "But if you've got pride, and you're proud you do...Hey, we could use some more like me and you...Where the stars and stripes and the eagle fly." Impressive, huh? But most of all, I am just a part of God's marvelous creation. **(Closing Paragraph)**

Box A-1-2

## Sample Paragraph Outline With and Without Symbols\*

**Topic of Paragraph A:** Habitat (in "wordy" format)

- Range includes almost all of North America including most of Canada and Northern Mexico
- Lives near rivers, lakes, and oceans with plenty of fish
- Roosts in hardwood and coniferous trees
- Prefer areas with low densities of human population
- Was on the brink of extinction in early 20th century
- Now is stabilized

**Topic of Paragraph A:** Habitat (with symbols & "short hand")

- Range incl. almost all North America incl. + + + Canada & Northern Mexico
- Lives near rivers, lakes, & oceans w/ + + + fish
- Roosts → hardwood & coniferous trees
- Prefers areas w/ low densities human population
- Brink of extinction → early 20th century
- Now = stabilized

\*You may use symbols instead of complete sentences in your outline. Remember, an outline is for you--and you should use what helps you the most to write.

Box B-1

## Lesson B. Study Skills: Research and Outline

Many times creative writing comes from within you--like a story, poem, narration, journal entry, etc. Sometimes, however, you will need to research to find information, even in the case of a creative piece. That is the way this week's assignment is designed.

Yes, you will write creatively. You will be clever. You will use humor. You will use first person speaking from a non-human being. However, you will need to research to get the information that you will include in your essay.

Look again at the Sample Outline provided for you. This outline looks "research-based" or even "encyclopedia-like." However, when the author used those notes to write his essay, he made the writing creative. (See the Sample Essay also.) **He used humor, first person writing, description, personification, and more.** That is what you will do!

↔ **B-1.** Study the sample paragraph outline(s) provided and consider whether a "wordy" outline or a "short-hand" outline will help you the most for this project.

↔ **B-2.** Follow the steps below to outline paragraphs for the body of an essay about a bird:

- (1) **Find a source** that has **ample information** for the assignment length and subject matter.
- (2) **Read through this source**, noticing the types of information it contains--the "**sections**" or "**major aspects**" of your topic.
- (3) See if your source **contains the major aspects that the Sample Outline contains**:
  - a. **Habitat**
  - b. **Feeding**
  - c. **Appearance/size**
  - d. **Human relationship**
  - e. **Birth/mating**
- (4) **Consider if you would like to include those aspects of your bird in your essay**--and consider any others you may desire to include in addition to those or instead of those.
- (5) **Develop some sort of coding system** that will help you in your outlining, such as this "Color-Coded Research" method:
  - a. If your source can be photocopied or printed off, **choose five or six different colors of highlighters--one for each paragraph of the body.**
  - b. **Make a "color-coded list" in the "Color-Coded Research" box below**--by making a swipe with the highlighter. Beside that swipe, write what that color will stand for in your source (e.g. pink is habitat; yellow is feeding; blue is appearance/size, etc.). By doing this, you are committing (tentatively--you may always change your mind later) to the paragraphs that you will include in your essay.
  - c. Once your Color-Coded Research box is ready, **go to your source and mark it up with highlighters.** For example, highlight everything about **habitat** (that you think you will want to use), with your **pink** highlighter; everything about feeding with your yellow highlighter, etc.--or **whatever your coding system is.**
  - d. **Go to your outlining lines and list the Paragraph Topics** that you have chosen and highlighted.
  - e. **Using one color of material from your "color coded" source at a time, pen in notes on the outlining lines.** For example, take notes from all the **pink highlighted** information for the **habitat** paragraph, then move to the yellow one and write notes for the feeding paragraph, etc., until all paragraphs are outlined.

**Color-Coded Research Box**

<b>Color-Coded Research Box</b>

**Box B-2 (5)**

(6) Consider these tips as you outline:

- a. You may use **key words for each sentence, bullet points, or complete sentences** in your outline. Remember, your outline is for you!
- b. You will use the Sentence-by-Sentence approach you learned earlier in this book. That is, you will outline your essay sentence-by-sentence and paragraph-by-paragraph.
- c. Do not worry about getting the order, wording, etc., all perfect at this stage. **You will have a chance to “tweak” it later.**
- d. If you find yourself short on information as you outline, go back to your source and find more material for each paragraph.
- e. **Be sure each paragraph of notes has only information about that paragraph’s topic.** Remember, a paragraph is a unit of thought. When you change topics, change paragraphs.
- f. You may or may not use most of the outlining lines provided.

**Note: If your source can not be printed or copied, use various colors of sticky notes on the edges of your source and color-code it with notes written on the sticky notes. (For example, write habitat Paragraph A on all of the pink sticky notes, feeding Paragraph B on all of the yellow sticky notes, etc.)**

### All--Paragraph of Body A

Topic of Paragraph One: \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 4 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 6 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 7 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 8 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 9 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 10 \_\_\_\_\_

## **All--Paragraph of Body B**

Topic of Paragraph Two: \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 4 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 6 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 7 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 8 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 9 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 10 \_\_\_\_\_

## **All--Paragraph of Body C**

Topic of Paragraph Three: \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 4 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 6 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 7 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 8 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 9 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 10 \_\_\_\_\_

## **All--Paragraph of Body D**

Topic of Paragraph Four: \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 4 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 6 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 7 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 8 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 9 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 10 \_\_\_\_\_

## **All--Paragraph of Body E**

Topic of Paragraph Five: \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 4 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 6 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 7 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 8 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 9 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 10 \_\_\_\_\_

## **Extension--Paragraph of Body F**

Topic of Paragraph Six: \_\_\_\_\_

**Sentence 1** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sentence 2** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sentence 3** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sentence 4** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sentence 5** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sentence 6** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sentence 7** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sentence 8** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sentence 9** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sentence 10** \_\_\_\_\_

## Lesson C. Composition: Write Rough Draft of Informative, Creative Essay About a Bird Created on Day Five

<> C. Follow these steps to write your essay:

- (1) Read the sample essay provided and compare it with the notes from the bald eagle to see how to use your notes in your essay.
- (2) **Optional:** If it helps you to get “into character” more, you may flip over and outline and write your Opening Paragraph first. (Read those instructions before writing it.)
- (3) **Number the headers** in the order you want each of the “paragraphs” to occur in your essay. (In other words, Paragraph A may not be the first paragraph of your body if you do not want it to be. You may reorder your paragraphs in any order you desire.)
- (4) **Begin with the #1 paragraph of information** (that you labeled #1) and add any notes to this paragraph that you desire, mark through things you do not want to use, or find more information if you feel that more is needed.
- (5) Read the topic of your first paragraph of the body and the sentence notes beneath it.
- (6) **Re-number the sentence lines in the order you want your information** (if needed).
- (7) **Write the first paragraph of the body of your essay** in your notebook (on every other line) or key it on the computer (double spaced).
- (8) Remember, you will be writing a separate Opening Paragraph later, **so just start right into the body as though you have already introduced yourself in the Opening Paragraph.**
- (9) Continue the steps above for the rest of your essay.
- (10) Write the last paragraph of the body of your essay just as you did the other paragraphs. **You will tell your audience “good-bye” or add another clever closing in your Closing Paragraph later.**

## Lesson D. Study Skills/ Prewriting/ Composition: Take Notes for an Original Opening Paragraph

↔ **D-1.** Now that you have written the body of your essay, you are ready to write notes for an original Opening Paragraph. Follow these steps:

- (1) Read the body of your essay aloud to yourself, and consider these options for opening your essay.
  - a. Scripture passage **about Day Five of creation**
  - b. **Song about birds**
  - c. Story about **when your creature was born (or hatched)**
  - d. **Definition of bird**
  - e. Example in **Scripture of birds**
  - f. An **introduction of your bird with you meeting him on your bird feeder**
  - g. Something from the characteristic list that might **surprise or entertain your readers**
  - h. A catchy **“How do you do” from your character**
  - i. Other: **“Fly” in to see his nest** (see the world from the point of view of the bird in flight)
  - j. Something **you want to use to open and close your essay** (a continuing poem, verse, story, etc.)
- (2) **In your notes, plan on what you will include in your Thesis Statement.\* (You may tweak your original Thesis Statement to fit in your Opening Paragraph however you see fit.)**
  - a. Remember, a Thesis Statement is a statement that **tells the “thesis” of your paper--what your entire paper is about.**
  - b. It should be a sentence or two in length and should introduce your reader to your topic.
  - c. It may be at the very beginning of your Opening Paragraph or at the end of your Opening Paragraph.
  - d. It should bridge the gap between your catchy Opening Paragraph and the body of your essay.
- (3) Write enough notes for **4-8 sentences** on the lines provided, again not worrying about the order, having too much information, etc.
- (4) You may just jot down some thoughts, references, etc., for your Opening Paragraph notes, or you may create a Sentence-by-Sentence Outline like you did for the body of your essay.

**\*Note: If you are used to writing Thesis Statements and Opening Paragraphs, you may experiment with putting your Thesis Statement later in your Opening Paragraph--even at the very end of it, if desired. Sometimes this helps the flow of your Opening Paragraph when you are using a story or other information in your Opening Paragraph that you want to keep all together--then follow all of this with the Thesis Statement.**

- (5) You may plan to write your Opening Paragraph in a different “person” (first person, second person, etc.) if the contents warrants it. For example, if you are using an opening story, you may tell it in first person (if needed). If you are using an opening challenge, you may tell it in second person, etc. If you are going to use an “encyclopedia--like” Opening Paragraph, you might want to write that in the third person (but be sure you “talk” as your bird at the end of this factual paragraph).



- (3) Using each set of notes for one sentence in the following way:
- Read a line of notes.
  - Consider what you want to say about those notes.
  - Say aloud a sentence that you want to use.
  - Write down that sentence.
  - Repeat these steps for all of your notes.
  - You may leave out some information that you do not want to include or add more information if you remember something you forgot.
  - Write this paragraph in your notebook (on every other line) or key it on the computer (double spaced) before the essay you just wrote.

## Lesson E. Study Skills/Prewriting/ Composition: Take Notes for an Original Closing Paragraph

<> E-1. Now that you have written the body and Opening Paragraph of your essay, you are ready to write a Closing Paragraph.

(1) **Your Closing Paragraph will include a Thesis Statement “Reloaded.”**

- Remember, a **Thesis Statement “Reloaded”** is a statement that **“closes” your paper--sums up what your entire paper is about.**
- It should be a sentence or two in length and should close your essay.
- It may be at the very beginning of your Closing Paragraph or at the end of your Closing Paragraph.
- It should bridge the gap between your catchy Closing Paragraph and the body of your essay.
- It should leave your reader with a feeling of satisfaction after reading your paper.
- It may repeat something catchy from your opening or may repeat the title of your essay, if desired.
- Be sure your Thesis Statement “Reloaded” is not identical to your Thesis Statement--it should be “reloaded” with the key words still in it.
- You may desire to continue something you began in your Opening Paragraph or use an idea listed in the Opening Paragraph section as your Closing Paragraph. This is great! Just be sure you close “close up” your essay in your Closing Paragraph too.

(2) Write enough notes for **5-8 sentences** on the lines provided, again not worrying about the order, having too much information, etc.

(3) You may just jot down some thoughts, references, etc., for your Closing Paragraph notes, or you may create a “Sentence-by-Sentence” Outline like you did for the body of your essay.

**Note: If you are used to writing Thesis Statements “Reloaded” and Closing Paragraphs, you may experiment with putting your Thesis Statement “Reloaded” later in your Closing Paragraph--even at the very end of it, if desired. Sometimes this helps the flow of your Closing Paragraph when you are writing a story or other information in your Closing Paragraph that you want to keep all together--then follow this with the Thesis Statement “Reloaded.”**



## Lesson F. Composition and Editing: Edit and Revise Using the Checklist Challenge

<> F. Use the Checklist Challenge located after this week's lesson to edit your essay.

- (1) Complete **each revision for each paragraph, as indicated.**
- (2) Insert revisions with pen or pencil into your rough draft paper.
- (3) **Highlight (or code) each revision on your rough draft paper** as directed by your teacher.
- (4) **Check off (or code) each item's check box** on the Checklist Challenge for this.

**Note: If you are not familiar with CI's Checklist Challenge, and you feel that you need more help on it than this upper level book provides, you may desire to secure a first semester MC book for levels four through nine or the *Character Quality Language Arts Teacher's Guide*--all of which contain detailed lessons on the How To's of the Checklist Challenge. Also, see the Checklist Challenge Coding box provided.**

Note: Notice that after several tasks of the Checklist Challenge, the items start to contain words like "If you have already done this, highlight the word or sentence in your paper and highlight the check box(es) as directed by your teacher." When you start to see these words, you may just locate the items in your paper and code them for your teacher rather than adding more of them. Be sure you code the items in your paper and in the task check boxes of the CC Chart.

## Lesson G. Composition: Final Copy Original Informative Creative, Essay

<> G-1. **Write the final copy of your essay in your notebook (on every line).** If you prefer, you may key it on the computer (double spaced).

<> G-2. **Read your final copy aloud.** Do you like the way it sounds now? Do you notice an improvement in your essay since you completed the Checklist Challenge?

## Checklist Challenge Coding

Your teacher may desire for you to code your CC for her so that she can grade it/check it more easily. The following steps will help you learn to code your CC for your teacher. For more help on this, see the Suggested CC Coding Chart in the back of this *Meaningful Composition* book.

1. Use **colored pencil** or **colored pens** or **highlighters**.
2. **Print off your** double spaced **rough draft report or essay** (or use your handwritten rough draft).
3. **With your CC on one side and your paper on your dominant side** (right hand side for right handed students), complete the first CC task.
4. **Place a check mark in the check boxes for the items that say "read" or "look for errors,"** etc., with a pen as you complete them.
5. For items that involve inserting things or omitting something and adding something else, code in one of two ways:
  - a. **Insert the change or addition with a pen or pencil on your paper and use a highlighter to mark it in your paper** in a distinguishing way--highlight the addition with an orange highlighter, circle the change with blue highlighter, double underline the title with a pink highlighter, etc. (choosing whatever colors you desire without repeating the exact same marking). **OR**
  - b. **Insert the change or addition with a colored pencil or colored pen** (choosing whatever colors you desire without repeating the exact same marking). (In this method, you will eventually need to add the change AND circle it or underline it so that your exact same marking is not repeated. For example, you might add verbs with a blue pen but add the title with a blue pen and underline the title with that same blue pen--two different markings, one written in blue pen and one written in blue pen *and* underlined with the blue pen.)
6. **Whatever you do to the insertion on your paper should be done to the CC check boxes for that item.**
  - a. For example, if you highlight your new verbs with an orange highlighter in your paper, you will color in the check box with orange highlighter.
  - b. If you underline your title with purple highlighter in your paper, you should underline the check box with purple highlighter.
  - c. If you write your new verbs in green colored pencil in your paper, make a check mark in the check box with that same green colored pencil.
7. **If your teacher gives you permission to skip a CC task** (or you and she do not think a change will improve a paragraph), **place an NC (no change) in the check box for that paragraph**, so your teacher will not look for it.
8. If you skip a task altogether (without your teacher's permission), place an X in the task box(es), so your teacher will know not to search for the revisions. Obviously, it is always preferred that you do all of your assignments, but it would be better to indicate that you skipped something than to leave the box(es) blank.

The point is that **the coding you put into the paper copy of your composition should be identical to what you do to (or above, beneath, around, etc.) the CC check boxes for that task.** This method will allow your teacher to have your CC chart on one side and your "colorful paper" (with the CC revisions inserted with colors) on the other. She can check at a glance to find your new insertions, title, Thesis Statement, and more.

**Note: Some students prefer to do the CC on their paper on the electronic document on the computer with the colored shading tool provided in word processing programs. This is fine, too, but the student should still do the same marking/coding on the CC chart as he did on the electronic document--or write beside the tasks what color each task is. For example, if the student shades the verbs he replaced in pink shading, he should write PINK beside the CC task for the verbs on the chart. Then when he prints this "colorful" version, the teacher can still check his revisions easily.**

Box F





# Checklist Challenge for Weeks 6 & 7: Original Creative Essay

## The Birds Speak

Complete the Checklist Challenge by using these guides:

- Determine which check boxes apply to your level.
- Each box will indicate the number of changes that need to be completed (normally one box for each paragraph).

All ALL LEVELS

B BASIC LEVEL only

E EXTENSION only

Optional OPTIONAL -- Your teacher will decide whether you should complete this task or not, based on your grammar/usage level.

All  All  All  All

All  All  All  E

Read your essay to your teacher or an older sibling. Together, listen for sentences that sound unclear. **Be sure to read aloud.** You will “hear” errors you would otherwise not find. **Place a check mark in each CC box with a pen or pencil when this step is completed.**

☞ Focus on content errors at this time.

All  All  All  All

All  All  All  E

Circle each **verb** with a light colored highlighter. This will make it easier to change your verbs and to add adverbs (*ly* words and others) as further directed. **“Code” the CC boxes in the same way that you coded your located verbs in your paper.**

Be sure to circle all of the following verbs:

- Action verbs--show what the subject *does*
- Be, a Helper, Link verbs (BHL)--being, helping, and linking verbs (is, are, am, was, were, has, had, do, does, etc.)
- Infinitives--to + verb (to +action verb or to + BHL verb)

☞ **Be sure you circle the verbs in your writings as this step is crucial later in the Checklist Challenge. However, do not get discouraged if you miss some. You do not need to labor over each word, fearful of missing a verb. The more you look for the verbs, the better you will get at finding them--and the better you will get at the verb-related CC items.**

All  All  All  All

All  All  All  E

Change one of the “**boring**” verbs in each paragraph to a “**strong**” verb. You may select one from the list below or choose one of your own. **“Code” the CC boxes in the same way that you coded your coded your verbs in your paper.**

<u>Instead of</u>	<u>Use</u>	<u>Instead of</u>	<u>Use</u>	<u>Instead of</u>	<u>Use</u>
found	discovered	looking	appearing	run	sprint
coming	visiting	sit	recline	talk	communicate
go	hasten to	asked	interrogated	lay	recline
said	announced	write	pen	lie	deceive
look	examine	answered	responded	play	frolic
walk	saunter	lie	stretch out	talk	proclaim
list	enumerate	become	develop	work	toil
look	scan	see	determine	add	enhance
help	assist	teach	instruct		

☞ **Be sure you add or delete words in the sentence when inserting your new verb, as needed for clarity.**

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Add an **adverb** (*ly* word or other) to each paragraph. You may select one from the list below or choose one of your own. **“Code” the CC boxes in the same way that you coded your added adverbs in your paper.**

Examples:

only	totally	joyfully	willingly	completely	never
practically	significantly	closely	finally	diligently	seldom
cheerfully	carefully	laboriously	gladly	slowly	later
extremely	gratefully	happily	sometimes	always	tomorrow
fully	thoughtfully	interestingly	apparently	cautiously	repeatedly

☞ **An adverb is a describer that describes or modifies a verb, adjective, or other adverb. An adverb tells *where, when, how, or to what extent.***

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Add one descriptive **adjective** to each paragraph. You may select one from the list below or choose one of your own. **“Code” the CC boxes in the same way that you coded your added adjectives in your paper.**

Examples:

stringent	gracious	lengthy	trusted	courteous	infallible
meek	meager	valiant	understanding	trustworthy	horrendous
courageous	fulfilling	preoccupied	terrible	incapable	presumptuous

☞ **An adjective is a describer that describes a noun or a pronoun. It tells *whose, which one, how many, or what kind.* You should add descriptive adjectives--those that tell *what kind*--though often clarifying adjectives are needed to tell the reader which one. (These are normally inserted during writing.)**

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From the **Banned Words List** below, select one word (or form of that word) that you have in one of your paragraphs, omit it, and substitute a similar, but stronger, word. ***If you do not have any Banned Words, just “code” the CC check box(es) as directed by your teacher (or place a check mark in each one that represents a paragraph with no Banned Words).***

**Banned Word List**

very	big	really	good	great	fine	slow
say	bad	little	want	see	look	such
ask	lot	find	walk	said	go	become
sit	think	soft	fast	many	find	

\*like (*Like* is only banned when it is a verb. When used as a preposition, *like* often creates a simile--and is not a Banned Word.)

☞ **Advanced students should omit as many Banned Words as possible throughout all paragraphs.**

Create a **title**, and put it at the top of your paper. *If you have already done this, you should still “code” the CC check box and the title in your paper as directed by your teacher.*

Consider the following ideas:

- Something catchy: “**Your Feathered Friend**”
- Something comical: “**Danger!**”
- Something bold: “**Feathered Foe?**”
- A song title or line: “**Why Do We Birds Sing?**”
- A Scripture: “**Birds of the Air**”
- Something biblical: “**And It Was Good**”
- Something informative: “**The Birds**”
- Something about character: “**Friendly Feathered Fellow**”
- Other: “**Your Pleasant Peacock**”
- Other: “**We Wiry Wrens**”

 **Tips:**

- **Center your title at the top of the first page of your composition.**
- **Capitalize the first letter of the first and last word.**
- **Capitalize all the words within the title that are important--but not three-letter-or-fewer articles, pronouns, or prepositions.**
- **Do not italicize your title, though you may treat it like a minor work and surround it with quotation marks (regular ones, not single ones), if desired.**

Add a sentence to the beginning of your paper that describes the whole piece. This is called the **Thesis Statement**. *If you have already done this, you should still “code” the CC check box and the Thesis Statement in your paper as directed by your teacher.*

Examples:

- Report about raccoons: Ever wonder how that furry bandit known as a raccoon manages to get into your coolers while you sleep in your tent at night?
- Report about an experience: When I just turned thirteen years old, I found out the challenging way how important siblings truly are.

 **Tips**

- **Write a sentence that describes your paper without telling the reader exactly what it is about.**
- **Do not say: *In this paper you will learn about . . .***
- **Be sure this Thesis Statement is truly representative of the content of your *entire* composition.**
- **Your Thesis Statement is your commitment to write about that topic. It should cleverly introduce your composition’s subject.**
- **If your paper does not have a separate Opening Paragraph, you will want to add an Opening Thesis Statement-Plus--a sentence or two introducing your topic that contains the Thesis Statement--to the beginning of your paper.**

Add one **word you have never used before in writing** (or more than one, according to your level), if you and your teacher think it is appropriate. *If you have already done this, you should still “code” the CC check box(es) and these words in your paper as directed by your teacher.*

-  **A word you have never used in writing might be one you use in speaking but not in your compositions. Do not be afraid to use words you cannot spell! Use spell check on the computer or a dictionary to spell these challenging words that will add more depth to your writing.**

E

Add one **SSS5—Super Short Sentence** of five words or fewer. **If you have already done this, you should still “code” the CC check box and the SSS5 in your paper as directed by your teacher.**

Examples:

- They display extraordinary stealth.
- Then, they are trapped!
- And soon it happened.

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Using a thesaurus, if needed, change one word in each paragraph to a **more advanced or distinct word**. **If you and your teacher feel that your vocabulary is advanced enough, you should still “code” the CC check box(es) and the advanced words in your paper as directed by your teacher.**

<u>Instead of:</u>	<u>Use:</u>	<u>Instead of:</u>	<u>Use:</u>
tree	maple	deep	bottomless
kind	compassionate	turn	swerve
grass	blades	loud	obnoxious

☞ **This may be any type of word--noun, verb, describer, etc. When choosing the new word, select one that paints a more vivid picture, gives better detail, is more distinct, etc. Do not just randomly select a word. Your new word choice should be *intentional*.**

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Choose a word (or forms of a word) that you used more than one time within each paragraph. If the word sounds **redundant**, change that word, at least once, to a word with a similar meaning. **If you do not have any redundancy, just “code” the CC check box(es) as directed by your teacher.**

Examples:

- If *joyful* is redundant, substitute *elated* the next time.
- If *drove* is redundant, substitute *careened* the next time.
- If *answered* is redundant, substitute *retorted* the next time.

**Note: Advanced level students should omit as much redundancy as possible throughout all paragraphs.**

☞ **Do not change insignificant words such as *was, it, and, etc.***

All

Add one **interjection** to the beginning of one of your sentences, or add a new sentence with an interjection in it (or more than one time, according to your level). **If you have already done this, you should still “code” the CC check box and the interjection in your paper as directed by your teacher.**

Punctuate appropriately:

- Follow it with a comma: **Yes**, that “hunter” has an easy meal! **OR**
- Follow it with an exclamation mark, then start a new sentence with a capital: **Yes!** That hunter has an easy meal.

☞ **Interjections include words from the following rhyme:**

My, well, oh  
Wow, yes, no

All

Start one or more of your sentences with an **adverb** (ly word or other) (or more than one, according to your level). ***If you have already done this, you should still “code” the CC check box(es) and the adverb opener(s) in your paper as directed by your teacher.***

Examples:

- Adverb opener: **Consequently**, there is no way for the creature to get loose.
- Adverbial clause or phrase opener: **Directly assailing their victims**, courageous predator attack and eat.

☞ **The comma may be directly after the adverb or shortly after it, depending on where you “hear” it. Do not use a comma if the adverb phrase or clause is actually a subject**  
***Directly assailing their victims is what they do (no comma).***

All

Add one **prepositional phrase opener** to each paragraph (or more than one, according to your level). If it is long or you hear a pause after it, follow it with a comma. ***If you have already done this, you should still “code” the CC check box(es) and the PP opener(s) in your paper as directed by your teacher.***

Examples:

- **Within its abdomen**, the spider has special glands that produce silk. (Optional comma)
- **From the center of the web**, spokes fan out and anchor the surrounding frame.
- **Onto the surrounding frame**, the center of the bridge is anchored. (Optional comma)
- **In the center of a web**, the spider waits patiently for its victim.
- **With even more silk**, the spider further entangles its prey.
- **With leaves tipped with spines that act like prison bars**, the spider catches its prey.
- **After digestion**, the leaf gradually reopens and waits for another insect to come too close.

☞ **Follow the PP opener with a comma if it is five words or longer or two prepositional phrases in a row, or when a pause is heard when it is read aloud.**

E

Combine two related complete, sentences (CS) with a semicolon. ***If you have already done this, you should still “code” the CC check box(es) and the CS ; CS in your paper as directed by your teacher.***

Examples:

- Some predators do not catch their prey by assailing them directly; these sneaky ones use far more subtle methods. (CS; CS)
- They act via traps and snares; they put their victims in challenging positions. (CS; CS)

☞ **A semicolon in the middle of two Complete Sentences (CS) is one way of creating a compound sentence--two sentences joined together as one. When you are instructed concerning this compound sentence creation, you may see this combination as CS ; CS (Complete Sentence semicolon Complete Sentence).**

E

Add one **coordinating conjunction** (cc) with a complete sentence on both sides (or more than one, according to your level). Be sure to put a comma before the cc. ***If you have already done this, you should still “code” the CC check box(es) and the CS, cc CS in your paper as directed by your teacher.***

Examples:

- Some predators do not catch their prey by assailing them directly, **for** these sneaky ones use far more subtle methods. (CS , cc CS)
- It steps into the trap, **for** the trap was hidden from view. (CS , cc CS)

⇒ A “comma cc” in the middle of two complete sentences (CS) is one way of creating a compound sentence- two sentences joined together as one –CS , cc CS). When you are instructed concerning this compound sentence creation, you may see this combination as CS, cc CS (Complete Sentence “comma coordinating conjunction” Complete Sentence).

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Check each paragraph carefully to be sure that your **transition from one paragraph to another** is smooth. If not, add transition sentences as needed. ***If your transition sentences are adequate, you should still “code” the CC check box(es) and the transition sentence(s) in your paper as directed by your teacher.***

⇒ Your transition from one topic to another topic may come at the end of a paragraph (telling the next paragraph’s topic) or at the beginning of a paragraph (telling that new paragraph’s topic).

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**Edit each paragraph** with your teacher, and correct any **usage or spelling errors**. Place a check mark in each CC box with a pen or pencil when this step is completed.