

WRITING: A MINI-COURSE

by Leonard Peikoff

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. SELECTIVITY

Answer the following in a letter of 200 words or less:

Editorial argues that capitalism is too selfish a system as proved at home by all the money-grubbing lobbies in Washington and abroad by greedy cartels like OPEC. The piece concludes that both the U.S. and the U.N. should support stiffer laws to control man's lower instincts.

2. STRUCTURE

Arrange the following points in logical order for presentation in a public statement:

Ecology is anti-man.
Ecological "truth" should not be taught or legislated.
Ecology as such, not just the "extremists," is bad.
Ecology is anti-industrialization. Ecology is unscientific. Ecology is an outgrowth of Kant.

3. EMOTIONAL-FACTUAL

Rewrite the following keeping a similar content, but making the emotional sentences dryly factual and the factual ones more emotional:

- a. Power-lusters are real whim-worshippers.
- b. A is A.
- c. What is the heroic achievement of the unsung genius through the ages? He is the source and creator of all mankind's glory. What makes possible his reverence-inspiring feat? The sovereignty of his unadorned spirit.
- d. Free enterprise is **productive**.

4. CONTEXT

Supply (and if necessary modify) the appropriate sentence(s), which can serve as the requisite context for the following:

The right to life, therefore, includes the right to dispose of one's life, and it does not apply to an embryo or fetus. It follows that, contrary to the tenets of religion, man's rights include suicide and abortion. We should be praising and supporting, not jailing or murdering doctors who perform or assist in these urgent procedures.

5. MOTIVATION

For a talk to college freshmen on the virtue of justice, prepare the outline of a three-minute statement to motivate your audience.

6. CONDENSATION

Rewrite the following in simple English:

The sheer quantity of separate units becomes, at a certain point and under certain conditions, problematical and even excessive, that is, intolerably burdensome to the individual consciousness struggling against daunting odds to retain such a multiplicity of units within the forefront or focus of its cognitive field. The result is the unavoidable evaporation of most or all of the units from the mind in question; that is, the inability of the thus overloaded consciousness to sustain its all-encompassing grasp, within the confines of a single frame of its awareness, **of all** of the individually involved separate units.

The above, though needlessly pedantic in its mode of expression, is the ultimate and even definitive meaning of what Objectivists are wont to call, in somewhat jocular fashion, the "crow epistemology."