

The Lost Tools of Writing

Level One: Arrangement ABC's

*Because our writing problems fall into three categories, LTW lessons are divided into three groups. The three groups, called “canons”, include lessons in **invention**, thinking of something to say; **arrangement**, organizing thoughts; and **elocution**, expressing thoughts appropriately.*

(The last two canons of classical rhetoric are memory and delivery, which are not addressed in Level One.)

Usually, during the canon of arrangement where we organize our thoughts, we work through four steps of organizing. Since we learn only one step at a time, the arrangement lessons for Essay One contain only two of those parts. The second essay adds one more. After we reach Essay Three, we begin to use the complete, four-part arranging process.

What are the four parts of the complete arrangement?

1. Sorting: We look back at the lists of information we generated during invention and stored in the ANI. Then we sort the ideas. Sorting is always completed as the first step of the arrangement exercises. Learning to sort can be difficult, as it is the most difficult intellectual skill in Level I. As students practice, and their abilities to compare and define improve, sorting will become easier. Lessons in sorting are available in the curriculum's new Level I videos and in Sorting webinars, which are available online.

2. Arrangement A (Arr A) guides consist of exercises that help us create each new piece of the outline: first we learn Amplification, then Exordium, Division, Refutation, and Narratio.

You will find Arrangement A forms in the Student Workbook and in the Teacher's Guide.

3. Arrangement B (Arr B) is gathering. This is the place where we collect and write all the parts that will go into the outline. The order of gathering is determined by what we are able to think of. The first step is gathering groups of proofs and supports from the sorted ANI to build the body of the essay. After we know the body, we can write the parts of a conclusion. After we know the body and conclusion of our essay, we can craft an introduction. We can't introduce a person or a thing we don't know! Arrangement B helps us build the habit of creating introductions last. Also, in this gathering stage, we don't attend to elocution. In other words, the way an idea is expressed is not yet our concern. Copying ANI sentences into Arrangement B is fine—so is bad spelling and a lack of capital letters if those things don't naturally flow out of us.

You will find Arrangement B forms in the Student Workbook, but not in the Teacher’s Guide.

3. Arrangement C (Arr C) provides a form (or template) to create each outline. While Arr B provided the “thinking order” of an outline, Arr C provides the presentation order of an outline, so the introduction is at the top. We follow correct outline form (e.g., using a capital letter to start each line). Since Arr C prepares us for elocution, our use of words matters now: we cut our sentences and write only one word or phrase for each point. We never write a complete thought as an outline point because if we do, ANI sentences from Arr B end up in the essay, and that’s not good writing. (For example, the words “are, have, do” are great for thinking, but not for expression.) However, we can cut the complete thoughts that were in Arr B and write brief notes in Arr C. Then, as we enter the elocution stage that is based on the outline, we have the potential to write great sentences to express our ideas.

You will find Arrangement C templates in the Student Workbook and in the Teacher’s Guide.

Steps in Arrangement: Guide to ABC exercises for essays one to nine
(including suggested reviews)

Essay 1: Arrangement B and Arrangement C

Essay 2: Sorting, Arr B, Arr C

Essay 3: Sorting, Arr A: Guide to Exordium, Arr B, Arr C

Essay 4: Sorting, A: Guide to Amplification, (review Exordium Guide from 3), Arr B and C

Essay 5: Sorting, A: Guide to Division, (review Amplification Guide from 4), B, C

Essay 6: Sorting, A: Guide to Refutation, (review Division Guide from 5), B, C

Essay 7: Sorting, A: Guide to Narratio, (Review Refutation Guide from 6), B, C

Essay 8: Sorting, (Review Narratio Guide (A) from 7), B, C

Essay 9: Sorting, B, C