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1

FORM: CONTENT IN THE PROPER PACKAGE

There are two basic elements to any piece of writing. One is *content*—what the writer has to say. The other is *form*—the way the content, or message, is presented. The form of a written piece includes its organization and layout. Form gives a reader an immediate idea of what to expect. Without reading a word you could probably recognize a written piece by its form. A letter *looks like* a letter, an ad like an ad, an essay like an essay, a novel like a novel.

A

The items on the right are made up of nonsense letter groups. Using form as a clue, write a letter to match each item on the right with a type of communication named on the left.

1. _____ poem

2. _____ friendly letter

3. _____ conversation

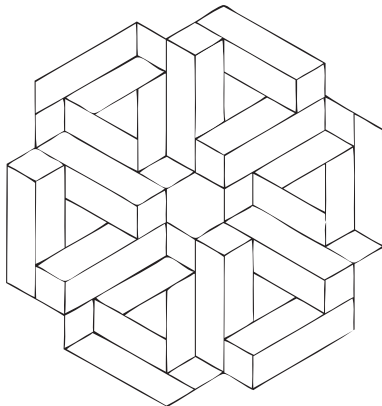
4. _____ paragraph

a. Xmxm Zxyxwvs,
X vzwk xm nvtrznq. Wijwrm nrvin
vr sklmpk xzyurst. Brggg flmzrx zsixxt stt.
Trrrl frngzr clmp! Glrzzz frrr gbmlpzqr.
Szzbmlp,
Zrrrtship

b. Lgfr rijklpt fdhbm fg zppprt vrfj zzwvqrt
splt. Sqwww zzgrh brft ff, clp spbmkllzzz
vbnm lpwqg. Zsddvg hb ghfddd rwfr zzzvw
qwwwt blppp nmgg. Crz bmpldffg zpp wwq
vrgjh klpqww.

c. “Splggfr wf grhqt nwwz?” klggd Brggz.
“Nz Slilkkt frxxv dip?”
“Gzzzlwkr skl tdddwq,” trddid Mrgqk. “Jlkz!”

d. Trug fligget mrik splinger con splan,
Wrik dugget mon brinker lon flan.
Pog wigget on plug,
Wrip stimet von slug,
Splig micket don wicket son blan.



B

The activity on page 6 showed you form without content. This activity shows you content without form. Rewrite each item in its proper form.

1. Dear Joel, I can't believe it's your fifteenth birthday! Are you excited to get your learner's permit and begin driving? I'm sorry I can't visit, but you know it is harvest time on our farm. Hope you have a great birthday! Love, Aunt Amanda

2. Harvest Moon The first full moon of autumn is known as the Harvest Moon. It usually occurs around September 23 and rises at about the same time for several nights. The bright moonlight allows northern farmers to work in the fields late at night. They say the Harvest Moon is nature's gift.

C

Write *T* or *F* to tell whether each statement is *true* or *false*.

1. ____ Proper form helps a reader separate main ideas.
2. ____ Form helps a reader recognize the writer's purpose.
3. ____ The proper form of a poem and a letter is the same.
4. ____ Form separates main parts of a written work.
5. ____ Form shows which person is speaking in a conversation.
6. ____ Proper form is only important in business writing and formal documents.

2

FORM COUNTS!

Proper form makes your message clearer. Good form is the mark of a good writer. Whenever you write, pay close attention to even margins, even spacing between words, and clearly indented paragraphs.

A

As you read this article, look for errors in form such as uneven margins, uneven spacing between words, and incorrectly indented paragraphs. Mark each error with a check (✓). The first error has been marked for you.

The Know-Nothings

✓ *Between 1852 and 1860 a group of Americans turned a secret society into its own political party. The party slogan was “Americans must rule America,” and the members had some unfair ideas. They wanted to pass laws against electing foreign-born citizens or Catholics to public offices. They called themselves the American Party, but others called them the Know-Nothings.*

The Know-Nothings held secret meetings. They never told anyone what they discussed. Whenever an outsider asked a question, a Know-Nothing would reply, “I don’t know.” This phrase gave the party its nickname.

B

The Know-Nothings had foolish ideas. Write a paragraph about a good idea for America. Make sure to do the following: write the title correctly; clearly indent the first line; keep even margins on both sides of the paper; and maintain even spacing between words and sentences.
