Rhetoric Matters: A Guide to Success in the First Year Writing Class

RHETORIC MATTERS: A GUIDE TO SUCCESS IN THE FIRST YEAR WRITING CLASS

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LOUIS: The Louisiana Library Network
Baton Rouge

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ABOUT THIS BOOK

Johannah White and Melanie Gagich & Emilie Zickel

Rhetoric Matters: A Guide to Success in First Year Writing

This book and the accompanying course (CENL 1023–English Composition II) were created as part of the Interactive OER for Dual Enrollment project, facilitated by LOUIS: The Louisiana Library Network and funded by a $2 million Open Textbooks Pilot Program grant from the Department of Education.

This project supports the extension of access to high-quality post-secondary opportunities to high school students across Louisiana and beyond by creating materials that can be adopted for dual enrollment environments. Dual enrollment is the opportunity for a student to be enrolled in high school and college at the same time.

The cohort-developed OER course materials are released under a license that permits their free use, reuse, modification and sharing with others. This includes a corresponding course available in MoodleNet and Canvas Commons that can be imported to other Learning Management System platforms. For access/questions, contact Affordable Learning Louisiana.

If you are adopting this textbook, we would be glad to know of your use via this brief survey.

This book is primarily built upon the work of Melanie Gagich and Emilie Zickel, first and foremost. We owe them a debt of gratitude for their excellent work. We also thank their many contributors and sources for making *Guide to Rhetoric* so useful. Please see below for information, attribution, and thanks from that original work.

Review Statement

This textbook and its accompanying course materials went through at least two review processes:

- Peer reviewers, coordinated by Jared Eusea, River Parish Community College, used an online course development standard rubric for assessing the quality and content of each course to ensure that the courses developed through Interactive OER for Dual Enrollment support online learners in that environment. The evaluation framework reflects a commitment to accessibility and usability for all learners.
    - Reviewers
        - Jesse Walczak

        - Emily Aucoin
        - Nicole Shaw
- The Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME) collaborated with LOUIS to review course materials and ensure their appropriateness for dual enrollment audiences. Review criteria were drawn from factors that apply across dual enrollment courses and subject areas, such as determining appropriate reading levels, assessing the fit of topics and examples for high school DE students; applying high-level principles for quality curriculum design, including designing for accessibility, appropriate student knowledge checks, and effective scaffolding of student tasks and prior knowledge requirements, addressing adaptability and open educational practices, and principles related to inclusion and representational social justice.
    - Reviewers
        - Danielle R Potier
        - Will Rogers

Guide to Rhetoric

This book combines the *Introduction to Writing in College* by Melanie Gagich and *ENG 102: Reading, Writing and Research* by Emilie Zickel, which were both supported by Cleveland State University's 2017 Textbook Affordability Small Grant. The book was then revised, edited, and formatted by Melanie Gagich, Emilie Zickel, Yvonne Bruce, Sarah Lacy, John Lanning, Amanda Lloyd, Charlotte Morgan, and Rashida Mustafa. This work was made possible through the generous support of the Cleveland State University Office of the Provost.

Within each chapter there are sections written by Melanie Gagich, Emilie Zickel, or other members of the textbook team (see above) and authorial attributions are given. This book also contains other resources integrated under Creative Commons licenses. These open-access resources include complete and also remixed chapters from Monique Babin, Carol Burnell, Susan Pesznecker, Nichole Rosevear, and Jamie Wood's *The Word on College Reading and Writing*, links to several essays from the open source textbook series *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing*, and several links to articles from the open source website *Writing Commons*. Additionally, parts of this book also come out of a remixed version of Robin Jeffrey's *About Writing*, which have been rearranged, amended, edited, and enhanced with digital reading experience by including videos and visual reading features. Shared and remixed materials will be denoted with attribution information when necessary.

Our Philosophy

When Melanie and Emilie decided to combine our individual textbooks, we decided that we wanted the new text to function more like a manual or guide to rhetorical concepts and writing genres, to composing in a college setting, and to helping students succeed in FYW at Cleveland State rather than a formal textbook. Together we conceptualized a text that does not necessarily answer all student questions or cover all material taught by FYW instructors at CSU or at other institutions. Instead, we wanted to create a text that is less prescriptive than a traditional textbook and allows for the picking and choosing of content by instructors and by students. We believe this type of text fosters student-centered pedagogies because it is a tool for students that supports them during many different writing moments such as when the instructor isn't there to reinforce concepts that have been discussed already in class.

Further, the text lacks a unifying tone because we feel that one of the central philosophies behind Open Access Educational Resources is the need for and importance of collaboration and the sharing and "remixing" of others' content. Our text was not written by one or even two authors, rather it is a collection of a diverse array of viewpoints and writing styles, which, to us, exemplifies one of the many ways that our book is different from a traditional, printed, and academic textbook. We feel that the inclusion of work by multiple authors can also provide a starting point for conversations in writing class about how writing "actually works in the real world" (Wardle and Downs).

In sum, the book cannot and should not replace the voice of the instructor. We envision it as a manual or guide also because we want all instructors to be able to use it how they see fit. We hope that this text will reflect not only our voices and the voices of our team of part-time instructors but also offer students resources for navigating and succeeding in college and support for working on writing assignments.

A Note about Citations

This text was written in and chapters have been edited to reflect the 8th edition of MLA.

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Pressbooks: Simple Book Production

CHAPTER 1: THE INTRODUCTION

THE INTRODUCTION

Amy Guptill and Tracey Watts

Really? Writing? Again?

Yes. Writing. Again.

Obviously, you can write. And in the age of Facebook and smartphones, you might be writing all the time, perhaps more often than speaking. Many students today are awash in text like no other generation before. You may have even performed so well in high school that you're deemed fully competent in college-level writing and are now excused from taking a composition course.

So why spend yet more time and attention on writing skills? Research shows that deliberate practice—that is, close focus on improving one's skills—makes all the difference in how one performs. Revisiting the craft of writing—especially on the early end of college—will improve your writing much more than simply producing page after page in the same old way. Becoming an excellent communicator will save you a lot of time and hassle in your studies, advance your career, and promote better relationships and a higher quality of life off the job. Honing your writing is a good use of your scarce time.

Also consider this: a survey of employers conducted by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) found that 89 percent of employers say that colleges and universities should place more emphasis on "the ability to effectively communicate orally and in writing." It was the single-most favored skill in this survey. In addition, several of the other valued skills are grounded in written communication: "Critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills" (81%), "The ability to analyze and solve complex problems" (75%), and "The ability to locate, organize, and evaluate information from multiple sources" (68%). This emphasis on communication probably reflects the changing reality of work in the professions. Employers also reported that employees will have to "take on more responsibilities," "use a broader set of skills," "work harder to coordinate with other departments," face "more complex" challenges, and mobilize "higher levels of learning and knowledge" (Hart Research Associates 2). If you want to be a professional who interacts frequently with others—presumably you do; you're in college—you have to be someone who can anticipate and solve complex problems and coordinate your work with others, all of which depend on effective communication.

> Writing is one of the most important skills to our society, and it almost always has been. Having the ability to write is what separates history from pre-history! That's a pretty big deal! Because most professors have different expectations, it can be tricky knowing what exactly they're looking for. Pay attention to the comments they leave on your paper, and make sure to use these as a reference for your next assignment. I try to pay attention and adapt to the professor's style and preferences.

Aly Button

The pay-off from improving your writing comes much sooner than graduation. Suppose you complete about 40 classes for a 120-credit bachelor's degree, and—averaging across writing-intensive and non-writing-intensive courses—you produce about 2500 words of formal writing per class. Even with that low estimate, you'll write 100,000 words over your college career. That's about equivalent to a 330-page book. Spending a few hours sharpening your writing skills will make those 100,000 words much easier and more rewarding to write. Your professors care about good writing, whether or not they see their courses as a means to improve it. Formal written work is the coin of the academic realm. Creating and sharing knowledge—the whole point of the academy—depend on writing. You may have gotten a lot of positive feedback on your writing before college, but it's important to note that writing in college is distinct in ways that reflect the origins of higher education.

The Origins of Higher Education

College may look and feel similar to high school, and for the most part, you already know how to perform your student role within this setting. However, there are some fundamental differences. The most obvious ones are that high school is mandatory (to a certain point), freely available, and a legal right. They have to offer you the opportunity, regardless of your grades. College is optional, costly, and performance-based. Most institutions will dismiss you if your grades don't meet a certain minimum. But college is different in more subtle ways as well, and those differences reflect the evolution of the university.

In their original ancient and medieval forms, universities were centers for scholarship, existing at the pleasure of the crown, church, or state. While centers of study go at least back to ancient Mesopotamia 2500 years BCE, the Islamic and European universities of the first and second millennium CE are usually considered the first of the modern model. Highly privileged people went to these universities as students, but they didn't really attend classes, write papers, and take exams like college students today. Instead, they acted as independent, though novice, scholars: they read everything they could find in their areas of interest, attended lectures that expert scholars gave, and if they were lucky (and perhaps charming), got some feedback from those scholars on their own work or assisted scholars in theirs. Students were simply the most junior of scholars at a university, enjoying the extraordinary privilege of interacting with the revered academic superstars of their day.

Obviously, colleges and universities today are much more student-centered, and most higher education faculty spend most of their time carefully crafting educational experiences for students. But the notion of the university as a center for scholarship and exchange still shapes how colleges and universities operate today. Some points:

Professors are scholars and artists: Most of your professors have had little to no formal training in pedagogy (the science of teaching). They're extensively trained in their scholarly or creative fields, well versed in relevant theories, methods, and significant findings. Many taught during graduate school, but most come to their jobs as relative novices about teaching. Professors apply themselves to the craft of teaching with the same creative and intellectual fervor that drew them into their fields. They attend conferences and presentations about effective teaching and learning, keep journals and portfolios to reflect on their teaching work, and read books and articles about cognitive neuroscience, trends in higher education, and the social worlds of their students. There are some professors who still see themselves in the classical model—as someone who delivers content through lectures and assesses performance through a final exam or term paper, but that approach is becoming ever rarer. Almost all professors seek out innovative and engaging pedagogies.

Professors have competing obligations: While you may view your professors primarily as teachers, your instructors are also collecting data, writing books and articles, making films, writing poetry, consulting with businesses and organizations, or inventing things. Even those who spend a majority of their time on teaching think of themselves as scholars or artists who *also* teach. Scholarship and creative activity are central ways that colleges and universities serve society. In addition to educated graduates, higher education also produces ideas, findings, and innovations. High school teachers, though similarly engaged in the craft of teaching, have much more formal training in instruction and are more likely to see themselves primarily as teachers, even those who are writing magazine articles, restoring wetland ecologies, or composing music on the side.

Professors design their own classes: While both college professors and high school teachers teach, one condition of their work is substantially different. Most high school teachers in public school systems are contractually obligated to deliver a particular curriculum and, in some cases, to use particular methods to do so. The topics and materials are often determined by state regulators, local boards of education, and school administrators. There is room for innovation, but under the current mania for standards, many teachers are no longer treated (and respected) like craftspeople in their own right. Higher education instructors still have a lot more latitude than their high-school counterparts. Your instructor may be required to cover particular concepts and skills or even assign a particular textbook, especially if one class is a prerequisite to more advanced classes. However, he or she still has a lot of freedom to determine what students should learn, what they will do to learn it, and how their achievements will be measured. As a result, two different sections of the same college course (such as Ancient World History) could differ dramatically, much more so than two parallel high school sections.

Students drive their own learning: The assumption behind high-school instruction is that the teacher is the engine of learning. Consequently, a lot of time is spent in direct face-to-face instruction. Homework is for further practice to reinforce material from that day. Teachers will often tell students what each night's homework assignment is, follow up on missing work, and closely track students' progress. The assumption behind college instruction, in contrast, is that students are the engine of learning and that most of the significant learning happens outside of class while students are working through a dense reading or other challenging intellectual task on their own. Most college classes meet only 1-3 times a week for a total of about 3 hours. Consequently, college instructors think of class meetings as an opportunity to prepare you for the heavy-lifting that you'll be doing on your own. Sometimes that involves direct instruction (how to solve a particular kind of problem or analyze a particular kind of text). More often, though, professors want to provide you with material not contained in the reading or facilitate active learning experiences based on what you read.

The assumption is that all students—like their medieval counterparts—have the skill and self-motivation to carefully read all the assigned texts. Professors lay out a path for learning—much like how personal trainers develop exercise routines—but it is up to students (and athletes) to do the difficult work themselves.

While university systems have clearly shifted toward student-centered practices, colleges and universities still see themselves as communities of scholars, some senior (i.e., faculty), most junior (i.e., students). Your professors are passionate about their fields, and they want to share their excitement with you as effectively as they can. However, they also know that *you* came to *them* on a voluntary basis, and they fully expect you to take complete responsibility for your own learning.

College Writing Is Different

The origins of the university help explain why even skilled wordsmiths benefit from studying the assumptions and expectations behind college-level writing. College is a fundamentally different educational model; as a result, the purposes and expectations for writing are different. You have learned many of the essential skills and practices of formal written communication throughout your schooling; now it's time to take your writing a step further.

By the end of high school, you probably mastered many of the key conventions of standard academic English, such as paragraphing, sentence-level mechanics, and the use of thesis statements. You likely learned important skills, such as organizing evidence within paragraphs that relate to a clear, consistent thesis, and choosing words and sentence structures that effectively convey your meaning. These practices are foundational, and your teachers have given you a wonderful gift in helping you master them. However, college writing assignments require you to apply those skills to new intellectual challenges. Professors assign papers because they want you to think rigorously and deeply about important questions in their fields. To your instructors, writing is for working out complex ideas, not just explaining them. A paper that would earn a top score in your high school classes might only get a C or D in a college class if it doesn't show original and ambitious thinking.

Professors look at you as independent junior scholars and imagine you writing as someone who has a genuine, driving interest in tackling a complex question. They envision you approaching an assignment without a pre-existing thesis. They expect you to look deep into the evidence, consider several alternative explanations, and work out an original, insightful argument that you actually care about. This kind of scholarly approach usually entails writing a rough draft, through which you work out an ambitious thesis and the scope of your argument, and then starting over with a wholly rewritten second draft containing a mostly complete argument anchored by a refined thesis. In that second round, you'll discover holes in the argument that should be remedied, counter-arguments that should be acknowledged and addressed, and important implications that should be noted. When the paper is substantially complete, you'll go through it again to tighten up the writing and ensure clarity. Writing a paper isn't about getting the "right answer" and adhering to basic conventions; it's about joining an academic conversation with something original to say, borne of rigorous thought.

My own experience as an instructor indicates that few students approach writing college papers in the way that professors envision. Many students first figure out what they want to say and then (and only then) write it down as clearly (and quickly) as they can. One quick round of proof-reading and they're done. Many students have a powerful distaste for truly revising (i.e., actually rewriting) a paper because it feels like throwing away hard-won text. Consequently, when students are invited or required to revise an essay, they tend to focus on correcting mechanical errors, making a few superficial changes that do not entail any rethinking or major changes. Professors find that tendency incredibly frustrating. Some instructors craft an assignment sequence to force a true revising process; others leave it up to you. Virtually all shape their expectations for the final project around the idea that you're writing to learn, writing to develop, writing to think—not just writing to express.

> On my first college paper, I was scared. I did not know what to expect or what my professor would want. All I kept thinking about was whether or not I would get a good grade. But do not fear! At the end of the day, I talked to my professor about how I could better my writing. Professors love to be asked questions and interact with students. If you ever need help, do not hesitate to ask for advice on how you could do better.
>
> Timothée Pizarro

Another major impact of this shift to a junior-scholar role is that you not only have to learn to write like a scholar; you also have to learn to write like a political scientist, a chemist, an art historian, and a statistician—sometimes all in the same semester. While most of the conventions of academic writing are common across disciplines, there is some variation. Your professors—immersed as they are in their own fields—may forget that you have such varied demands, and they may not take class time to explain the particular conventions of their field. For every new field of study, you're like a traveler visiting a foreign culture and learning how to get along. Locals will often do you the kindness of explaining something, but you'll have to sleuth out a lot of things on your own.

So, What Do Professors Want?

At one time or another, most students will find themselves frustrated by a professor's recalcitrant refusal to simply "Tell us what you want!" It's a natural feeling and, at times, a legitimate one. While all professors want to set you up to succeed, they may find their expectations hard to articulate, in part because they struggle to remember what it's like to be a beginner in the field. Often, however, the bigger and better reason that professors won't just tell you what to do is that there simply isn't a particular "answer" they want you to give in the paper. They want to see your own ambitious and careful analysis. Some students assume that they should be able to envision a paper and its thesis within minutes of receiving the assignment; if not, they complain that the assignment is unclear. Other students assume that every professor has a completely different set of expectations and, consequently, conclude that writing papers is just an unavoidable guessing game about entirely subjective and idiosyncratic standards. Neither of those assumptions are true. Good, well-constructed writing assignments are supposed to be challenging to write, and professors are, above all, looking for your own self-motivated intellectual work.

Despite some variations by discipline, college instructors are bringing similar standards to evaluating student work. Recently, the Association of American Colleges and Universities has brought together faculty members from across the country to deliberate on the core knowledge and skills that define education. They have also worked out benchmarks of success, as summarized in a rubric for written communication. Check it out! While few instructors are sitting down with the AACU rubric to determine grades on papers, you can be confident that these are the kinds of things almost all professors are looking for. The language of the "capstone" column illustrates especially well the scholarly mindset and independent work habits they expect students to bring to their work:

> "thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose,"
> "mastery of the subject,"
> "detailed attention" to writing conventions,
> "skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources," and
> "graceful language."

Professors want to see that you've thought through a problem and taken the time and effort to explain your thinking in precise language.

The following chapters in this book seek to concretize these ideas. They begin with the most fundamental issues (the purpose of the assignment and the thesis), move through organizational strategies, and end with sentence-level expression. The expectations laid out here may seem daunting—and perhaps unreasonable, given that very few of you are going to follow your professors into academic life. But communication isn't just about expressing yourself; it's about connecting with others. And it's other people—in families, couples, communities, and workplaces—that shape the most important experiences of your life.

> Don't get discouraged! On my first college paper I got a very low grade. It felt like a slap in the face because I was a straight-A student in high school. It's just a fact of life. Talk to your professor about what you could have done differently. This will help you be better prepared for future papers.
>
> Kaethe Leonard

Additional Resources

This website summarizes the daily routines of some famous writers.

This video from the Online Writing Center at Purdue gives you perspectives other students have had on the college writing process.

Exercises

Go to Professor Stephen Chew's website about good study practices and watch the first video titled "Beliefs that Make You Fail … or Succeed." Can you use the concept of metacognition to explain why good papers are challenging to write?

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CHAPTER 2: READING IN WRITING CLASS

2.1 WHY WE READ

Melanie Gagich and Charlotte Morgan

"At the center of all academic writing is a curiosity about how the world works and a desire to understand it," Stuart Greene and April Lidinsky write in the introduction of the text *From Inquiry to Academic Writing*. Colleges and universities provide students with the education and, through research, develop new technologies to compete in the 21st century global economy. College writing starts with asking questions. To get those answers we must read.

The Liberal Arts were once concerned with the study of that which is true. To make the adjustment from high school writing to writing at the collegiate level, you must realize academic writing today is all about current beliefs, which change over time. You will have to practice learning not only how to think like an academic, but how to read like one as well until this becomes a habit. We read, we research, and we write about what we have learned.

Learning how to read in college also helps you develop content knowledge. This section includes a brief discussion of what it means to read to build content knowledge.

Reading to Build Content Knowledge

"Content knowledge" refers to your knowledge about a subject, topic, controversy, current event, or area of study. Creating content knowledge is important to the writing process because you must have something to write about before you can actually begin writing. Many students assume that they can simply read one or two articles and then write an entire essay, but that is hardly ever an accurate assumption. Whether you are writing about yourself, responding to a topic chosen by the instructor, or crafting a research essay for history class, you need to build knowledge about the content area first.

Scenario

Your college writing instructor assigns everyone a debatable topic, and you are asked to write about the benefits of the death penalty. You are excited because you have seen a lot of *Law* *and Order* episodes and have decided that the death penalty is a “good thing” for American society. So, you sit down and write your essay using all of your ideas about the death penalty.

Sounds good, right? Wrong. Forming an argument based solely on a television show or on only one source does not lead to a strong or well-informed text. Also, a writer must consider all sides of an argument. In this scenario the student doesn’t really have a lot of experience with the topic, which means he or she must build content knowledge first. This will most likely require finding opinion-based (or popular articles), research-based (or scholarly articles), credible statistics from independent researchers, and any other legitimate source to develop an understanding of the topic. From there, an ethical writer (which you are working to become) must evaluate those sources to ensure credibility because if a writer relies on faulty sources, then his or her work becomes faulty or inaccurate, too. Once all of this content knowledge-building work has been completed, then you are ready to write a paper supporting the death penalty.

Building content knowledge is a key part of the writing process, which is why reading effectively is an important skill to master.

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2.2 HOW TO READ EFFECTIVELY

Yvonne Bruce

Read like a Writer

Good writing begins with good reading. Almost all good readers are good writers because they have familiarized themselves with and are not afraid of different styles, genres, diction, grammar, and levels of difficulty.

But many students don't like to read and don't read for pleasure. Unfortunately for them, college is reading intensive. You must be able to read effectively to perform effectively in college, and it helps if you can turn the process from a chore into a pleasure. So how can you learn to confidently approach the difficult texts you will encounter during your study?

In other words, how can you become a reader, or a better reader?

1. Good readers almost always annotate the text as they read.
2. Good readers know that almost all non-fiction texts—no matter the discipline, level of difficulty, or genre—follow pretty much the same pattern. The main idea comes at the beginning, the body paragraphs support the main idea, and the conclusion wraps up the whole thing. All the way back in grade school, you may have learned this formula for presenting your work: "Say what you are going to say, then say it, then say what you just said." This describes a PhD dissertation as well as it did your fifth-grade book report.
3. Good writers don't write to obscure; they write to clarify. (Mostly.) In order to be clear, they use the conventions of standard professional or academic non-fiction prose writing. If you know these conventions and their purpose, you will never get lost in someone's written statement. You already know that most non-fiction texts have an intro, a supporting body, and a conclusion (see #2 above). These elements too are conventions.

Other conventions to look for:

- The title: Most times, the title is a phrase that conveys the author's stance, thesis questions, or argument. Occasionally, in popular literature and especially in news and social media, titles can be somewhat misleading because they are meant to generate readership. But titles always give you a clue to the authors' topic.
- The main idea or thesis: Sometimes students tell us that the thesis should come at the end of the first

paragraph, but a more accurate place to look for the thesis is at the end of the introduction, which may or may not be a paragraph in length. In a book, for example, the introduction may be a full chapter on its own. In other texts, where does the introduction end? It depends—in a scholarly work, it may end before the first subsection. In a lengthy magazine essay or article, after a few paragraphs. Sometimes, in an essay that began as a speech or in a written essay that speaks directly to the reader, the main idea may come immediately at the beginning of the work in its own separate sentence or paragraph and then be followed by a more traditional introduction. Think about what you're reading and the author's purpose and look for clues to guide you to the main idea. If you can't find it at the beginning, look for it in the conclusion, where the author usually restates the main idea.

- The body: Where does the author often go after the introduction? To a history of the topic. To shocking statistics or vivid personal stories. To a definition of the problem under discussion. What do all these examples have in common? They set up a context for the development of the main idea. They tell you what you have to understand in order to appreciate the train of the authors' thinking.
- Transitions: Look for transitional sentences at the beginning of paragraphs that introduce new ideas and sections of the work. "There are numerous reasons for the rapid decline in the creation of new social media outlets after 2010" clearly is introducing a section that may be several paragraphs or pages in length. "But not all scholars agree with my interpretation of the data" clearly introduces a section of counterargument AND suggests that a restatement of the author's main idea or a supporting idea has just come before in the previous paragraph. Pay attention to what these transition sentences are telling you.
- Conclusions: Hard to write but easy to find in your reading. Look also for "pre-conclusions," or transitional statements like "Before ending, there is one final point that must be made . . . " or "Finally, let me turn to . . . " that suggest the author is wrapping up the main argument. Sometimes, there is no transition to this pre-conclusion, but the author may still introduce a new point that is less important than or peripheral to the main points. Many times, the conclusion proper will begin with a coordinating conjunction (but, so, and). Look for these subtle cues.

1. If you are not already a good reader with an extensive vocabulary, it can be difficult to pick up rhetorical subtleties and to keep previous points in mind as you continue to read—especially with long works. Here, as with so many other difficult tasks, the key is to understand the big picture and break the task up. Using your pen or pencil (see #1 above), mark off the key conventional elements of the text (see #3 above) and any other important features you notice at a glance. Then, read the introduction and conclusion. Next, read the first and last sentences of each paragraph. If that doesn't give you the main idea of each paragraph, keep reading from the outside in until you get it. Write down the main points of these sections in the margins, on Post-its, or in your notes. This focused reading and writing will help you keep track of the main ideas of the whole article or essay or chapter, and when you see what you have written, you may be able to understand the work at a

deeper level simply by imagining the connections between your annotations.

2. Good readers are alert to other rhetorical features, like tone, purpose, audience, and context. Once you have the main ideas of your text at least partly understood and written down, then you can start to appreciate these other features, which are the subject of the next chapter, "How to Read Rhetorically."

Do Quick Research

As you read, you might run into ideas, words, or phrases you don't understand, or the text might refer to people, places, or events you're unfamiliar with. It's tempting to skip over those and keep reading, and sometimes that actually works. But keep in mind that when you read something written by a professional writer or academic, they've written with such precision that every word carries meaning and contributes to the whole. Therefore, skipping over words or ideas could change the meaning of the text or leave the meaning incomplete.

When you're reading and come to words and ideas you're unfamiliar with, you may want to stop and take a moment to do a bit of quick research. Google is a great tool for this—plug in the idea or word and see what comes up. Keep on digging until you have an answer, and then, to help retain the information, take a minute to write a note about it.

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2.3 HOW TO READ RHETORICALLY

Melanie Gagich & Emilie Zickel

When we read rhetorically, we are moving beyond simply trying to comprehend what an author is saying at a basic level. Instead, one who reads rhetorically seeks to understand how meaning in a text is shaped not only by the text itself, but also the context.

Rhetorically focusing on the text might include observing the following: what the author says, how he or she arranges information, and the types of information that he or she includes.

Rhetorically focusing on the context might include observing and researching the following: the context of the text; the author's identity, values, and biases; the audience's interests and needs; the medium in which the author composes; the purpose for creating the text, and more.

Rhetorically Reading the Text: Understanding What the Author Is Trying to Say

- Who is the author? What else has he or she written? What is the author's occupation? Is the author a journalist, professor, business person, or entertainer? Is the author an expert on the topic he or she is writing about?
- When and where was the piece originally published? Research the original publication. Does that publication have a perceived bias? Is the original publication highly regarded?
- What is the author's main idea? The main idea is the author's central claim or thesis. Describe the author's main idea in your own words. Does the author make his or her claim successfully? Is the claim held consistently throughout the text? Does the thesis appear in one sentence or in bits and pieces throughout the text?
- What information does the author provide to support the central claim? Making a list of each key point the author makes will help you analyze the overall text. Hint: each paragraph should address one key point, and all paragraphs should relate to the text's central claim.
- What kind of supporting evidence does the author use? Is the evidence based more on fact or opinion, and do you feel those choices are effective? Where does this evidence come from? Are the sources authoritative and credible?
- What is the author's main purpose? Note that this is different from the text's main idea. The text's main idea (above) refers to the central claim or thesis embedded in the text. The author's purpose, however, refers to what he or she hopes to accomplish. Is the author's goal to persuade his or her readers to adopt a

viewpoint or to act in some way? Does the author intend to provide information or to entertain?
- Describe the tone in the piece. Is it friendly? Authoritative? Does it lecture? Is it biting or sarcastic? Comedic or dire?
- Describe the diction in the piece. What word choices does the author make? Does the author use simple or technical language? Is it full of jargon? Does the language feel positive or negative? Formal or conversational? Does the author use figurative language?
- Is the author objective? Why does the author try to persuade you to adopt his or her viewpoint? If the author is biased, does this interfere with the way you read and understand the text?
- Does the text seem to be aimed at readers like you or at a different audience? What assumptions does the author make about his or her audience? Would most people find these reasonable, acceptable, or accurate? Is the author trying to reach a certain age group, ethnicity, gender, or educational background?
- Does the author try to appeal to your emotions? Does the author use any controversial words in the piece? Do these affect your reading or your interest?
- How is the piece organized? Where does the thesis appear? Toward the beginning or the end of the text and why? Are there sections with bolded subheadings, and if so, do these subheadings accurately reflect the content of the section?
- Does the piece include images or graphics? Are there illustrations, photographs, or graphs? Do these images add to or detract from the written text?

In addition to these textual questions, we need to look at contextual considerations when we read rhetorically.

Rhetorically Reading the Context: Understanding Context

Let’s define context as the time and place and setting of the event, the writing of a text, a film, etc., in a society. In the First-Year Writing class, you will read essays, news articles, and scholarly research findings, and to help make sense of it all, you must contextualize these texts. Why? Well, today is not like yesterday. Remember, the current beliefs change over time.

An example of how yesterday is different:

Think about your smartphone. You may have been born at the end of the 20th century or the start of the 21st century. Your family had a cordless phone. Thirty years ago, most households had landline phones where you had to dial a number (see photo below), which were called rotary phones. In most households today, there is no landline.

Figure 2.3.1: “Western Electric Model 302 Telephone c.1945” by fwaggle is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

How to Consider Context

Everything you read, and all that you write, must be considered contextually. Some instructors refer to rhetorical context, or the writing situation. As writers, you have to think of this as you begin any reading or writing assignments. Below are a few questions you might want to consider when analyzing the time, place, and setting of a text:

- Where was the text published?
- Was it published online or in print?
- When was the text published? What does this tell you about the time it was written? Is it still relevant information or outdated?
- What is the author’s main idea? Is it a current belief?

As a student, if you begin to read contextually, you can shift to reading critically. These are the skills a critical thinker employs to make inquiries about the world.

Rhetorically Reading the Context: Understanding Author Bias and Authority

Most reputable websites and news sources will list or cite an author, even though you might have to dig into the site deeper than just the section you're interested in to find it. Most pages will have a home page or "About Us"/"About This Site" link where an author will be credited.

Often, understanding the author's bias or authority will require some research that goes well beyond any blurb that might be included with the actual article. Google the author, or consider looking at his or her LinkedIn profile. Look at several different sources instead of relying on just one website to understand who the author is.

- Does the author support a particular political or religious view that could be affecting his or her objectivity in the piece?
- Is the author supported by any special-interest groups (i.e., the American Library Association or Keep America Safe)?
- Is the author a highly educated expert on that topic who is choosing to publish an article for a popular, mainstream audience?
- Is he or she a journalist who specializes in the topic? A journalist whose specialty is unclear? A citizen who is weighing in?
- Is the author writing from personal experience, or is he/she synthesizing and offering commentary on others' experiences?
- Each of these different levels of expertise will confer a different level of authority on the topic. It is important to understand whether or not an author is truly an expert on the content.

Rhetorically Reading the Context: Understand the Publication Ideology and Bias

Certain newspapers or magazines are subject to corporate owners' political ideologies or biases. Just as you can do some background research on an individual author, do some research on the publication that hosts the article you would like to use. Again, research can help. Look at several different sources—do not rely on just one website.

- Does the publication have an ideological bias? (conservative? liberal?)

- Is the publication religious? Secular?
- Is the publication created for a very specific target audience?
- If you are looking at a website, what is its purpose? Was the site created to sell things, or are the authors trying to persuade voters to take a side on a particular issue?

If you are looking at a website, the sponsor of the site (the person or organization who is footing the bill) will often be listed in the same place as the copyright date or author information. If you can't find an explicit listing for a sponsor, double check the URL: .com indicates a commercial site, .edu an educational one, .org a nonprofit, .gov a government sponsor, .mil a military sponsor, or .net a network of sponsors. The end part of a URL may also tell you what country the website is coming from, such as .uk for the United Kingdom or .de for Germany.

A Note on Publication Bias:

You can find many articles indicating that a bias exists in academic publishing. This publication bias means that only certain types of research studies get published in academic journals. In the sciences, the publication bias favors studies that have positive results ("we got some results!") rather than negative results ("this did not work as we had hypothesized"). In the Arts and Humanities, some have argued that prestigious academic journals favor articles that come from professors at elite colleges and universities. Other speculation about publication bias in academic journals focuses on the bias in the peer reviewer: that a peer reviewer is more likely to accept an article for publication if that article confirms his or her own thinking.

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2.4 RECOGNIZING CLAIMS

Anna Mills

In almost every college class, we are asked to read someone else's writing, explain what that person is arguing, and point out the strengths and weaknesses of their argument. This section offers tools for figuring out the structure of an argument and describing it.

When you are trying to understand the basic ideas about something you have read, how do you go about it? An argument is a swarming cluster of words. How do you get to the heart of it?

In this section, we look at how to take notes not just on the meaning of each part of the argument but also on its relation to the other parts. Then we use these notes to draw a visual map of an argument. In the map, we see the argument's momentum as the reason points us toward the claim. We see how each element implies, supports, limits, or contradicts other elements. Thus, we begin to imagine where the argument is vulnerable and how it might be modified.

STEVEN FURTICK
CRASH THE CHATTERBOX
STAEDTLER

Figure 2.4.1: Photo by Jazmin Quaynor on Unsplash under the Unsplash License.

Types of Claims to Look For

As we make notes on what a writer is claiming at each point, it is worth distinguishing what kind of claim they are making.

Claims of Policy

The most familiar kind of argument demands action. It is easy to see when the writer is asking readers to do something. Here are a few phrases that signal a claim of policy, a claim that is pushing readers to do something:

- We should ______________.
- We must ______________.
- The solution is to ______________.
- The next step should be ______________.
- We should consider ______________.
- Further research should be done to determine ______________.

Here are a few sample claims of policy:

- Landlords should not be allowed to raise the rent more than 2% per year.
- The federal government should require a background check before allowing anyone to buy a gun.
- Social media accounts should not be censored in any way.

A claim of policy can also look like a direct command, such as, "If you are an American citizen, don't let anything stop you from voting."

Note that not all claims of policy give details or specifics about what should be done or how. Sometimes an author is only trying to build momentum and point us in a certain direction. For example, "Schools must find a way to make bathrooms more private for everyone, not just transgender people."

Claims of policy don't have to be about dramatic actions. Even discussion, research, and writing are kinds of action. For example, "Americans need to learn more about other wealthy nations' health care systems in order to see how much better things could be in America."

Claims of Fact

Arguments do not always point toward action. Sometimes writers want us to share their vision of reality on a particular subject. They may want to paint a picture of how something happened, describe a trend, or convince us that something is bad or good.

In some cases, the writer may want to share a particular vision of what something is like, what effects something has, how something is changing, or how something unfolded in the past. The argument might define a phenomenon, a trend, or a period of history.

Often these claims are simply presented as fact, and an uncritical reader may not see them as arguments at all. However, very often claims of fact are more controversial than they seem. For example, consider the claim "Caffeine boosts performance." Does it really? How much? How do we know? Performance at what kind of task? For everyone? Doesn't it also have downsides? A writer could spend a book convincing us that caffeine really boosts performance and explaining exactly what they mean by those three words.

Some phrases writers might use to introduce a claim of fact include the following:

- Research suggests that ______________.
- The data indicate that ______________.
- ______________causes ______________
- ______________leads to ______________.

Often a claim of fact will be the basis for other claims about what we should do that look more like what we associate with the word "argument." However, many pieces of writing on websites and in magazines, office settings, and academic settings don't try to move people toward action. They aim primarily at getting readers to agree with their view of what is fact. For example, it took many years of argument, research, and public messaging before most people accepted this claim: "Smoking causes cancer."

Here are a few arguable sample claims of fact:

- It is easier to grow up biracial in Hawaii than in any other part of the United States.
- Raising the minimum wage will force many small businesses to lay off workers.
- Fires in the western United States have gotten worse primarily because of climate change.
- Antidepressants provide the most benefit when combined with talk therapy.

Claims of Value

In other cases, the writer is not just trying to convince us that something is a certain way or causes something, but is trying to say how good or bad that thing is. They are rating it, trying to get us to share her assessment of its value. Think of a movie or book review or an Amazon or Yelp review. Even a "like" on Facebook or a thumbs up on a text message is a claim of value.

Claims of value are fairly easy to identify. Some phrases that indicate a claim of value include the following:

- ______________is terrible/disappointing/underwhelming.
- ______________is mediocre/average/decent/acceptable.
- We should celebrate ______________.
- ______________is great, wonderful, fantastic, impressive, makes a substantial contribution to ______________.

A claim of value can also make a comparison. It might assert that something is better than, worse than, or equal to something else. Some phrases that signal a comparative claim of value include these:

- ______________is the best ______________.
- ______________is the worst ______________.
- ______________is better than ______________.
- ______________is worse than ______________.

The following are examples of claims of value:

- The Bay Area is the best place to start a biotech career.
- Forest fires are becoming the worst threat to public health in California.
- Human rights are more important than border security.
- Experimenting with drag is the best way I've found to explore my feelings about masculinity and femininity.
- It was so rude when that lady asked you what race you are.

Note that the above arguments all include claims of fact but go beyond observing to praise or criticize what they are observing.

Practice Exercise

On a social media site like Facebook or Twitter or on your favorite news site, find an example of one of each kind of claim.

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2.5 ANNOTATING THE WRITER'S CLAIMS

Anna Mills

A first step toward summarizing and responding to an argument is to make margin notes on the claims. Let's take the following argument as an example:

Sample Argument: "Wouldn't We All Cross the Border?"

All the disagreement over immigration policy I have been hearing about in the news lately reminds me that while I believe in the rule of law, I feel profoundly uncomfortable with the idea of keeping people out who are desperate to come in. Is illegal immigration actually wrong? Is it unethical to cross a border without permission?

I don't have a clear vision yet of what the right border policy would be, and I admit that completely open borders would put our security at risk. But surely there are ways to regulate the border without criminalizing people who are driven by need and good intentions.

If I were raising children in an impoverished third-world community plagued by violence, and if I had a chance to get my family to the U.S., I would take it. I would try to cross a border illegally so my children would get enough to eat and would have a more stable childhood and a chance at a better education and a better career. What parent would sit on their hands and tell themselves, "I want to give my child a better life, but oh well. If I don't have the papers, I guess it would be wrong"?

If most of us, under desperate circumstances, would cross the border without permission and feel no moral qualms about doing so, then we must recognize this crossing as an ethical, reasonable act. If it is ethical and reasonable, then how can either a wall or a detention center be on the side of justice? We must find a policy that treats migrants as we would want to be treated—with empathy, respect, and offers of help.

We can often paraphrase the claims more readily on a second read when we are already familiar with the content. Some students need the physicality of taking notes by hand in the margins of a book or a printout.

Some students take notes by creating comments in Word or Google Docs. Another way is to copy the text into a table in a word processing program and write notes in a second column, as we have done below:

Section of the text	**Notes on the claims**
Wouldn't We All Cross the Border?	Implies a claim of fact: we would all cross the border (under what circumstances?)
All the disagreement over immigration policy I have been hearing about in the news lately reminds me that while I believe in the rule of law, I feel profoundly uncomfortable with the idea of keeping people out who are desperate to come in. Is illegal immigration actually wrong? Is it unethical to cross a border without permission?	Suggests a claim of value: It might not be wrong to cross illegally. But also suggests another claim of value: that "the rule of law" is right. Is this a contradiction?
I don't have a clear vision yet of what the right border policy would be, and I admit that completely open borders would put our security at risk. But surely there are ways to regulate the border without criminalizing people who are driven by need and good intentions.	Claim of policy about the border—we shouldn't criminalize people who have legitimate reasons to cross. Admits there are security risks in "open borders." Looking for some kind of middle ground that keeps us safe but doesn't criminalize migrants.
If I were raising children in an impoverished third-world community plagued by violence, and if I had a chance to get my family to the U.S., I would take it. I would try to cross a border illegally so my children would get enough to eat and would have a more stable childhood and a chance at a better education and a better career. What parent would sit on their hands and tell themselves, "I want to give my child a better life, but oh well. If I don't have the papers, I guess it would be wrong"?	Claim of fact: the author would consider it right to cross illegally to benefit their children. That is, if their whole family didn't have enough money, a safe place to live, or access to a good education. They imply another claim of fact: that any parent would do the same and feel okay about it.
If most of us, under desperate circumstances, would cross the border without permission and feel no moral qualms about doing so, then we must recognize this crossing as an ethical, reasonable act. If it is ethical and reasonable, then how can either a wall or a detention center be on the side of justice? We must find a policy that treats migrants as we would want to be treated–with empathy, respect, and offers of help.	Starts with the same claim of fact as in the title and the previous paragraph: most people would cross the border illegally. Adds the idea that we wouldn't feel it was wrong. The implication is that if all these people would feel it is right, then it really is "ethical and reasonable." "We must recognize" implies a claim of policy—that people should talk about illegal crossings publicly in a different way than we do now. Claim of policy: Border walls and detention centers are not right. Ends with three policy recommendations for how to treat migrants: empathy, respect, and help.

Notice that attempting to summarize each claim can actually take more space than the original text itself if we are summarizing in detail and trying to be very precise about what the text claims and implies. Of course, we won't want to or need to do this in such detail for every paragraph of every reading we are assigned to write about. We can resort to it when the argument gets harder to follow or when it's especially important to be precise.

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CHAPTER 3: THINKING AND ANALYZING RHETORICALLY

3.1 WHAT IS RHETORIC?

Melanie Gagich and Sarah M. Lacy

The definition of rhetoric commonly used is "the art of persuasion." Rhetoric is everywhere and can involve any kind of communication, including speech, written word, images, movies, documentaries, the news, etc. So, it is important to understand how to navigate the murky waters of persuasion and rhetoric.

The Purdue OWL (Online Writing Lab) section "A Review of Rhetoric: From 'Persuasion' to 'Identification" clearly describes some of the intricacies of rhetoric in the following passage:

> Aristotle defined rhetoric as "an ability, in each particular case, to see the available means of persuasion" (Aristotle Rhetoric I.1.2, Kennedy 37). Since then, Aristotle's definition of rhetoric has been reduced in many situations to mean simply "persuasion." At its best, this simplification of rhetoric has led to a long tradition associating rhetoric with politicians, lawyers, or other occupations noted for persuasive speaking. At its worst, the simplification of rhetoric has led people to assume that rhetoric is merely something that manipulative people use to get what they want (usually regardless of moral or ethical concerns).
>
> However, over the last century or so, the academic definition and use of "rhetoric" has evolved to include any situation in which people consciously communicate with each other. In brief, individual people tend to perceive and understand just about everything differently from one another (this difference varies to a lesser or greater degree depending on the situation, of course). This expanded perception has led a number of more contemporary rhetorical philosophers to suggest that rhetoric deals with more than just persuasion. Instead of just persuasion, rhetoric is the set of methods people use to identify with one another—to encourage each other to understand things from one another's perspectives (see Burke 25). From interpersonal relationships to international peace treaties, the capacity to understand or modify another's perspective is one of the most vital abilities that humans have. Hence, understanding rhetoric in terms of "identification" helps us better communicate and evaluate all such situations.

Why Do I Need to Think Rhetorically?

A rhetorical analysis asks you to "examine the interactions between a text, an author, and an audience." However, before you can begin the analysis, you must first understand the historical context of the text and the rhetorical situation.

To locate a text's historical context, you must determine where in history the text is situated—was it written in the past five years? Ten? One hundred? You should think about how that might affect the information being delivered. Once you determine the background of the text, you should determine the rhetorical situation (i.e., who, what, when, where, why). The following questions may help:

- What is the topic of the text?
- Who is the author? What are the author's credentials, what sort of experiences has he or she had? How do his or her credentials, or lack of, connect (or not) with the topic of the text?
- Who is the target audience? Who did the author have in mind when he or she created the text? Who is the unintended audience? Are they related in any way to the target audience?
- What was the occasion, historical context, or setting? What was happening during the time period when the text was produced? Where was the text distributed or published?
- How does the topic relate to the author, audience, and occasion? What is the author's purpose? Why did he or she create the text? In what medium was the text originally produced?

Meaning can change based on when, where, and why a text was produced, and meaning can change depending on who reads the text. Rhetorical situations affect the meaning of a text because it may have been written for a specific audience, in a specific place, and during a specific time. An important part of the rhetorical situation is the audience, and since many of the articles were not written with you, a college student in a college writing class, in mind, the meaning you interpret or recognize might be different from the author's original target audience. For example, if you read an article about higher education written in 2016, then you, the reader, are connected with and understand the context of the topic. However, if you were asked to read a text about higher education written in 1876, you would probably have a hard time understanding and connecting to it because you are not the target audience and the text's context (or rhetorical situation) has changed.

Further, the occasion for writing might be very different, too. Articles or scholarly works that are at least five years old or older may include out-of-date references and may not represent relevant or accurate information (e.g., think of the change regarding gay marriage in the past few years). Older works require that you investigate significant historical moments or changes that have occurred since the writing of the text.

The targeted audience, the occasion, and the date, site, and medium of publication will all affect the way you, the reader, read a text. Therefore, it is your duty as a thoughtful reader to research these aspects in order to fully understand and conceptualize the text's rhetorical situation. Furthermore, even though you might not be a member of the targeted audience or perhaps might not have even been alive during the production of a text, that does not mean that you cannot recognize rhetorical moves within it. We will examine the aspects of the rhetorical situation in the following section.

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3.2 WHAT IS THE RHETORICAL SITUATION?

Melanie Gagich; Robin Jeffrey; and Emilie Zickel

A key component of rhetorical analysis involves thinking carefully about the "rhetorical situation" of a text. You can think of the rhetorical situation as the context or set of circumstances out of which a text arises. Any time anyone is trying to make an argument, one is doing so out of a particular context, one that influences and shapes the argument that is made. When we do a rhetorical analysis, we look carefully at how the rhetorical situation (context) shapes the rhetorical act (the text).

We can understand the concept of a rhetorical situation if we examine it piece by piece, by looking carefully at the rhetorical concepts from which it is built. The philosopher Aristotle organized these concepts as author, audience, setting, purpose, and text. Answering the questions about these rhetorical concepts below will give you a good sense of your text's rhetorical situation—the starting point for rhetorical analysis.

We will use the example of President Trump's inaugural address (download the text: Inaugural Address—Friday, January 20, 2017) to sift through these questions about the rhetorical situation (context).

Author

The "author" of a text is the creator—the person who is communicating in order to try to effect a change in his or her audience. An author doesn't have to be a single person or a person at all—an author could be an organization. To understand the rhetorical situation of a text, one must examine the identity of the author and his or her background.

What kind of experience or authority does the author have in the subject about which he or she is speaking?

What values does the author have, either in general or with regard to this particular subject? How invested is the author in the topic of the text? In other words, what affects the author's perspective on the topic?

Example of author analysis for the rhetorical situation (President Trump's Inaugural Address): President Trump was a first-term president and someone who had not previously held political office. He did not yet have experience with running the country. He is, however, a wealthy businessman and had a great deal of experience in the business world. His political affiliation is with the Republican party—the conservative political party in America.

Audience

In any text, an author is attempting to engage an audience. Before we can analyze how effectively an author engages an audience, we must spend some time thinking about that audience. An audience is any person or group who is the intended recipient of the text and also the person/people the author is trying to influence. To understand the rhetorical situation of a text, one must examine who the intended audience is by thinking about these things:

- Who is the author addressing?
    - Sometimes this is the hardest question of all. We can get this information of "who is the author addressing" by looking at where an article is published. Be sure to pay attention to the newspaper, magazine, website, or journal title where the text is published. Often, you can research that publication to get a good sense of who reads that publication.
- What is the audience's demographic information (age, gender, etc.)?
- What is/are the background, values, interests of the intended audience? How open is this intended audience to the author?
- What assumptions might the audience make about the author? In what context is the audience receiving the text?

Example of audience analysis for the rhetorical situation (President Trump's Inaugural Address): Inaugural addresses are delivered to "the American people"; one can assume that all Americans are the intended audience. However, Americans were divided at the moment of President Trump's election, with some voters very happy that he was elected and others upset by the election results. Those opinions tended to split along party lines: Republicans tended to support Trump, whereas Democrats were critical of him. Republicans may be making the assumption that President Trump would be a great leader; Democrats were likely making the assumption that he would be a bad leader. As a candidate, President Trump (like all political candidates) spent most of his time in speeches trying to rally his base of supporters (his audience—Republican voters). In the inaugural address, he knows that his intended audience, his Republican base, is watching and listening with support. But there may be others who are watching his speech who are not a part of the intended audience, and as president, he likely wishes to engage and to reach out to even the Democrats who rejected him.

Setting

Nothing happens in a vacuum, and that includes the creation of any text. Essays, speeches, photos, political ads—any texts—were created in a specific time and/or place, all of which can affect the way the text communicates its message. To understand the rhetorical situation of a text, we can identify the particular occasion or event that prompted the text's creation at the particular time it was created.

Was there a debate about the topic that the author of the text addresses? If so, what are (or were) the various perspectives within that debate?

Did something specific occur that motivated the author to speak out?

Example of setting analysis for the rhetorical situation (President Trump's Inaugural Address): The occasion of President Trump giving this speech is his election to the presidency. All presidents are expected to give a speech at their inauguration; therefore, the newly elected President Trump was required to give one.

Purpose

The purpose of a text blends the author with the setting and the audience. Looking at a text's purpose means looking at the author's motivations for creating it. The author has decided to start a conversation or join one that is already underway. Why has he or she decided to join in? In any text, the author may be trying to inform, to convince, to define, to announce, or to activate. Can you tell which one of those general purposes your author has?

What is the author hoping to achieve with this text?

Why did the author decide to join the "conversation" about the topic?

What does the author want from their audience? What does the author want the audience to do once the text is communicated?

Example of purpose analysis for the rhetorical situation: (President Trump's Inaugural Address): President Trump's purpose in the inaugural address was to set the tone for his presidency, to share his vision with Americans, and to attempt to unite the country and prepare it for moving forward with his agenda.

Text

In what format or medium is the text being made: image? written essay? speech? song? protest sign? meme? sculpture?

What is gained by having a text composed in a particular format/medium? What limitations does that format/medium have?

What opportunities for expression does that format/medium have (that perhaps other formats do not have?)

Example of text analysis for the rhetorical situation (President Trump's Inaugural Address): Inaugural addresses are expected for each president. They are delivered in Washington DC—always in the same spot. The tone is formal. Inaugural addresses generally lay out a vision for the incoming president's term.

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3.3 WHAT IS RHETORICAL ANALYSIS?

Robin Jeffrey and Emilie Zickel

- Rhetoric: The art of persuasion
- Analysis: Breaking down the whole into pieces for the purpose of examination

Unlike summary, a rhetorical analysis does not only require a restatement of ideas; instead, you must recognize rhetorical moves that an author is making in an attempt to persuade his or her audience to do or to think something. In the 21st century's abundance of information, it can sometimes be difficult to discern what is a rhetorical strategy and what is simple manipulation; however, an understanding of rhetoric and rhetorical moves will help you become more savvy with the information surrounding you on a day-to-day basis. In other words, rhetorical moves can be a form of manipulation, but if one can recognize those moves, then one can be a more critical consumer of information rather than blindly accepting whatever one reads, sees, hears, etc.

The goal of a rhetorical analysis is to explain what is happening in the text, why the author might have chosen to use a particular move or set of rhetorical moves, and how those choices might affect the audience. The text you analyze might be explanatory, although there will be aspects of argument because you must negotiate with what the author is trying to do and what you think the author is doing. Edward P. J. Corbett observes, rhetorical analysis "is more interested in a literary work for what it does than for what it is" (qtd. in Nordqvist).

One of the elements of doing a rhetorical analysis is looking at a text's rhetorical situation. The rhetorical situation is the context out of which a text is created.

Another element of rhetorical analysis is simply reading and summarizing the text. You have to be able to describe the basics of the author's thesis and main points before you can begin to analyze it.

To do rhetorical analysis, you will connect the rhetorical situation to the text. You will go beyond summarizing and instead look at how the author shapes his or her text based on context. In developing your reading and analytical skills, allow yourself to think about what you're reading, to question the text and your responses to it, as you read. Use the following questions to help you to take the text apart—dissecting it to see how it works:

- Does the author successfully support the thesis or claim? Is the point held consistently throughout the text, or does it wander at any point?
- Is the evidence the author used effective for the intended audience? How might the intended audience respond to the types of evidence that the author used to support the thesis/claim?
- What rhetorical moves do you see the author making to help achieve his or her purpose? Are there word

choices or content choices that seem to you to be clearly related to the author's agenda for the text or that might appeal to the intended audience?
- Describe the tone in the piece. Is it friendly? Authoritative? Does it lecture? Is it biting or sarcastic? Does the author use simple language, or is it full of jargon? Does the language feel positive or negative? Point to aspects of text that create the tone; spend some time examining these and considering how and why they work.
- Is the author objective, or does he or she try to convince you to have a certain opinion? Why does the author try to persuade you to adopt this viewpoint? If the author is biased, does this interfere with the way you read and understand the text?
- Do you feel like the author knows who you are? Does the text seem to be aimed at readers like you or at a different audience? What assumptions does the author make about their audience? Would most people find these reasonable, acceptable, or accurate?
- Does the text's flow make sense? Is the line of reasoning logical? Are there any gaps? Are there any spots where you feel the reasoning is flawed in some way?
- Does the author try to appeal to your emotions? Does the author use any controversial words in the headline or the article? Do these affect your reading or your interest?
- Do you believe the author? Do you accept their thoughts and ideas? Why or why not?

Once you have done this basic, rhetorical, critical reading of your text, you are ready to think about how the rhetorical situation—the context out of which the text arises—influences certain rhetorical appeals.

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3.4 RHETORICAL APPEALS: LOGOS, PATHOS, AND ETHOS DEFINED

Yvonne Bruce; Emilie Zickel; and Melanie Gagich

Rhetoric, as the previous chapters have discussed, is the way that authors use and manipulate language in order to persuade an audience. Once we understand the rhetorical situation out of which a text is created (why it was written, for whom it was written, by whom it was written, how the medium in which it was written creates certain constraints, or perhaps freedoms of expression), we can look at how all of those contextual elements shape the author's creation of the text.

We can look first at the classical rhetorical appeals, which are the three ways to classify authors' intellectual, moral, and emotional approaches to getting the audience to have the reaction that the author hopes for.

Rhetorical Appeals

Rhetorical appeals refer to ethos, pathos, and logos. These are classical Greek terms, dating back to Aristotle, who is traditionally seen as the father of rhetoric. To be rhetorically effective (and thus persuasive), an author must engage the audience in a variety of compelling ways, which involves carefully choosing how to craft his or her argument so that the outcome, audience agreement with the argument or point, is achieved. Aristotle defined these modes of engagement and gave them the terms that we still use today: logos, pathos, and ethos.

Logos: Appeal to Logic

Logic. Reason. Rationality.

Logos is brainy and intellectual, cool, calm, collected, objective.

When an author relies on logos, it means that he or she is using logic, careful structure, and objective evidence to appeal to the audience. An author can appeal to an audience's intellect by using information that can be fact checked (using multiple sources) and thorough explanations to support key points. Additionally, providing a solid and non-biased explanation of one's argument is a great way for an author to invoke logos.

For example, if I were trying to convince my students to complete their homework, I might explain that I understand everyone is busy and they have other classes (non-biased), but the homework will help them get a better grade on their test (explanation). I could add to this explanation by providing statistics showing the number of students who failed and didn't complete their homework versus the number of students who passed and did complete their homework (factual evidence).

Logical appeals rest on rational modes of thinking, such as:

- Comparison—a comparison between one thing (with regard to your topic) and another, similar thing to help support your claim. It is important that the comparison is fair and valid—the things being compared must share significant traits of similarity.
- Cause/effect thinking—you argue that X has caused Y, or that X is likely to cause Y to help support your claim. Be careful with the latter—it can be difficult to predict that something "will" happen in the future.
- Deductive reasoning—starting with a broad, general claim/example and using it to support a more specific point or claim
- Inductive reasoning—using several specific examples or cases to make a broad generalization
- Exemplification—use of many examples or a variety of evidence to support a single point
- Elaboration—moving beyond just including a fact, but explaining the significance or relevance of that fact
- Coherent thought—maintaining a well-organized line of reasoning; not repeating ideas or jumping around

Pathos: Appeal to Emotion

When an author relies on pathos, it means that he or she is trying to tap into the audience's emotions to get them to agree with the author's claim. An author using pathetic appeals wants the audience to feel something: anger, pride, joy, rage, or happiness. For example, many of us have seen the ASPCA commercials that use photographs of injured puppies, or sad-looking kittens, and slow, depressing music to emotionally persuade their audience to donate money.

Pathos-based rhetorical strategies are any strategies that get the audience to "open up" to the topic, the argument, or the author. Emotions can make us vulnerable, and an author can use this vulnerability to get the audience to believe that his or her argument is a compelling one.

Pathetic appeals might include:

- Expressive descriptions of people, places, or events that help the reader to feel or experience those events
- Vivid imagery of people, places, or events that help the reader to feel like he or she is seeing those events
- Sharing personal stories that make the reader feel a connection to, or empathy for, the person being described
- Using emotion-laden vocabulary as a way to put the reader into that specific emotional mindset (what is the author trying to make the audience feel? and how is he or she doing that?)
- Using any information that will evoke an emotional response from the audience. This could involve making the audience feel empathy or disgust for the person/group/event being discussed, or perhaps a

connection to or rejection of the person/group/event being discussed.

When reading a text, try to locate when the author is trying to convince the reader using emotions because, if used to excess, pathetic appeals can indicate a lack of substance or emotional manipulation of the audience. See the links below about fallacious pathos for more information.

Ethos: Appeal to Values/Trust

Ethical appeals have two facets: audience values and authorial credibility/character.

On the one hand, when an author makes an ethical appeal, he or she is attempting to tap into the values or ideologies that the audience holds, for example, patriotism, tradition, justice, equality, dignity for all humankind, self-preservation, or other specific social, religious or philosophical values (Christian values, socialism, capitalism, feminism, etc.). These values can sometimes feel very close to emotions, but they are felt on a social level rather than only on a personal level. When an author evokes the values that the audience cares about as a way to justify or support his or her argument, we classify that as ethos. The audience will feel that the author is making an argument that is "right" (in the sense of moral "right"-ness—i.e., "My argument rests upon the values that matter to you. Therefore, you should accept my argument"). This first part of the definition of ethos, then, is focused on the audience's values

On the other hand, this sense of referencing what is "right" in an ethical appeal connects to the other sense of ethos: the author. Ethos that is centered on the author revolves around two concepts: the credibility of the author and his or her character.

Credibility of the speaker/author is determined by his or her knowledge and expertise in the subject at hand. For example, if you are learning about Einstein's Theory of Relativity, would you rather learn from a professor of physics or a cousin who took two science classes in high school thirty years ago? It is fair to say that, in general, the professor of physics would have more credibility to discuss the topic of physics. To establish his or her credibility, an author may draw attention to who he or she is or what kinds of experience he or she has with the topic being discussed as an ethical appeal (i.e., "Because I have experience with this topic—and I know my stuff!—you should trust what I am saying about this topic"). Some authors do not have to establish their credibility because the audience already knows who they are and that they are credible.

Character is another aspect of ethos, and it is different from credibility because it involves personal history and even personality traits. A person can be credible but lack character or vice versa. For example, in politics, sometimes the most experienced candidates—those who might be the most credible candidates—fail to win elections because voters do not accept their character. Politicians take pains to shape their character as leaders who have the interests of the voters at heart. The candidate who successfully proves to the voters (the audience) that he or she has the type of character that they can trust is more likely to win.

Thus, ethos comes down to trust. How can the author get the audience to trust him or her so that they will accept his or her argument? How can the author make him or herself appear as a credible speaker who embodies the character traits that the audience values?

In building ethical appeals, we see authors:

- Referring either directly or indirectly to the values that matter to the intended audience (so that the audience will trust the speaker).
- Using language, phrasing, imagery, or other writing styles common to people who hold those values, thereby "talking the talk" of people with those values (again, so that the audience is inclined to trust the speaker).
- Referring to their experience and/or authority with the topic (and therefore demonstrating their credibility).
- Referring to their own character, or making an effort to build their character in the text.

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3.5 LOGICAL FALLACIES

Melanie Gagich & Emilie Zickel

Using ethos, pathos, and logos in an argument does not mean that the argument made is necessarily a good one. In academia, especially, we care a lot about making our arguments logically sound; we care about logos. We seek to create work that is rooted in rational discourse. We seek to produce our own rational discourse. We value carefully researched, methodically crafted work. Thus, to be a strong academic writer, you should seek to avoid logical fallacies, which are flaws in reasoning.

Fallacy means false. Think of the concept of a logical fallacy as something that makes an argument problematic, open to attack, or weak. In academic discourse, logical fallacies are seen as failures—as things you will want to avoid.

Thinking about fallacies can be confusing because you see them all the time: in advertising, in conversation, in political discourse. Fallacies are everywhere. But as students of rhetoric, part of your job is to spend time identifying these fallacies in both your own writing and in others' as a way to avoid them.

Logical Fallacies: A Short List

Generalization—A conclusion or judgment made from insufficient evidence. When one piece of evidence or information is used to make a broad conclusion or statement.

Cherry Picking—Picking and choosing only some of the available evidence in order to present only points most favorable to your point of view. If someone knowingly chooses certain (favorable) pieces of information and conveniently ignores less favorable information, then the argument is not supported by all of the available research.

Straw Man—An oversimplification of an opposing perspective so that it becomes easy to attack. This is unfair and illogical because when one oversimplifies or inaccurately represents an argument and refutes that oversimplified version, one is not actually addressing the argument.

Red Herring—Changing topics to avoid the point being discussed. This is an argument tactic in which one attempts to change the conversation, often by bringing up information that is not relevant to the claim or point being debated, in order to try to control the conversation. This can be a way to avoid having to address or answer the question at hand, and it harms the quality of an argument.

Ad Hominem—It is a personal attack rather than a way of engaging with someone's ideas. For example, "You are an idiot! That's why you're wrong!" This type of logical fallacy occurs when an arguer attacks or insults the person making opposing arguments instead of attacking the ideas, the logic, or the evidence within the opposing argument itself. It is a personal attack rather than a way of engaging with someone's ideas.

Ad Populum—A misused reference to popularly accepted values. For instance, "This is about freedom and righteousness, and if you believe in those things, then you should believe my argument." This is an example of misused ethos—when the author is referencing the values that the audience cares about so that they think only about the values and not about the content of the argument (or, likely, the fact that there is little intellectual substance in what is being said).

Either/Or—This is an argument that attempts to create a situation of absolutes with no options in between. For example, "Either we intervene, or we are basically no better than the Nazis." This thinking is fallacious because it assumes that there are only two options, with nothing in between.

Slippery Slope—This is a fallacy that assumes that one thing is going to have a series of consequences or effects—often leading to a worst-case scenario. For example, "If we let this happen, then that will happen and then the worst possible thing will happen." It is false reasoning because 1) it's impossible to predict the future, 2) it is illogical to suggest that one action will always necessarily lead to the worst possible outcome, and 3) it assumes a very specific chain of future events. This "if we let this happen there will be some horrible end" is a misuse of cause/effect reasoning, often with some pathos (fear) sprinkled in.

When you are reading others' arguments, see if any of their reasoning is actually one of these fallacies of logic.

You may also find a longer list of logical fallacies here.

As you draft ideas for your own arguments, test each of your reasons against these definitions: have you used any of these fallacies to build your reasoning? If so, keep revising your line of reasoning!

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3.6 PATHOS: THE PLACE OF EMOTION IN ARGUMENT

Anna Mills

Figure 3.6.1: Multi-faceted Buddha. Photo by Mark Daynes on Unsplash under the Unsplash License

The Place of Emotion in Argument

We have spent the bulk of this book analyzing arguments' logical structure. We have mapped out arguments and assessed their reasoning, evidence, and assumptions without referring to our feelings about them. And yet we all know that arguments are not won and lost solely on the merits of the ideas. Humans are not robots. As Jeanne Fahnestock and Marie Secor put it in *A Rhetoric of Argument*, emotions are "powerful incentives to belief and action." Philosophers and laypeople have long asked what role emotions should have in shaping our ideas. Is it right for arguments to appeal to emotion, or is it a cheap trick? Should we guard against feeling what an argument asks us to feel? Or should we let emotions play a role in helping us decide whether we agree or not?

In one oversimplified view, logic is a good way to decide things and listening to emotions is a bad way. We might make this assumption if we tell ourselves or others, "Stop and think. You're getting too emotional." According to this view, no one reasons well under the influence of emotion. Pure ideas are king, and feelings only distort them.

Of course, sometimes emotions do lead us astray. But emotions and logic can work together. Consider Dr. Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech. Was it illegitimate for him to ask listeners to feel deeply moved to support racial equality? He famously proclaimed, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character." Should listeners have guarded themselves against feeling sympathy for those four children? If we care about things that matter and an argument is about something that matters, then we will and should have feelings about it. King intertwines his logical argument against racism with an appeal to our empathy, tenderness, and sense of justice.

Not all arguments are as intense as that one. Many, such as scientific journal articles, are calm and dispassionate. But all arguments must call on emotion, broadly defined, because they must motivate readers to stay engaged. Even a captive audience could potentially tune out. Every argument needs a reason to exist, a reason why it is important or relevant or just worth reading. It needs to keep us interested, or, failing that, to keep us convinced that reading on will be worthwhile. This reason to exist is sometimes called exigence. An argument can create exigence and motivate readers in many ways, but all these ways depend on emotion.

Besides the basic human emotions we might recognize on a toddler's face—anger, joy, sadness, fear, disgust, desire, and surprise—each one with many options for levels of intensity, there are others that we don't always think of as emotion. If we appeal to readers' self-interest, we play on fear and hope and desire for emotional, physical, and economic well-being. Another kind of emotion is the desire for belonging, for a sense of being seen and validated. We feel pride in a group or sense of identity or social status, so references to that shared identity or status appeal to this sense of belonging. Our motivation to uphold our most precious values is bound up in deep feeling.

Another form of emotion present in the most seemingly objective arguments is curiosity. This is often combined with an appeal to a sense of pride in our intellectual capacity. Academic journal articles and popular newspaper and magazine articles and nonfiction books must all appeal to readers' curiosity about the world and its workings and surprises to encourage them to keep reading. An argument may implicitly invite us to enjoy learning and discovery. It can offer a sense of relief, comfort, and pleasure in ideas laid out clearly in an ordered fashion.

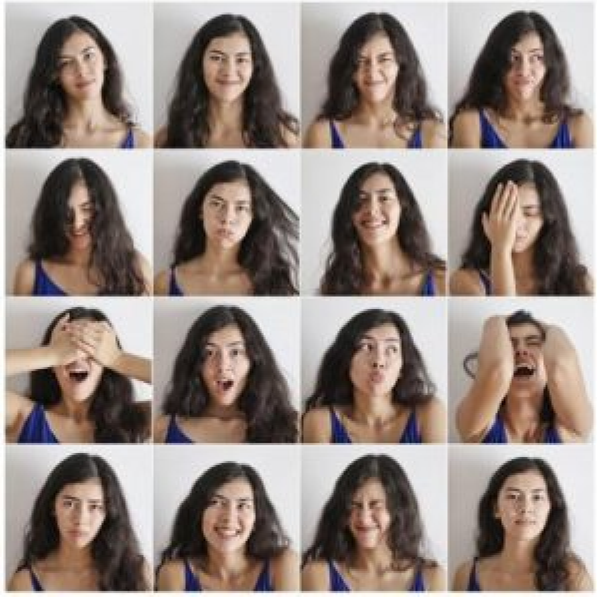

Figure 3.6.2: The Many Faces of Expression. Photo by Andrea Piacquadio from Pexels under the Pexels License

Arguments can call on emotions in support of claims, but they can also make shaping readers' emotions their primary purpose. An argument may set out to define or change how a reader feels about something. Or, it may set out to reinforce emotions and amplify them. A eulogy, for example, is a speech that praises a person who has passed away, a person usually already known to the audience. It serves to help people feel more intensely what they already believe about the value of the person's life.

In this section, we will explore how writers use examples, word choice, and tone to affect readers' feelings. We will look at how writers can vary their emotional appeals in the course of an argument and adapt them to specific audiences. Finally, we will consider how to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate emotional appeals, between those that fit the logic of the argument and those that stray from it.

Word Choice and Connotation

Let's look at how writers choose words not only to convey ideas but to shape readers' emotional experiences and subconscious reactions.

Connotation refers to the emotions, social and cultural implications, and related concepts that most people associate with a word. Some connotations are obvious: anyone would prefer to be called "assertive" rather than "pushy" for demanding something they consider to be their right. Other connotations are more subtle. Consider the difference between the feelings associated with the words "change" and "transform." "Transform" has connotations of visionary change for the better. If we hear that "the new college president has transformed the admissions process" we are more likely to feel hopeful, perhaps impressed, without knowing anything at all about the nature of the changes. If we hear simply that "the new college president has changed the admissions process," we will probably feel more skeptical about these changes and what their positive and negative impacts may be.

Consider what different feelings about journalists come across in the following two sentences:

- The media were swarming around the pileup on the expressway to capture every conceivable injury for the evening news.
- The journalists were on the scene at the expressway crash to document the incident for the evening news.

The first sentence gives us a sense of media reporting that is inappropriately aggressive through the words "swarm" and "capture." In the second sentence, on the other hand, "were on the scene" and "document" imply that the journalists are neutral, diligent, and professional.

If something in an argument is likely to set the reader against the argument, the writer can try to soften that reaction by choosing the most positive words available to fit the meaning. If the writer wants to intensify feelings of outrage, tragedy, or absurdity around a phenomenon that readers might otherwise dismiss as ordinary, the writer will need to think of an unfamiliar and dramatic way to describe that phenomenon.

Practice Exercises

1. Rank the words below from most negative to neutral to most positive. What are the connotations of each word?

- riot, demonstration, protest, rally, uprising, unrest, march, revolt, movement

Next, discuss the feelings and images called up by the following two sentences:

- Rioters flooded downtown streets on Monday afternoon.
  Protestors marched through the city.

Think of a situation in which public demonstrations or unrest occurred. Describe what happened, choosing your words carefully to shape readers' feelings and associations.

2. Working in a pair or small group, order the following groups of words from least to most positive, using your knowledge of connotation to guide you. Note where you agree or disagree on a word's connotation. What cultural, socio-economic, or personal factors may have caused your group's

disagreements (or lack thereof)?

- thin, fit, lanky, skinny, gaunt, slender
- aggressive, assertive, domineering, dynamic, pushy
- shrewd, nerdy, bright, brilliant, cunning, smart, intelligent

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3.7 ESTABLISHING PATHOS THROUGH EXAMPLES AND TONE

Anna Mills

Powerful Examples

Emotional language can certainly affect readers, but even the most fervent appeals to values and sympathies may feel too abstract without examples. To feel connected to an argument, readers need to be able to imagine what it means in some particular case. Writers can bring an example to life by describing a scene, developing a character, or building suspense and ending with a dramatic resolution.

One book, Solito/Solita: Crossing Borders with Youth Refugees from Central America, edited by Steven Mayers and Jonathan Freedman, dedicates itself to first-person stories of asylum seekers. One of these is "Rosa, a Salvadoran mother fighting to save her life as well as her daughter's after death squads threatened her family. Together they trekked through the jungles on the border between Guatemala and Mexico, where masked men assaulted them." Another is "Adrian, from Guatemala City, whose mother was shot to death before his eyes. He refused to join a gang, rode across Mexico atop cargo trains, crossed the US border as a minor, and was handcuffed and thrown into ICE detention on his eighteenth birthday." Promoting the book, Voice of Witness sees powerful individual stories as its best tool to effect social change. Its mission statement declares, "Voice of Witness (VOW) advances human rights by amplifying the voices of people impacted by injustice…Our work is driven by the transformative power of the story, and by a strong belief that an understanding of crucial issues is incomplete without deep listening and learning from people who have experienced injustice firsthand."

Of course, an argument calling for more controls on immigration would choose a wholly different kind of story. The following excerpt from President Trump's speech accepting the nomination for the presidency in 2016 focuses on a young woman killed by an immigrant:

> "They are being released by the tens of thousands into our communities with no regard for the impact on public safety or resources. One such border-crosser was released and made his way to Nebraska. There, he ended the life of an innocent young girl named Sarah Root. She was 21 years old, and was killed the day after graduating from college with a 4.0 Grade Point Average. Her killer was then released a second time, and he is now a fugitive from the law. I've met Sarah's beautiful family. But to [the Obama] Administration, their amazing daughter was just one more American life that wasn't worth protecting. One more child to sacrifice on the altar of open borders."

Obviously, there are as many stories to choose from as there are immigrants. If a story serves as an illustration of a general point, we have to ask how representative it is. Is it presented as typical? If so, is there evidence to show its typicality? Arguments can complement specific examples with statistics to show typicality.

Even if an example represents a common experience, we need to look carefully at how it is used. Does the story promote harmful stereotypes while neglecting accounts that are just as common or more common and that contradict those stereotypes?

Practice Exercise

Review some local headlines on news sites like NPR, Fox News, ABC, or any other news site you frequently visit, and find an article or video that uses a powerful example to illustrate a point. Then, evaluate the powerful example, addressing the following questions:

- What point does the powerful example illustrate?
- What types of emotions does the example play on? How will these emotions affect the reader's opinion on an issue discussed in the piece?
- Is the powerful example presented as typical? If so, is there evidence to show its typicality?
- Does the powerful example promote harmful stereotypes? How so, or why not?

Tone

Tone refers to the overall emotional attitude of the argument. We know intuitively what "tone of voice" means when we're describing a conversation. If we hear a person speaking and ask ourselves the following questions, we will usually be able to describe the tone:

- What emotions does the sound of the voice convey?
- What expression do we see or imagine on the speaker's face as they make the argument?

Figure 3.7.1: Smiling Woman with Microphone. Photo by Loui G. from Pexels under the Pexels License.

When we read, we lack the visual and auditory clues, but we still intuitively sense the writer's attitude. Tone comes across through emotional word choice and choice of examples, but also in other ways, both subtle and overt. These include sentence structure, use of questions, emphasis, and direct declarations of feeling. All of these contribute to an overall pattern.

For example, let's look at the following lines, which make an argument about developing a solid border regulation policy:

> I don't have a clear vision yet of what the right border policy would be, and I admit that completely open borders would put our security at risk. But surely there are ways to regulate the border without criminalizing people who are driven by need and good intentions.

We might note that words like "driven by need" and "good intentions" evoke feelings of compassion and sympathy. In describing the tone, however, we could go further to talk about the writer's purpose and attitude. Their admissions of uncertainty in the first sentence indicate an attitude of humility and openness, so we could describe the tone as "humble." In the second sentence, the word "surely" suggests urgency and an appeal to common sense. The contrast between the orderly, neutral phrase "regulate the border" and the more aggressive-sounding "criminalizing people" suggests that one option is decent and the other cruel. The feelings of compassion and sympathy evoked by people's "need" and "good intentions" reinforce the sense of urgency and appeal to decency. The combination of all of this suggests that the writer cares very much about the ethics of what they are discussing because innocent people's wellbeing is at stake. We could describe the tone, then, as "earnest," "urgent," or "impassioned."

How can we identify a writer's tone? If we want to describe the tone of an argument, we can ask ourselves these general questions:

- How does the writer feel about the topic of the argument?
- How does the writer feel about their own knowledge of the topic?
- What is the writer's attitude toward the reader?

If we are not sure how to answer or we want more insight, we can consider specific aspects of the writer's attitude, such as the degree of respect, seriousness, or certainty they feel. To describe the tone very precisely, we will need to use multiple words. We can ask ourselves about each of the aspects of tone listed in the table below and consider which of the accompanying tone words best describe the argument we are analyzing. Note that words clustered together are in most cases not synonyms. They convey shades of meaning, so they are worth looking up in an online dictionary to confirm their connotations before using them.

Words to Describe a Writer's Tone

Aspect of the writer's attitude	**Tone words**	**Contrasting tone words**
Degree of seriousness	conversational, flippant, glib, childish, frivolous, facetious, humorous, sarcastic, comic, satiric, amused, ironic, mocking, irreverent, casual, lighthearted, playful, cheerful, ridiculous, giddy, dreamy	vs. serious, earnest, solemn, grave, intense, impassioned, prayerful, reverent, idealistic
Degree of respect	dismissive, patronizing, condescending, arrogant, haughty, chauvinistic, macho, domineering	vs. humble, respectful, reverent, intimidated, obsequious, submissive, complimentary, flattering, simpering
Degree of formality	irreverent, informal, coarse, vulgar, casual, conversational, improvisational, exploratory	vs. formal, businesslike, professional, professorial, esoteric, clinical
Degree of self-regard	condescending, arrogant, patronizing, proud, majestic, haughty, obnoxious	vs. modest, humble, self-effacing, self-deprecating, down-to-earth
Degree of goodwill toward others	benevolent, kind, loving, affectionate, amiable, genial, agreeable, friendly, jovial, encouraging, warm	vs. mean-spirited, mean, malicious, spiteful, cruel, hateful, hating, vengeful
Degree of anxiety	agitated, excited, sensational, alarmed, nervous, anxious, obsessive, worried, fearful, frightened, paranoid, frantic, frazzled, desperate, dramatic, disturbed, perturbed	vs. calm, tranquil, serene, unworried, contemplative, meditative, reflective, thoughtful
Degree of hesitation	cautious, hesitating, reticent, evasive	vs. bold, audacious, straightforward, direct, outspoken, authoritative
Degree of certainty	conflicted, uncertain, reluctant, contradictory, confused, baffled, ambivalent, uneasy, apologetic, regretful, pensive	vs. confident, sure, definite, unapologetic, righteous, self-righteous, determined, persuasive, hypnotic
Degree of interest in the topic	wondering, curious, inquisitive, fascinated	vs. bored, apathetic, removed, indifferent, wooden, world-weary, dull, bland, banal, blasé
Degree of surprise	unbelieving, incredulous, surprised, innocent, naive, disbelieving	vs. knowing, jaded, nonplussed, weary
Degree of distance	intimate, impassioned, passionate, ardent, personal	vs. formal, impersonal, objective, neutral, journalistic, informative, professional, businesslike, intellectual, detached, numb, distant, disinterested

Aspect of the writer's attitude	**Tone words**	**Contrasting tone words**
Degree of openness	open, direct, forthright, candid	vs. secretive, sneaky, cagey, sly
Degree of approval	elated, enthusiastic, ecstatic, celebratory, euphoric, joyous, jubilant, zestful, exuberant, blissful, happy, delighted, awestruck, appreciative, approving	vs. disapproving, disappointed, concerned, alarmed, critical, caustic, appalled
Degree of warmth toward the audience	warm, cordial, friendly, flirtatious, seductive	vs. cold, forbidding, aloof, impersonal
Degree of connection to suffering	concerned, compassionate, tender, consoling, comforting, sympathetic, empathetic	vs. apathetic, indifferent, detached, aloof, callous
Desire to communicate	talkative, eager	vs. laconic, taciturn, reluctant
Pace	abrupt, hurried, hasty	vs. patient, gradual, unhurried, lethargic, languid, pensive, scrupulous
Attitude to the future	despairing, tragic, defeated, discouraged, resigned, overwhelmed, disheartened, dismal, foreboding, dejected, depressed, bitter, bleak, bewildered, pessimistic, distressed, cynical, pathetic, melancholy, nostalgic, saddened, miserable, morbid, morose, mournful, sorrowful, somber, lamenting, grave, grim	vs. hopeful, sanguine, optimistic, content, excited, enthusiastic
Attitude to another's success	envious, jealous	vs. admiring, congratulatory, celebratory, enthusiastic
Attitude to another's failing	critical, annoyed, angry, frustrated, impatient, disappointed, resentful, hurt, aggravated, outraged, appalled, indignant, disgusted, impotent, vindictive, vengeful, furious	vs. forgiving, indulgent, understanding, accepting, tolerant
Attitude to one's own failing	apologetic, remorseful, repentant, disgusted, self-critical	vs. defensive, self-indulgent, complacent
Attitude to powerful forces like spirit, country, religion	patriotic, pious, religious, reverent, mystical, spiritual, obedient	vs. irreverent, scoffing, impious, skeptical

Figure 3.7.2: Black Lives Matter. Photo by Edward Howell on Unsplash

Phrases for Analyzing Tone

If the tone is constant:

- X takes a ___________ tone in this piece.
- The tone of the argument is ___________.
- The ___________ tone suggests that ___________.
- X's choice of words like "___________" to describe ___________ suggests their ___________ attitude.
- X's ___________ tone reflects their attitude to ___________.

If the tone shifts in the course of the argument:

- Early on, X adopts a ___________ tone, but later they seem more ___________.
- Although at first, the tone is ___________, X shifts to a more ___________ tone when ___________.
- X takes a ___________ attitude to ___________, but when it comes to ___________, X is more ___________.
- X's ___________ tone in the section on ___________ contrasts with their more ___________ attitude to ___________.

Practice Exercises

A. Write three one-sentence versions of the same argument, each with a different tone. Label each version with a tone word that describes it precisely.

B. Choose an argument you have read recently, and describe its tone. Choose a sample sentence from the argument in which the tone comes across clearly and explain which words expressed that tone.

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3.8 ETHOS: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND AUTHORITY

Anna Mills

An Argument Implies a Relationship

Figure 3.8.1: Spelling It Out. Photo by Brett Jordan on Unsplash under the Unsplash License

Arguments attempt to affect our emotions, but their success depends on how well writers have gauged their readers' values and cultural associations. Now we can back up and look at readers' responses through a different lens: that of trust. Trust provides an underlying foundation for the success of emotional and logical appeals. If we don't have a certain degree of trust in the writer, we will be less willing to let an argument affect us. We may not allow even a skillfully worded emotional appeal to move us, and we may not be ready to agree even with a well-supported claim.

How does a writer build trust if they never come face to face with the reader? This section will look at various approaches to creating trust in written argument, including establishing the writer's authority on the subject, convincing readers of the writer's moral character, showing respect and goodwill, and creating a sense of closeness or shared identity. To understand each of these approaches to trust, it will help to think of an argument not as words blared through a loudspeaker into the void, but as an offering within the context of a relationship. Even as the writer explains their ideas, they are also consciously or unconsciously implying a particular relation between reader and writer.

What do I mean by relationship here? Each relationship implies expected ways people interact, and it often involves a shared identity, whether a family connection, an ethnic similarity, a job they need to complete together, or a situation they are concerned about. A relationship can be casual or formal, intimate or distanced. The writer draws the reader close, beckons the reader to their side, or holds the reader at arm's length. They choose a style typical of the role they imagine, whether of a friend, confidante, preacher, doctor, or expert. The way they address us affects how we warm to their words. When we analyze an argument, we can ask ourselves what kind of roles and interactions the words imply. Is the writer talking to us as if we were buddies? As if we were students in a lecture hall? As if we were spiritual followers? As if we were professional colleagues working together? Or as if we were the jury at a trial?

Focusing on trust and relationship allows us to see how nuanced an argument can be and how varied its effects on different readers. An argument is not an equation. Not only does it affect our emotions, but, like a movie, a song, a novel, or a poem, it invites us into a lived experience. If we accept, we grapple with ideas in an imagined encounter with another human being.

Figure 3.8.2: Reaching Out. Image by Harish Sharma from Pixabay under the Pixabay License

Authority

One kind of relationship of trust is between a person who is an authority on the subject and a person who is less of an authority. The writer relates to us as a teacher and we defer to their greater knowledge. So the most common and ready way to establish trust is to make sure readers know what makes the writer an authority on the subject at hand. Here are some messages that writers send, either explicitly or implicitly, to readers about why they should be regarded as authorities. This kind of trust depends on the qualifications of the writer rather than on the style of writing. It is sometimes called extrinsic ethos.

"I am a recognized expert"

How can a writer convince us that they are an expert on a topic? In general, they need to show that experts in their field have recognized some level of competence or leadership in them. Different topics require different forms of expertise. If the topic fits within a particular academic field, the writer can refer to their degree and to the college, university, or think tank where they do research. The reputation of the institution they are affiliated with will affect their reputation as an expert. Readers will expect a higher level of expertise from a Yale professor, for example, then from a state college professor. Sometimes specific departments develop reputations for excellence, however. For example, those familiar with the field will know that the University of Michigan has a top sociology department.

Any work the person has produced can also serve as evidence. Publishing a book on a topic lends credibility, but if the writer can point to positive reviews of the book, robust sales, and examples where other experts have cited the book, so much the better. Newspaper and magazine articles will gain credibility from the reputation of the newspaper or magazine. We can assume that the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* have high standards and make sure that their articles represent expert knowledge.

If the topic requires professional expertise, the writer will want to point to job experience, title, role in any professional associations, and any professional awards or certifications. For example, a lawyer must pass a bar examination to be allowed to practice law, so identifying a person as a lawyer implies a certain level of expertise. If the lawyer works for a firm that is well known in its specific area of law, naming that firm will boost the lawyer's credibility further. Of course, a partner at a prestigious firm will have much more credibility than an intern.

If the writer has a public reputation as an expert above and beyond the items that could be listed on a resume, they can provide evidence of that reputation in the form of praise from other experts, the number of times their work has been cited, radio or television shows where they have been interviewed, or any other sign of public recognition of expertise.

If we want to prove or assess the level of expertise of a writer, we may want to review the following list:

- Degrees earned
- Institutional affiliation
- Job title
- Job rank
- Job experience
- Awards
- Publications
- Public reputation

To be relevant, of course, all of these need to be related to the topic of the argument at hand. Dr. Phil McGraw, for example, has a Ph.D. in clinical psychology and has focused his career on mental health. He is not medically trained. Readers should only appeal to him as an expert on psychological matters.

“I have personal experience”

We are all authorities on our own experiences, feelings, and values. If something in our experience is relevant to our topic, we can speak with authority even without expertise. Using “I,” also called speaking in the first person, can allow a writer to speak honestly and with conviction to further an argument. Maybe a story from our lives illustrates a larger point we want to make. Or maybe an emotional reaction to something becomes part of our argument. The sample argument about immigration which we analyzed earlier describes what the writer herself would do if she were in a desperate situation in another country and needed to flee in order to protect her children. Even though she has no experience of immigration, she can be considered an authority on her own sense of morality. Thus, the claim that she would feel justified in crossing illegally is hard to refute. From this starting point, she launches into a broader argument, claiming that others would feel the same way and that therefore, Americans need to rethink how they criminalize undocumented immigrants.

Sometimes the authority of personal experience is combined with the authority of power. This allows the CEO of a company or the director of a nonprofit or the president of a country to use the pronoun “we” to speak for their group. Thus, David Drummond, Google’s senior vice-president for corporate development and chief legal officer, can title an opinion piece “Google: We will bring books back to life.” In the same Guardian opinion piece published in February 2010, he supports a legal settlement to make copyrighted books available online, arguing, “We at Google could make that wealth of knowledge available at a click. And authors would earn too.”

“I’ve done my research”

When a writer has no particular qualification in relation to the subject, they can still establish a certain degree of authority by citing authoritative sources. The essence of a journalist or a science writer’s job, for example, is to find and present authoritative sources. In academic research papers, we want readers to see that we have done due diligence and can represent a range of authorities on the subject. We can build credibility by describing for readers what kind of expertise each source has. MLA and APA in-text citations and Works Cited pages are designed to help us showcase our authoritative sources and allow readers to check up on them.

Practice Exercises

1. Use a popular search engine like Google to find an article about a controversial topic. Then, investigate the source of the information, such as the author, organization, or institution that published it. Consider the following questions:

    - Is the source of information an authority in the topic they discuss?
    - Where does the source gain their authority (i.e., by being recognized experts, by having relevant

personal experience, or by doing research)?

2. Do a quick brainstorm about your life's experiences, education, and personal interests. Then, with a pair or small group, describe some areas you have authority in, and explain if you got that authority by being a recognized expert, by having relevant personal experience, or by doing research.

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3.9 ETHOS: BUILDING TRUST AND CONNECTIONS

Anna Mills

Trust through Distance and Formality

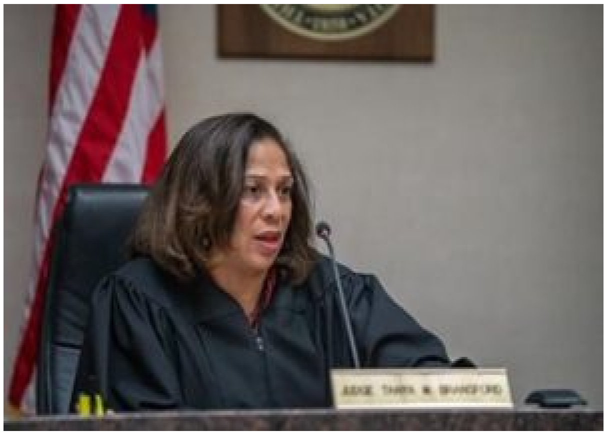

Figure 3.9.1: Judge Presiding in Court. "Hennepin County Judge Tanya Bransford" by Tony Webster on Flickr, licensed CC BY-NC 2.0.

Often when we think of an "authoritative style," we think of someone who speaks impersonally and with confidence, describing how some aspect of reality works without involving their own or the reader with "I," "you," or "we." This approach to earning the reader's trust is all about setting aside the personal to pursue objective, neutral, unbiased pronouncements. It requires the writer to step back from their own personality and feelings to ally their speech with impersonal truth.

A formal style indicates that the writer takes seriously the institution they are speaking for and the rigorous expectations of argument. Traditionally, academic writing is expected to be relatively formal and distanced.

Think of a judge in black robes presiding over a courtroom. The judge is there as an official, not a private individual, and what they say is understood to represent the rule of law, not their personal opinion. When they speak, they use formal language and usually describe events impersonally. As a representative of the law, they represent the government and the interests of the people as a whole.

Think also of a professor asked to speak on a news program about their area of expertise. Despite a climate scientist's degrees and institutional affiliation, we may not trust their personal musings about the future of humanity while flying over melting Greenland ice. Their impersonal style of speech and their focus on facts about climate, reassure us that what they tell us is unbiased, objective, neutral, and vested with all the authority of academic rigor. If they use "we" it will be to refer to their academic colleagues, as in "As climate scientists, we look at overall trends rather than specific snowstorms or heat waves." We will expect the scientist to speak in definite, precise language and to speak with a certain dignity and seriousness.

Formality and distance have their disadvantages as well as their advantages. They can make the argument seem objective and solid, but they can also alienate the reader. After all, distance means we are being pushed away. Our trust in a formal argument depends on our trust in the institutions it represents, like the government or academia. The reader may be disillusioned with these institutions or may never have trusted them in the first place. The reader may not believe that the topic calls for neutrality. We may wonder, too, what personal opinions and experiences and feelings the writer is hiding behind a mask of neutrality.

Trust through Intimacy and Informality

Over the last few decades, academia has become less wedded to the idea of objectivity and formality. In the humanities, as we have questioned the history of deferring to the white European male voice and considering it universal, many have questioned whether any observer can be objective. Even in physics, the discovery of the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle introduced the idea that the observer affects the phenomenon observed and is not separate from it.

An alternate approach to trust involves connection rather than distance. We relate to the writer as a friend or loved one rather than an authority figure. The writer reveals their humanity and particular responses. A sense that the writer is being open with us and inviting us into an intimate conversation leads to trust.

Figure 3.9.2: Table Talk. Photo by Jessica Da Rosa on Unsplash under the Unsplash License.

An argument could be both intimate and formal, like a marriage vow, but that combination is rare. Usually, the more comfortable we are and the more we share about ourselves in an argument, the less formal the style. Conversely, the less formal the style, the friendlier and more connected the argument usually feels. Of course, for this approach to work, the writer has to make the intimate conversation seem appealing and convince us they are genuine in their openness. The writer's approach and knowledge of how the reader will likely respond are key here. An informal and intimate approach can backfire if it comes across as presumptuous or invasive. The reader may be uncomfortable with the degree of closeness presumed.

So how does a writer create a sense of intimacy with a reader they will probably never meet? The more the argument can follow the style of a close conversation, the more readers may consciously or unconsciously go along with that feeling. Using an informal style will often help. That might look like casual language, the use of humor, some simpler or abbreviated sentence structure or occasional questions interjected. The most direct and obvious way to create the feeling of a conversation, however, is to declare it to the reader by using the "I," the "we," or the "you" instead of an impersonal voice.

The "I" of personal experience

Many of us have heard the advice that academic arguments should never use "I." In fact, many arguments in academic journals nowadays do use "I" on occasion, especially in introductions and conclusions. They use it judiciously when the personal experience of the writer is relevant to the argument. In addition to offering an emotional connection, personal anecdotes give readers a sense that the author is a person who is reaching out to us as people.

The ordinary 'I'

Using the first person "I" to talk about an experience that many people share can create a folksy sense of the author as a humble, ordinary person we can relate to. We might think that drawing attention to the writer's ordinariness would undermine credibility. Of course, if we are looking to find out how black holes work, we know we need to turn to an expert. But if the topic is less technical and closer to everyday life, we may trust someone down to earth and easy to relate to more than we trust a distant authority figure.

The attention-getting "you"

When we use 'you' we are demanding the reader's attention. We can think of it as taking the reader by the hand, tapping them on the shoulder, or grabbing their collar, depending on how forceful the tone is. Papers written for college classes can use "you" on occasion, especially to command the reader's attention in an introduction or a conclusion.

The "we" that unites reader and writer

A writer may use "we" to convey that they are not only in conversation with the reader but on the same side or in the same boat. This approach is often combined with a reference to a shared identity, an appeal we will explore in the next section. It can also be used, however, to speak more generally about the writer and readers as fellow humans, as in the sentence "We often forget that our parents were ever new to parenting."

Practice Exercise

Read the two student paragraphs below and reflect on the following questions:

- What parts help you to relate to the writer as a friend?
- What words or phrases show that the writer is being open with you?
- What words or phrases make this feel like a conversation?
- Which of these two paragraphs creates more trust through intimacy overall?

Rewrite one or more sentences in each paragraph to help create more trust through intimacy.

Paragraph 1:

Due to a recent pandemic, the whole world is experiencing something that has never been experienced in all of history. In order to prevent the spread of a very contagious disease, the whole world decided to go on lockdown. Now a worldwide lockdown has never happened before, and it has led to an interesting experience that is greatly changing a lot of lives. This virus causes many interesting results when studying human behavior. However, these results are also negative, which scares people when thinking of the possible economic recession. This paper will mainly cover how this pandemic affects crime rates. With everyone locked inside, it could lead to an increase in crime with fewer witnesses out. However, with fewer people to mug and not being able to go outside for no reason, this pandemic could also lead to a decrease in the current crime rate. In order to see how crime has been affected by the pandemic, it is necessary to analyze crime before and after the lockdown.

Paragraph 2:

We generate so much hate in this world. We seem to show more hate than love to each other. We put others down. We discriminate. We judge. We persecute. We hurt those who we see differently. We act before we think. Why do we hate? Hate is such a powerful word. We have all seen or experienced acts of hate occur within our lives. Whether it's the terrorism we see on the news, or the bullying in our schools, it is extremely prevalent in every sector of our lives. The world would be a much better place if we had more empathy towards each other. Although hate and empathy can be very broad subjects, I want to focus on how giving to others can lead to less unhappiness and instead more empathy. To figure this out, we need to define what empathy truly means. We need to find the motives behind empathetic people, and then compare them with those who are hateful. We can study their respective motives and learn how to shift them.

Respect and Goodwill

We don't tend to trust people who don't respect us and don't wish us well. Regardless of how formal or informal or how intimate or distanced the argument is, if the reader feels the writer is disrespectful and doesn't care about the reader's perspective or experience, the reader will lose trust.

Conversely, if the reader feels that the writer understands the reader's perspective and uses that understanding to make the experience of reading the argument as straightforward and intellectually pleasant as possible, the reader will trust the writer more. Goodwill and respect distinguish a good argument from a rant which gives vent to the arguer's feelings while ignoring what readers might need.

Figure 3.9.3: Handing You My Heart. Photo by Kelly Sikkema on Unsplash under the Unsplash License

Creating Goodwill and Respect

Here are a few concrete actions writers can take to show goodwill and respect toward readers:

- Express ideas in a clear and straightforward way. Making things clear often takes a lot of mental sweat. Readers generally do not appreciate having to do the work of sorting out unnecessarily convoluted sentences.
- Guide readers through the ideas with clear transitions. Showing how each part of the essay relates to the next also takes mental sweat on the part of the writer. Readers will appreciate not being left dangling at the end of one paragraph, trying to figure out why the writer switches topics in the next and how the two topics are connected.
- Tell the reader what to expect from the structure of the argument. If there will be several parts to the argument, readers may feel supported when the writer offers a clear map of what is coming. An example might be "I will first describe how neurons carry messages from the brain to other parts of the body before I explain how those messaging pathways can be disrupted in neurological disorders." Telling the readers what the writer plans to do in first person is also called the "I" of method because the "I" is used not to describe personal experience but to describe the writer's methods in the text itself. If there is more than one writer, as in scientific papers, of course, this would become the "we" of method. Of course, too much description of what the writer is planning to do can become boring and can get in the way of the momentum of the argument.
- Anticipate and answer likely questions. This shows respect because the writer is giving the reader credit in advance for intelligence, curiosity, and critical thinking. One way to do this is to refer to the reader directly as "you," as in "you may well ask." It can also be done in third person, as in the phrases "some will wonder" and "this raises the question of…."
- Correct misconceptions respectfully. If a writer is frustrated with popular misconceptions on a topic,

they should give the reader the benefit of the doubt and politely assume that such daft misconceptions belong to others. We can refer to those who hold the misconception in the third person in a phrase like "some may assume that" rather than targeting the reader with a "you may be assuming that..."

Practice Exercise

Read the paragraphs below and reflect on the strategies the writer used to show respect and goodwill.

- Are there parts that are expressed clearly? Are there others that can be revised for clarity?
- Are there enough transitions to guide you?
- Are there any questions that show that the author gives the reader credit for intelligence, curiosity, or critical thinking? Is there a question that they could add?

Revise one of the paragraphs to show more respect and goodwill.

Paragraph 1:

There have been many theories about the idea of nature in mental health. Many researchers have begun to investigate certain theories that focus on the correlation between our cognitive processes and the natural world. The most recognized theories are the Attention Restoration Theory (ART), the Stress Reduction Theory (SRT), and specific preferences for nature. The Attention Restoration Theory (ART), developed and popularized by Stephen and Rachel Kaplan, professors of psychology at the University of Michigan, proposes that exposure to nature can help us improve our ability to concentrate as well as reduce stress through the automatic generation of physiologic responses. This can be attributed to the more relaxed sensation people may have when exposed to a natural environment. Stephen and Rachel Kaplan also proposed that there are four cognitive states on the way to restoration, which include a clearer head/concentration, mental fatigue recovery, soft fascination/interest, and reflection and restoration. In the first stage, thoughts, worries, and concerns are passed through the mind and are simply flowing through the mind naturally. During the second stage, restoration begins as the directed attention recovers and is restored. The third stage is focused on distracting the individual as they become engaged in low restoring activities, giving them time and space to calm down. Lastly, as a result of spending time in this environment, the individual can feel like they can relax and reflect on themselves and their goals. This is the most essential part of the restorative stage.

Paragraph 2:

One factor that social media primarily affects are sleep patterns. A study concluded that 37% of 268 young adolescents confirmed that increased internet use is associated with shorter sleep duration, later bedtimes and rise times, longer sleep latencies, and increased daytime tiredness (Woods 1). Sleep in a teenager's life is one of the utmost important factors to healthy development. According to Better Health, sleep deprivation can cause an unhealthy mental state that can lead to depression, aggression, low self-esteem, reduced physical and academic performance, and poor decision making. This leads to a vicious cycle: the cell phone causes sleep deprivation, which then causes mental health issues, which are confronted with more cell phone use. This is problematic because they distract themselves with their devices and don't realize they need professional help.

Moral Character

A part of our trust in a writer or in another person in any relationship is based on our perception of their moral character. Do they share the values we find most important? The word "character" has connotations of both firmness and fairness. A person with character stands up for their beliefs and is principled rather than self-interested. Note that there is some overlap between the trust appeal discussed above, which is founded in establishing respect and goodwill, and a trust appeal through good moral character. A basic element of good moral character is wishing others well, not ill.

Famous basketball coach John Wooden declared, "The true test of a man's character is what he does when no one is watching." Still, as humans, we constantly watch each other and assess each other's character. A writer can seek to gain the reader's trust by drawing attention to their moral character either directly or indirectly. In a direct appeal, a writer might describe their values, tell stories that illustrate their past moral actions, mention their reputation for good character, or refer readers to others who can vouch for them.

If a writer anticipates that some will question their character, they can present disclaimers, or rejections of others' likely misconceptions. Imagine an argument that starts by asking how Robin Hood might be a relevant hero for today's America. The writer would quickly need to clarify that they are not condoning stealing: "I would never argue that we should actually steal from the rich as Robin Hood did." Such a disclaimer is usually followed by a clarification of their position which highlights their good character: "I do think that the character of Robin Hood is an inspiration for today's advocates of a wealth tax to fund education and combat rising inequality."

Direct references to a writer's moral character run the risk of coming across as arrogant or presumptuous. More common and arguably more effective are indirect attempts to demonstrate moral character in the way a writer makes their argument. As Jeanne Fahnestock and Marie Secor write in *A Rhetoric of Argument*, "We all know that character shows in what we say and do. It is equally obvious in what we write." Honesty and reasonableness are two aspects of character that are especially crucial to demonstrate in argument.

Honesty

Abraham Lincoln was known in his day and after as "Honest Abe." His reputation as such, along with his accomplishments, formed the core of his image as an American hero. Probably nothing is more important to establishing trust than truthfulness and openness.

Even lies of omission can undermine trust. As readers, we want to believe that the writer is giving us a fair overview of what they know. If a writer fails to mention something relevant that makes them look bad, readers may well hear it from an opponent and consider the writer to have wrongly concealed it. Acknowledging points that actually hurt the writer's argument can help to demonstrate openness and honesty. This includes a writer's motivations, even those that involve self-interest. This may involve a disclaimer like the following: "It is true that I have an interest in maintaining high enrollment at our community college, since my job depends on it. But I do not think that is my main motivation for supporting the push to expand our offerings. I believe that the community will benefit when we have greater community participation in adult education."

Another aspect of honesty is emotional honesty—the writer's sincerity about the values and feelings expressed. If the writer has made an emotional appeal or an appeal to shared values, we as readers need to believe that the appeal represents the writer's authentic feelings and values. If we feel we are being manipulated, we will likely recoil and resist both the emotions and the logic of the argument. How can we tell if a writer is sincere or not? There is no formula for this, just as there is no formula when we meet someone or listen to a speech and decide if the person is sincere. Readers' intuitions will be shaped by subtleties of word choice and cultural expectations. One highly dramatic emotional appeal or declaration of values may come across as exaggerated, and another may come across as an earnest expression of the writer's strong convictions. In my own opinion, the best way for writers to create an impression of sincerity is to be sincere, not just about their feelings but about the degree of intensity of these feelings.

Reasonableness

It is our reason that allows us to make and evaluate arguments, so it comes as no surprise that writers want to come across as reasonable. Of course, as we have seen in earlier chapters, writers must actually make reasoned arguments or readers will notice their logical flaws and lose some trust in them. But to trust a writer, readers also need to have the impression that the writer is reasonable as a character trait.

Here are some ways writers show themselves to be reasonable:

- Responding to alternate perspectives with respect. Even when you do not see any merit in the opposing argument, As Jeanne Fahnestock and Marie Secor put it, "Without conceding to the opposition, you can show your audience that you treat other positions with respect, understanding, and even kindness." We can show empathy for the motivations or perspectives of others even if we ultimately judge them to be misguided.
- Showing fairness toward alternate perspectives. We see reasonableness in the ways in which writers deal with challenges to their ideas. Do they summarize the challenge accurately without distorting it to make it seem worse or weaker than it is?
- Showing openness to possibilities that may challenge the writer's expectations. There is some overlap here with honesty as discussed above.
- Making concessions when they see some validity to an opposing point.
- Showing moderation. A writer can send the message that they are not an extremist by pointing out and disavowing more extreme positions.

- Admitting uncertainty. As Jeanne Fahnestock and Marie Secor put it, “When you honestly find yourself somewhat uncertain on an issue, even after thinking through some arguments, you can shift into a lower gear by admitting your own uncertainty, the tentative nature of some of your conclusions, your openness to new ideas.”

Note that too much moderation can come across as wishy-washy. Good moral character also requires conviction and backbone. A writer must balance being open and self-critical with being willing to take a stand and defend it.

Practice Exercise

Find a speech by a president, former president, or presidential candidate and reflect on how the speaker attempts to establish good moral character in the speech. Which of the strategies listed above do they employ? How well do these strategies work to convince you of the speaker’s character?

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CHAPTER 4: WRITING A SUMMARY AND SYNTHESIZING

4.1 WRITING SUMMARIES

Adam Falik and Melanie Gagich

What Is a Summary?

A summary is a comprehensive and objective restatement of the main ideas of a text (an article, book, movie, event, etc.) Stephen Wilhoit, in his textbook *A Brief Guide to Writing from Readings*, suggests that keeping the qualities of a good summary in mind helps students avoid the pitfalls of unclear or disjointed summaries. These qualities include:

- Neutrality—The writer avoids inserting his or her opinion into the summary, or interpreting the original text's content in any way. This requires that the writer avoids language that is evaluative, such as the following words: good, bad, effective, ineffective, interesting, boring, etc. Also, keep "I" out of the summary; instead, the summary should be written in grammatical 3rd person (for example: "he," "she," "the author," "they," etc.).
- Brevity—The summary should not be longer than the original text, but rather highlight the most important information from that text while leaving out unnecessary details, though still maintaining accuracy.
- Independence—The summary should make sense to someone who has not read the original source. There should be no confusion about the main content and organization of the original source. This also requires that the summary be accurate.

By mastering the craft of summarizing, students put themselves in the position to do well on many assignments in college, not just English essays. In most fields (from the humanities to the soft and hard sciences), summary is a required task. Being able to summarize lab results accurately and briefly, for example, is critical in a chemistry or engineering class. Summarizing the various theories of sociology or education helps a person apply them to his or her fieldwork. In college, it's imperative we learn how to summarize well because we are asked to do it so often.

College students are asked to summarize material for many different types of assignments. In some instances, summarizing one source is often the sole purpose of the entire assignment. Students might also be asked to summarize as just one aspect of a larger project, such as a literature review, an abstract in a research paper, or a works consulted entry in an annotated bibliography.

Some summary assignments will expect students to condense material more than others. For example, when summary is the sole purpose of the assignment, the student might be asked to include key supporting evidence, whereas an abstract might require students to boil down the source text to its bare-bones essentials.

What Makes Something a Summary?

When you ask yourself, after reading an article (and maybe even reading it two or three times), "What was that article about?" and you end up jotting down—from memory, without returning to the original article to use its language or phrases—three things that stood out as the author's main points, you are summarizing. Summaries have several key characteristics.

You're summarizing well when you

- use your own words
- significantly condense the original text
- provide accurate representations of the main points of the text they summarize
- avoid personal opinion.

Summaries are much shorter than the original material—a general rule is that they should be no more than 10% to 15% the length of the original, and they are often even shorter than this.

It can be easy and feel natural, when summarizing an article, to include our own opinions. We may agree or disagree strongly with what this author is saying, or we may want to compare their information with the information presented in another source, or we may want to share our own opinion on the topic. Often, our opinions slip into summaries even when we work diligently to keep them separate. These opinions are not the job of a summary, though. A summary should only highlight the main points of the article.

PRO TIP: Focusing on just the ideas that best support a point we want to make or ignoring ideas that don't support that point can be tempting. This approach has two significant problems, though:

- First, it no longer correctly represents the original text, so it misleads your reader about the ideas presented in that text. A summary should give your reader an accurate idea of what they can expect if we pick up the original article to read.
- Second, it undermines your own credibility as an author to not represent this information accurately. If readers cannot trust an author to accurately represent source information, they may not be as likely to trust that author to thoroughly and accurately present a

reasonable point. This is especially significant when it comes to argumentative writing, where credibility is of great importance.

How Should I Organize a Summary?

Like traditional essays, summaries have an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. What these components look like will vary some based on the purpose of the summary you're writing. The introduction, body, and conclusion of work focused specifically around summarizing something are going to be a little different than in work where summary is not the primary goal.

Introducing a Summary

One of the trickier parts of creating a summary is making it clear that this is a summary of someone else's work; these ideas are not your original ideas. You will almost always begin a summary with an introduction to the author, article, and publication so the reader knows what we are about to read. This information will appear again in your bibliography, but is also useful here so the reader can follow the conversation happening in your paper. You will want to provide it in both places.

In summary-focused work, this introduction should accomplish a few things:

- Introduce the name of the author whose work you are summarizing.
- Introduce the title of the text being summarized.
- Introduce where this text was presented (if it's an art installation, where is it being shown? If it's an article, where was that article published? Not all texts will have this component—for example, when summarizing a book written by one author, the title of the book and name of that author are sufficient information for your readers to easily locate the work you are summarizing).
- State the main ideas of the text you are summarizing—just the big-picture components.
- Give context when necessary. Is this text responding to a current event? That might be important to know. Does this author have specific qualifications that make them an expert on this topic? This might also be relevant information.

So, for example, if you were to get an assignment asking you to summarize Matthew Hutson's *Atlantic* article "Beyond the Five Senses," an introduction for that summary might look something like this:

> In his July 2017 article in The Atlantic, "Beyond the Five Senses," Matthew Hutson explores ways in which potential technologies might expand our sensory perception of the world. He notes that some technologies, such as cochlear implants, are already accomplishing a version of this for people who do not have full access to one of the five senses. In much of the article, though, he seems more interested in how technology might expand the ways in which we sense things. Some of these technologies are based in senses that can be seen in nature, such as echolocation, and others seem more deeply rooted in science fiction. However, all of the examples he gives consider how adding new senses to the ones we already experience might change how we perceive the world around us.

However, you will probably find yourself more frequently using summary as just one component of work with a wide range of goals (not just a goal to "summarize X").

Summary introductions in these situations still generally need to

- name the author
- name the text being summarized
- state just the relevant context, if there is any (maybe the author has a specific credential that makes their work on this topic carry more weight than it would otherwise, or maybe the study they generated is now being used as a benchmark for additional research)
- introduce the author's full name (first and last names) the first time you summarize part of their text. If you summarize pieces of the same text more than once in a work you are writing, each time you use their text after that initial introduction of the source, you will only use the author's last name as you introduce that next summary component.

Presenting the "Meat" (or Body) of a Summary

Again, this will look a little different depending on the purpose of the summary work you are doing. Regardless of how you are using summary, you will introduce the main ideas throughout your text with transitional phrasing, such as "One of [Author's] biggest points is…" or "[Author's] primary concern about this solution is…"

If you are responding to a "write a summary of X" assignment, the body of that summary will expand on the main ideas you stated in the introduction of the summary, although this will all still be very condensed compared to the original. What are the key points the author makes about each of those big-picture main ideas? Depending on the kind of text you are summarizing, you may want to note how the main ideas are supported (although, again, be careful to avoid making your own opinion about those supporting sources known).

When you are summarizing with an end goal that is broader than just summary, the body of your summary will still present the idea from the original text that is relevant to the point you are making (condensed and in your own words).

Since it is much more common to summarize just a single idea or point from a text in this type of summarizing (rather than all of its main points), it is important to make sure you understand the larger points of the original text. For example, you might find that an article provides an example that opposes its main point in order to demonstrate the range of conversations happening on the topic it covers. This opposing point, though, isn't the main point of the article, so just summarizing this one opposing example would not be an accurate representation of the ideas and points in that text.

Concluding a Summary

For writing in which summary is the sole purpose, here are some ideas for your conclusion.

- Now that we've gotten a little more information about the main ideas of this piece, are there any connections or loose ends to tie up that will help your reader fully understand the points being made in this text? This is the place to put those.
- This is also a good place to state (or restate) the things that are most important for your readers to remember after reading your summary.
- Depending on your assignment, rather than providing a formal concluding paragraph where you restate the main points and make connections between them, you may want to simply paraphrase the author's concluding section or final main idea. Check your assignment to see what kind of conclusion your instructor is asking for.

When your writing has a primary goal other than summary, your conclusion should

- discuss the summary you've just presented. How does it support, illustrate, or give new information about the point you are making in your writing? Connect it to your own main point for that paragraph so readers understand clearly why it deserves the space it takes up in your work. (Note that this is still not giving your opinion on the material you've summarized, just making connections between it and your own main points.)

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4.2 SYNTHESIZING IN YOUR WRITING

Yvonne Bruce; Melanie Gagich; and Svetlana Zhuravlova

Synthesis as Conversation among the Authors of Your Source Materials

To synthesize is to combine ideas and create a completely new idea. That new idea becomes the conclusion you have drawn from your reading. This is the true beauty of reading: it causes us to weigh ideas, to compare, judge, think, and explore—and then to arrive at a moment that we hadn't known before. We begin with a simple summary, work through analysis, evaluate using critique, and then move on to synthesis.

How Do You Synthesize?

Synthesis is a common skill we practice all the time when we converse with others on topics we have different levels of knowledge and feeling about. When you argue with your friends or classmates about a controversial topic like abortion or affirmative action or gun control, your overall understanding of the topic grows as you incorporate their ideas, experiences, and points of view into a broader appreciation of the complexities involved. In professional and academic writing, synthesizing requires you to seek out this kind of multi-leveled understanding through reading, research, and discussion. Though, in academic writing, this is another kind of discussion: you set the goal for the discussion, organize the discussion among the authors of your found researched materials, orchestrate the progress of the discussion, provide comments and build logical guidance for your audience (readers of your Synthesis Essay), and finally, you draw your conclusion on the topic.

Below are some steps you can use to help you synthesize research:

1. Determine the goal(s) for your discussion such as reviewing a topic or supporting an argument
2. Organize the discussion among the authors of your found researched materials
3. Lead the discussion among the authors of your sources
4. Provide comments and build logical guidance for your audience
5. Summarize the most vivid of the authors' examples and explanations
6. Finally, draw your unique conclusion on the topic: in fact, the answer to your research question

What Synthesis Is NOT

Synthesizing does not mean summarizing everyone's opinion: "Julia is pro-life, and Devon is pro-choice, and Jasmine says she thinks women should be able to have abortions if their life is in danger or they've been the victims of rape or incest."

Synthesizing does not mean critiquing opinions: "Rick tried to defend affirmative action, but everyone knows it's really reverse racism."

Synthesizing does not simply comparative texts (unless assigned as such by your instructor). You are neither evaluating nor comparing the effectiveness of the authors' presentations.

What Synthesis IS

Instead, synthesis demonstrates YOUR full, objective, empathetic understanding of a topic from multiple perspectives. When you synthesize, you "cook" the ideas and opinions of others by thinking, talking, and writing about them, and what comes out is a dish full of many blended flavors but uniquely your recipe: "Because feelings about gun control are so strong on all sides, and because outlawing semi-automatic weapons will not solve the problem of illegal handguns that are implicated in most gun crimes in the United States, any solution to the problem of our gun violence will likely require greater efforts to reduce illegal weapons, greater responsibility taken by gun manufacturers, and better enforcement of existing legislation rather than new legislation or constitutional change."

Notice that this synthesis does not crouch behind limited and thoughtless positions: "You can't change the Second Amendment!" "Ban all guns!" This synthesis instead tries to depict hard reality: guns are an integral part of American culture, and so is gun violence, and limiting the latter cannot be done without impacting the former. This synthesis reserves judgment and aims for understanding.

Read More About It

For a more in-depth explanation of what synthesis writing is, what its goals are, and how you can approach synthesis, please check out the Writing Commons article "Identifying a Conversation".

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4.3 MAKE CONNECTIONS WHEN SYNTHESIZING IN YOUR WRITING

Svetlana Zhuravlova; Yvonne Bruce; and Melanie Gagich

The previous section introduces you to the idea of synthesis as conversation, and you are given a definition of synthesis throughout this text, but how do you indicate synthesis in your writing? When you synthesize, you are responding to the voices and ideas of others, so you should be as flexible in your written response to them as you would be in a verbal response to those you were having a discussion with about a complex topic. Primarily, your synthesis will indicate agreement or disagreement with your sources, but it may also recognize patterns of thinking, errors in logic, or the omission of important points—whatever it is you are adding to the conversation.

Synthesis that adds to the conversation in other ways:

- While most of the experts on topic X see overfishing as the primary cause of species depletion, only Source D acknowledges that there may be other, environmental causes.
- When I began writing about topic X, I expected to learn reason Y. To my surprise, none of the sources address this reason, which leads me to believe that . . .
- Because Source A is the expert in the field of topic X, most others writing about X accede to A's authority, but a closer examination of A reveals an important omission about X.

Other Examples of Sentence Structures That Demonstrate Synthesis

Synthesis that indicates agreement/support:

- Source A asserts that… Source B agrees when he or she states…
- According to both A & B…
- The combined conclusions of sources B & C seem to indicate that…
- The evidence shows that…
- Source B is correct that…
- Source C makes a convincing case when she argues…
- I agree with Source A's conclusion that…

Synthesis that indicates disagreement/conflict:

- Source A asserts that…Yet Source B offers a different perspective by…
- Source C & B would likely disagree regarding…
- My view, however, contrary to what Source A has argued, is…
- I argue that X & Y are the best solution, though Source B offers a different option.
- In contrast, I would like to offer some objections to the opinions expressed by source C…
- While source A makes an intriguing argument, I would disagree…

What the above examples indicate is that synthesis is the careful weaving in of outside opinions in order to show your reader the many ideas and arguments on your topic and further assert your own. Notice, too, that the above examples are also signal phrases: language that introduces outside source material to be either quoted or paraphrased.

Remember that you are working with multiple sources, so it is important to remember the following:

Consider your audience: they are intelligent readers who most likely belong to an academic environment; however, they are not familiar with all your source-materials, so they rely upon your presentation to get the meaning of the information you have retrieved from your research. Make it clear to your audience what information is taken from which of your sources.

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4.4 INFORMATIVE VS. ARGUMENTATIVE SYNTHESIS

Svetlana Zhuravlova

In academic research and writing, synthesizing the information from the obtained available resources results in novelty, discovery, reaching the common sense on a debatable issue, clarifying the perplexity of the subject under discussion, or making the point on a controversial topic. Your rhetorical goal for writing a synthesis essay will be identified by the given assignment. In your First-Year Writing courses, you may write an Informative/Explanatory Synthesis and/or an Argumentative Synthesis.

What Is an Informative/Explanatory Synthesis?

In informative writing, you are explaining the discussion points and topics to your readers without taking a position of one side or another, without showing your opinion. Even if the topic is debatable and highly controversial, instead of promoting your personal opinion, you have to objectively introduce the ideas of others and explain and show how their information is related to each other's, as well as how the information may connect and diverge. You are not showing your agreement with some authors and disagreement with the others. You should stay neutral both in your comments on the found information and in your conclusions reached at the end of the discussion.

- *Example: Numerous authors wonder if this is a natural progression over time because of the laws that have changed or a shift in ideals that redefine what free speech is supposed to be… Author N believes that [free speech] is not controlled enough in the interest of the people, while Authors B and D believe that, in an ideal world, opinions would be formed and spoken without repercussion and merely be a part of language…*

At the end of the discussion, draw *your neutral conclusion* on the topic:

- *Example: The question of if speech has become limited, affecting the right to freedom of speech, lies in the hands of the people and the justice system itself.*

What Is an Argumentative Synthesis?

Everything you learned about Argumentative Writing in the chapters of this textbook is true and valid for writing an Argumentative Synthesis. The main difference may be that you are to support your ideas with evidence found in multiple sources, show and explain how the authors' opinions relate, and discuss which of your authors agree and disagree on the controversial issue, while your comments on the information retrieved from these sources and your conclusions will clarify your own position in the debate.

First, you start the debate with the assertion that sets the goal for the debate, its controversy:

- *Example: Societal changes are a large part of the debate on free speech and its limitations. The debate is about whether offensive speech should be punished when it is said with the intent to psychologically harm a group or person, or if immoral or scandalous speech should be off-limits.*

Then, you are moderating the debate among the experts:

- Professor of Law E disagrees…
- His thought is echoed by Professor R from the University of …
- Authors F and S also discuss and assess…
- Following in their steps, Authors D and T express…
- Unfortunately, in opposition to their respect, Author X asserts that…
- This brings us back to the viewpoint of Authors F and S, who argue that…

Finally, conclude the discussion and finalize your position:

- *Thus, hateful and immoral speech—which typically associates itself with low value because of harmful words—will continue to find its limitations in the world even if it is not through government operations…*

When you synthesize, you are a part of the discussion and a leader of the discussion that you have initiated. You are introducing the voices and ideas of others, so you should be flexible and fair to all participating authors. You should avoid personal attack, as well as other logical fallacies in your comments on the information borrowed from your source materials.

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4.5 SYNTHESIS AND LITERATURE REVIEWS

Melanie Gagich & Emilie Zickel

Literature Reviews: Synthesis and Research

Why do we seek to understand the ways that authors or sources "converse" with one another? So that we can synthesize various perspectives on a topic to more deeply understand it.

In academic writing, this understanding of the "conversation" may become the content of an explanatory synthesis paper—a paper in which you, the writer, point out various themes or key points from a conversation on a particular topic. Notice that the example of synthesis in "What Synthesis Is" acknowledges that guns and gun control inspire passionate responses in Americans, that more than one kind of weapon is involved in gun violence, that guns in America are both legally and illegally owned, and that there are many constituencies whose experience with guns needs to be considered if sound gun-control policy is to be achieved. The writer of this synthesis isn't "pretending" to be objective ("Although gun violence is a problem in America today, people who want to increase gun control clearly don't understand the Second Amendment"); nor is the writer arguing a point or attempting to persuade the audience to accept one perspective. The writer is making a claim about gun control that demonstrates his or her deepest understanding of the issue.

Another assignment that you may complete that also applies your synthesis skills is a literature review. Literature reviews are often found at the beginning of scholarly journal articles to contextualize the author's own research. Sometimes, literature reviews are done for their own sake; some scholarly articles are just literature reviews.

Literature reviews (sometimes shortened to "lit reviews") synthesize previous research that has been done on a particular topic, summarizing important works in the history of research on that topic. The literature review provides context for the author's own new research. It is the basis and background out of which the author's research grows. Context = credibility in academic writing. When writers are able to produce a literature review, they demonstrate the breadth of their knowledge about how others have already studied and discussed their topic.

- Literature reviews are most often arranged by topic or theme, much like a traditional explanatory synthesis paper.
- If one is looking at a topic that has a long history of research and scholarship, one may conduct a chronological literature review, one that looks at how the research topic has been studied and discussed in various time periods (i.e., what was published ten years ago, five years ago, and within the last year, for example).

- Finally, in some instances, one might seek to craft a literature review that is organized by discipline or field. This type of literature review could offer information about how different academic fields have examined a particular topic (i.e., what is the current research being done by biologists on this topic? What is the current research being done by psychologists on this topic? What is the current research being done by [insert academic discipline] on this topic?).

A literature review offers only a report on what others have already written about. The literature review does not reflect the author's own argument or contributions to the field of research. Instead, it indicates that the author has read others' important contributions and understands what has come before him or her. Sometimes, literature reviews are stand-alone assignments or publications. Sometimes, they fit into a larger essay or article, especially in many of the scholarly articles that you will read throughout college.

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CHAPTER 5: THE WRITING PROCESS

5.1 WHAT IS THE WRITING PROCESS?

Adam Falik; Doreen Piano; Melanie Gagich; and Sarah M. Lacy

What Is the Writing Process?

Donald M. Murray, a Pulitzer Prize–winning journalist and educator, presented his important article "Teach Writing as a Process Not Product" in 1972. In the article, he criticizes writing instructors' tendency to view student writing as "literature" and to focus our attention on the "product" (the finished essay) while grading. The idea that students are producing finished works ready for close examination and evaluation by their instructor is fraught with problems because writing is really a process and arguably a process that is never finished.

Murray explains why writing is an ongoing process:

> What is the process we [writing instructors] should teach? It is the process of discovery through language. It is the process of exploration of what we know and what we feel about what we know through language. It is the process of using language to learn about our world, to evaluate what we learn about our world, to communicate what we learn about our world. Instead of teaching finished writing, we should teach unfinished writing, and glory in its unfinishedness. (4)

You will find that many college writing instructors have answered Murray's call to "teach writing as a process," and due to shifting our focus on process rather than product, you will find yourself spending a lot of time brainstorming, drafting, revising, and editing. Embracing writing as a process helps apprehensive writers see that writing is not only about grammatical accuracy or "being a good writer."

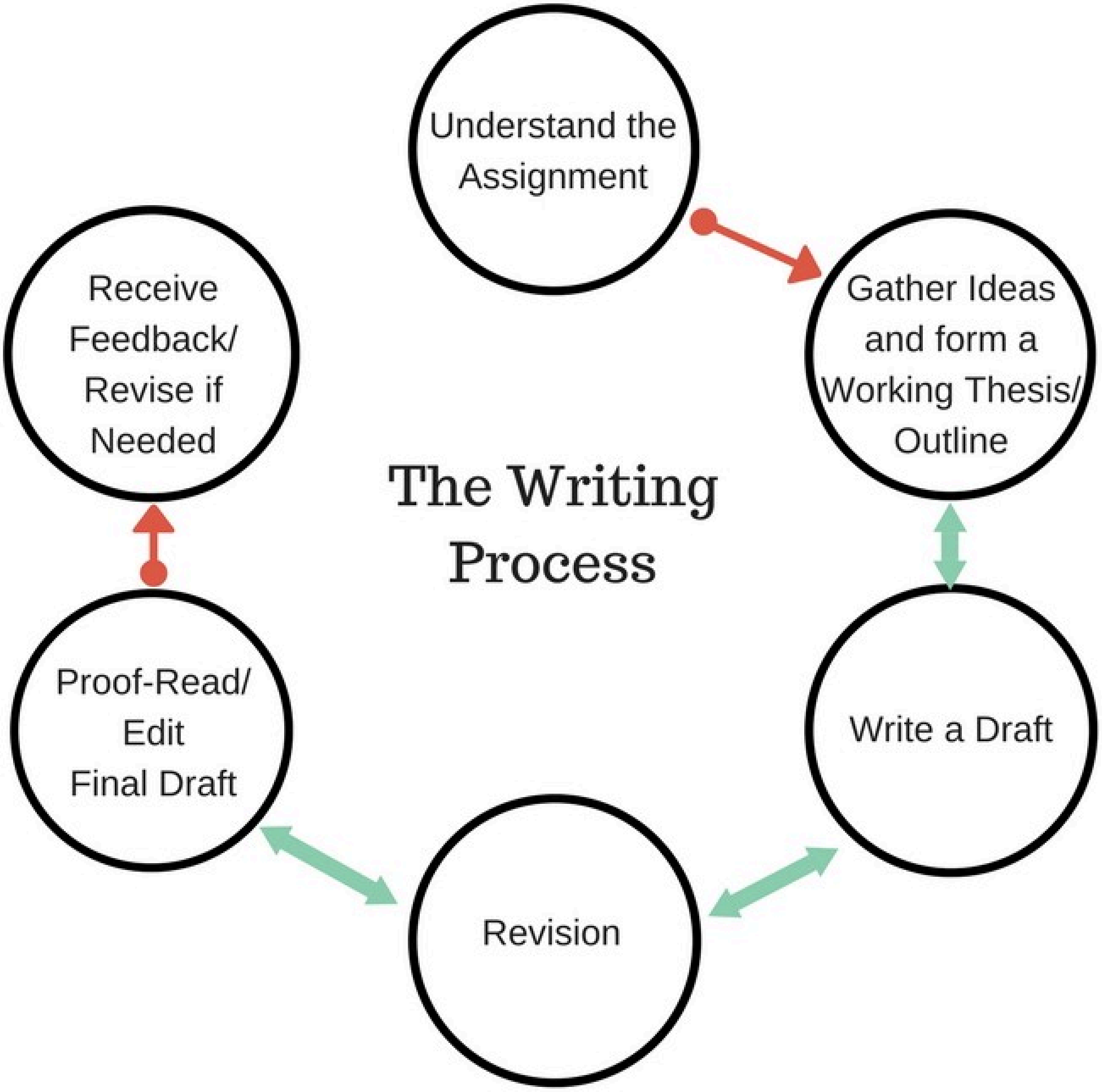
Understand the Assignment
Gather Ideas and form a Working Thesis/ Outline
Write a Draft
Revision
Proof-Read/ Edit Final Draft
Receive Feedback/ Revise if Needed
The Writing Process

Figure5.1.1: "The Writing Process" image was created by Sarah M. Lacy

The most important lesson to understand about the writing process is that it is recursive, meaning that you need to move back and forth between some or all of the steps; there are many ways to approach this process. Allowing yourself enough time to begin the assignment before it is due will give you time to move from one step to the other, and back as needed. Perhaps the easiest way to think about this process is as a series of steps that you can move from one to the other and back again.

The Writing Process in 6 Steps

The following steps have been adapted from the work of Paul Eschholz and Alfred Rosa, found in their book *Subject & Strategy*. The authors focus on discussing writing as a series of steps that can be adapted to meet any writer's needs; below, the steps have been modified to fit your needs as first-year writers. While reading through the steps below, remember that every writer has a unique approach to the writing process. The steps are presented in such a way that allows for any writer to understand the process as a whole, so that they can feel prepared when beginning a paper. Take special note of all the tips and guidance presented with each step, as well as suggested further reading, remembering that writing is a skill that needs practice: make sure to spend time developing your own connection to each step when writing a paper.

The detailed steps are as follows:

Step 1—Understand the Assignment

Always read over the entire assignment provided to you by your instructor. Think of this assignment as a contract; by accepting the assignment, you are agreeing to follow all guidelines and requirements that have been provided. This sheet is a direct communication from your instructor to you, laying out every expectation and requirement of an assignment. Follow each to ensure you are conducting and completing the assignment properly.

Step 2—Gather Ideas and Form Working Thesis

Once you understand the assignment, you will need to collect information in order to understand your topic and decide where you would like the paper to lead. This step can be conducted in various ways. Researching to build content knowledge is always a good place to start this step.

After you have conducted some research, begin brainstorming. You can do this in a variety of ways:

- Free writing
- Listing ideas
- Generate a list of questions
- Clustering/mapping (creating a bubble chart)
- Create a basic outline

Then, you will want to formulate a Working Thesis. A working thesis is different from the thesis found in a final draft: it will not be specific or as narrow. Think of a working thesis as the general focus of the paper, helping to shape your research and brainstorming activities. As you will later spend ample time working and re-working a draft, allow yourself the freedom to revise this thesis as you become more familiar with your topic and purpose.

In Argumentative writing, a Working Thesis is referred to as a Claim. What differentiates a Thesis from a Claim is that a Claim either wants something or wants something to happen. A Claim might merely suggest an action such as, "Middle school students should consider reading Harry Potter," or it might seek social change such as "The state legislature should amend laws concerning the importing of perishable goods." We will continue to study the development of your Claim, including the incorporation of Qualifiers and Exceptions.

Step 3—Write a Draft

After completing Steps 1 and 2, you are ready to begin putting all parts and ideas together into a full-length draft. It is important to remember that this is a first/rough draft, and the goal is getting all of your thoughts into writing, not generating a perfect draft. Do not get hung up with your language at this point; focus on the larger ideas and content.

Organization is a very important part of this step, and if you have not already composed an outline during Step 2, consider writing one now. The purpose of an outline is to create a logical flow of claims, reasons, and evidence before or during the drafting process; experiment with outlines to learn when and how they can work for you.

Outlines are great at helping you organize your outside sources, if you need to use some within a particular assignment. Start by generating a list of reasons to support your claim, and decide which source belongs with each idea, knowing that you may (and should) use your sources more than once, with more than one reason.

Step 4—Revise the Draft(s)

This is the step in which you are likely to spend the majority of your time. This section is different from simply "editing" or "proofreading" because you are looking for larger context issues; for example, this is when you need to check your topic sentences and transitions, make sure each reason supports the claim, and so on. Return to Steps 1 and 2 as needed, to ensure you are on the right track and your draft is properly adhering to the guidelines of the assignment.

The revision portion of the writing process is also where you will need to make sure all of your paragraphs are fully developed as appropriate for the assignment. If you need to have outside sources present, this is when you will make sure that all are working properly together. If the assignment is a summary, this is when you will need to double check all paraphrasing to make sure it correctly represents the ideas and information of the source text.

It is likely that your professor will instruct you to complete Peer Editing.

Step 5—Proofread/Edit the Draft(s)

Once the larger content issues have been resolved and you are moving towards a final draft, work through the paper looking for grammar and style issues. This step is when you need to make sure that your tone is appropriate for the assignment (for example, you will need to make sure you have remained in a formal tone for all academic papers), that sources are properly integrated into your own work if your assignment calls for them, etc.

When entering the final step, go back to the assignment sheet, read it over once more in full, and then conduct a close reading. Doing this will help you to ensure you have completed all components of the assignment as per your instructor's guidance.

Step 6—Turn in the Draft, Receive Feedback, and Revise (If Needed)

Once your draft is completed, turned in, and handed back with edits from your instructor, you may have an opportunity to revise and turn it in again to help raise your grade. As the goal of the FYW class is to improve your writing, this is an essential step to consider so that you get the most out of the course. Ask your instructor for more details.

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5.2 KNOWING YOUR AUDIENCE

Melanie Gagich; Adam Falik; and Doreen Piano

What Is Audience?

Knowing and addressing an audience is one of the components of the rhetorical situation (the author, the setting, the purpose, the text, and the audience).

Think about the last time you wrote a paper; who were you writing to? It is likely that you assumed you were writing to the teacher, so you may have focused on writing "correctly" rather than exploring who you were really trying to address and how that should affect your style, language, tone, evidence, etc.

Now, think about the last time you posted on Facebook or crafted a Tweet. It is likely that you were hyper-aware of your audience and how what you posted or shared might affect your audience. Knowing that you already have experience(s) with audience expectations when posting or creating social media texts should help you understand how important knowing your audience is when writing in the college composition classroom.

Types of Audience

Writing to an Imagined Audience

When writing, especially in college classes, you might be asked to write for an "imagined" audience, which can be difficult for any writer, but specifically for emerging writers. As stated by Melanie Gagich below:

> Invoking an audience requires students to imagine and construct their audience, and can be difficult for emerging or even practiced writers. Even when writing instructors do provide students with a specific audience within a writing assignment, it is probable that this "audience" will likely be conceptualized by the student as his or her teacher. This "writing to the teacher" frame of mind often results in students guessing how to address their audience, which hinders their ability to write academically.

Thinking of audience as someone or a group beyond the teacher will help you see various ways you can use language, evidence, style, etc. to support your message and to help you build credibility as the writer/creator. Consider, for example, that your claim seeks to change a law. Are you writing to voters, perhaps a group of peers who might support your position, or are you writing to lawmakers, who will be speaking the legalese (the formal and technical language of legal documents) of those who amend the law? For each of the separate audiences (your group of voting peers versus lawmakers), you might adopt a different tone and approach in your writing.

Writing to a Real Audience

You may also be called upon to address a real and interactive audience. For instance, if your instructor asks you to write an entry for Wikipedia, create a multimodal text, or present your work to your peers; then, the audience is not imagined but concrete and able to "talk back." Writing for real audience members can be difficult, especially online audiences, because "we can't always know in advance who they are" (NCTE), yet writing to these audience members can also be a helpful experience because they can respond to your work and offer feedback that goes beyond a teacher's evaluative responses. Composing in 21st-century spaces makes interacting with, talking back to, and learning from audience members much easier.

Addressing an interactive audience also gives you the opportunity to embrace diversity through the act of sharing your work digitally and to explore what it means to be rhetorically aware. Being rhetorically aware means that you understand how the integration of various language(s), cultural references/experiences, linguistic text, images, sounds, documentation style, etc. can help you form a cohesive and logical message that is carefully shared with an interactive audience in an appropriate online space.

What Are Discourse Communities?

Knowing the type of audience you're being asked to address is the first step to becoming aware of your audience. The second step is to determine whether the audience you're addressing are members of a discourse community. According to NCTE, a discourse community is "a group of people, members of a community, who share a common interest and who use the same language, or discourse, as they talk and write about that interest." Though you may not address a discourse community every time you write, when you are asked to address an academic audience, you are addressing a discourse community.

Generally, everyone is a member of a discourse community. For example, members of movie trivia sites, video gamers, sports fans, etc. are all examples of discourse community membership. Members can often distinguish each other based on their use (or misuse) of language, jargon, slang, symbols, media, clothing, and more. In academia, discourse communities are connected to academic disciplines. For instance, a literature professor's interests may be very different from a social science professor's. Differences will also be evident in their use of documentation styles, manuscript formatting, the language they use, and the journals they submit their work to.

You may wonder why it matters. Why not just write in MLA all the time and use the same word choices and tone every time you write? Well, it comes back to illustrating your credibility and awareness of the conventions and communication genres of a discourse community. NCTE explains, "When we write it is useful to think in terms of the discourse community we are participating in and whose members we are addressing: what do they assume, what kinds of questions do they ask, and what counts as evidence?" You earn credibility when discussing a basketball team's performance when you know all the names of the team members. In a different context, you also demonstrate credibility when you know to use APA rather than MLA in various academic contexts.

Furthermore, consider the previous example of a claim seeking to alter a law. The language one uses to inspire one's peers to civic action might be significantly more casual than the language used to change the opinion of those who are in charge of altering laws. The age, cultural background, education, and profession of your audience might affect your writing.

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5.3 UNDERSTANDING THE WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Robin Jeffrey; Emilie Zickel; Adam Falik; and Doreen Piano

By closely reading and breaking down the assignment, you are setting yourself up for an easier time of planning and composing the assignment.

Understanding What You Need to Do

First, carefully read the assignment sheet and search for the required page length (or word count), due dates for drafts and the final version, and how to turn in the assignment.

Second, determine the genre of the assignment.

Third, identify core assignment questions you will need to answer.

Fourth, locate the evaluation and grading criteria.

Writing Genre

What, in the broadest sense, are you being asked to do? What writing genre is expected?

- Analysis—Analysis questions often contain words or phrases like “how,” “in what ways,” “what are some of the…” Analysis asks you to examine small pieces of the larger whole and indicate what their meaning or significance is
- Synthesis—If you are asked to draw from and connect several different sources, then you will be synthesizing
- Explanation—Any text in which you merely report (as opposed to attempting to persuade) is going to be an explanation paper. None of your own opinions are being sought. Summaries, annotations, and reports are often explanatory
- Argument—Any text in which you are attempting to get a reader to accept your claim. Argument is

persuasive writing, and it can include things like argument-based research papers or critiques/evaluations of others' work.

How to Answer the Assignment Questions

Sometimes, a list of prompts or questions may appear with an assignment. It is likely that your instructor will not expect you to answer all of the questions listed. They are simply offering you some ideas so that you can think of your own questions to ask.

- Circle all assignment questions that you see on the assignment sheet
- Put a star next to the question that is either the most important OR that you will pursue in creating the assignment

Recognizing Implied Questions

A prompt may not include a clear "how" or "why" question, though one is always implied by the language of the prompt. For example:

"Discuss the effects of the No Child Left Behind Act on special education programs" is asking you to write how the act has affected special education programs.

"Consider the recent rise of autism diagnoses" is asking you to write why the diagnoses of autism are on the rise.

Identifying Writing Requirements

Some instructors offer indications of what certain parts of the essay/composition should contain. Does the assignment offer suggestions or requirements for the Intro paragraph? For the thesis statement? For the structure or content of the body paragraphs or conclusion paragraphs?

Identifying Evaluation Criteria

Many assignments contain a grading rubric or some other indication of evaluation criteria. You can use these criteria to both begin the writing process and to guide your revision and editing process. If you do not see any rubric or evaluation criteria on the assignment sheet—ask!

Recognizing Disciplinary Expectations

Depending on the discipline in which you are writing, different features and formats of your writing may be expected. Always look closely at key terms and vocabulary in the writing assignment, and be sure to note what type of evidence and citation style your instructor expects.

- Does the essay need to be in MLA, APA, CMS, or another style?
- Does the professor require any specific submission elements or formats?

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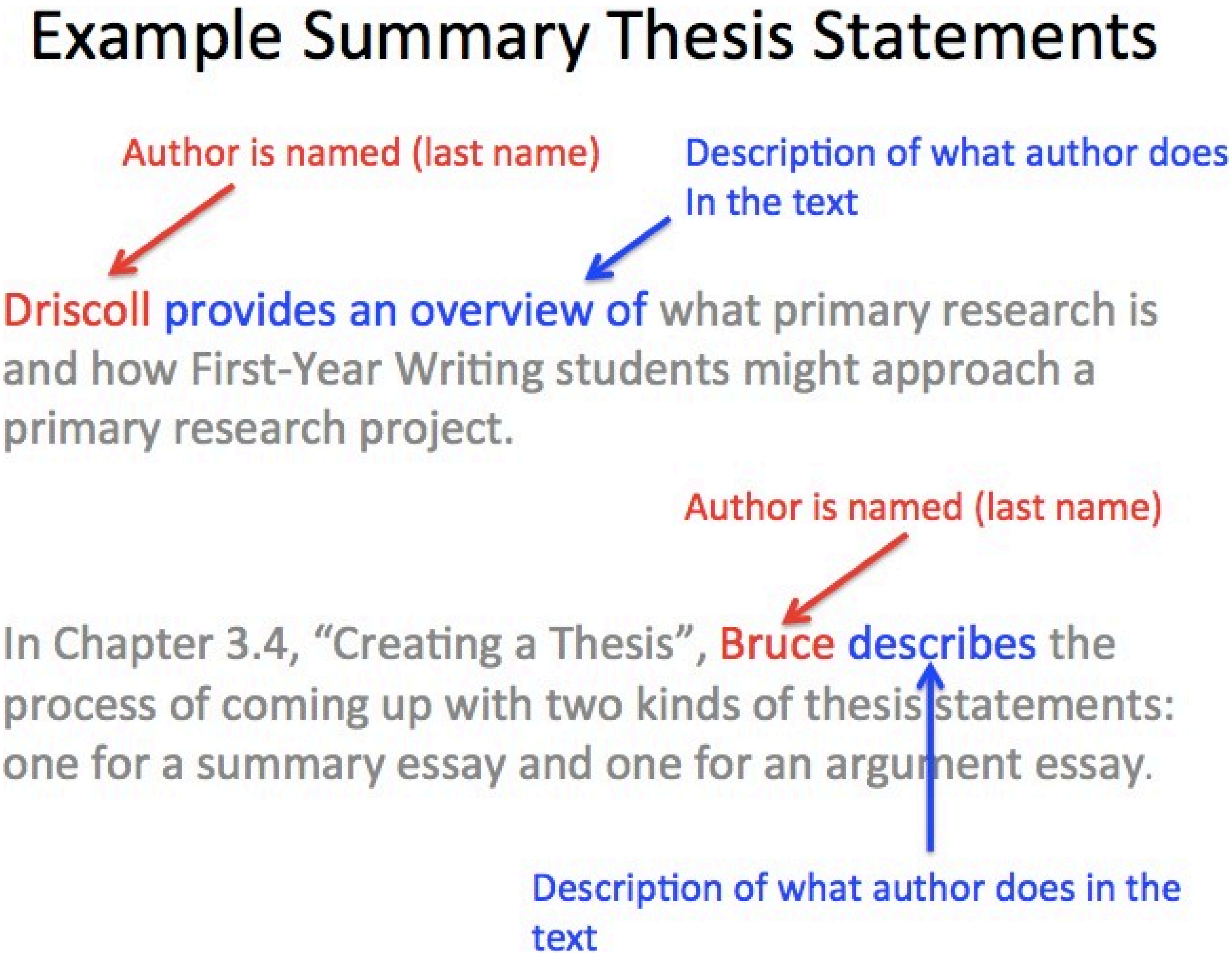
5.4 CREATING THE THESIS

Yvonne Bruce; Emilie Zickel; Adam Falik; and Doreen Piano

Now that you have begun or are well into the process of reading and drafting, you will have to create a thesis for any paper you are assigned. A thesis is an expression of the main idea of what you are writing about. The thesis will be determined by the kind or genre of paper you are asked to write, but even a summary assignment—a paper in which you summarize the ideas of another writer without adding your own thoughts—must have a thesis. A thesis for a summary would be your expression of the main idea of the work you are summarizing. The presence of a thesis, and paragraphs to support that thesis, is what distinguishes a summary from a list.

Imagine, for example, that you are summarizing last night's football game to a friend. You would not summarize it this way, unless you wanted to put your friend to sleep: "First the Falcons came out on the field, and then the Steelers came out on the field, and then there was a coin toss, and then the Falcons kicked off, and then the Steelers returned the ball for thirty yards, and then . . ."

What you would do instead is organize your summary around what you thought was the most important element of that game: "Last night's game was all defense! The Steelers returned the ball for thirty yards on the first play, but after that, they hardly even got any first downs. The Falcons blocked them on almost every play, and they managed to win the game even though they only scored one touchdown themselves."



Example Summary Thesis Statements

Author is named (last name)

Description of what author does In the text

Driscoll provides an overview of what primary research is and how First-Year Writing students might approach a primary research project.

Author is named (last name)

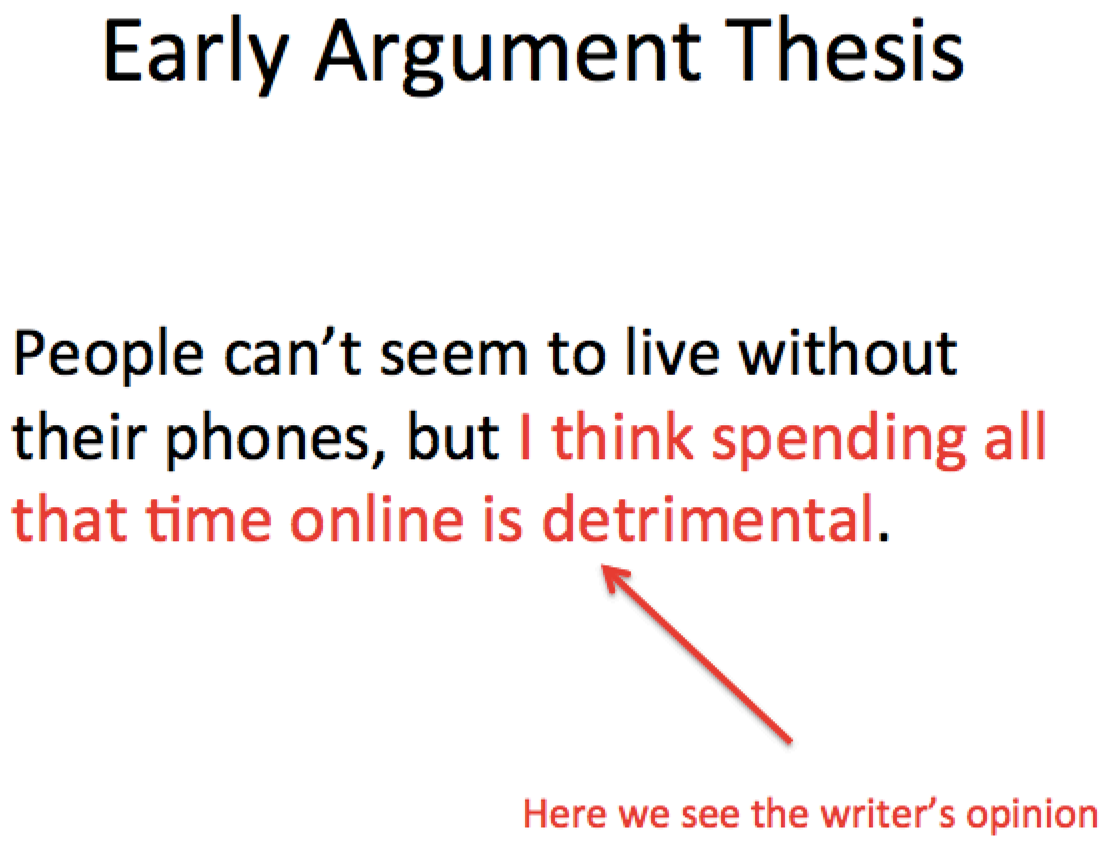
In Chapter 3.4, “Creating a Thesis”, Bruce describes the process of coming up with two kinds of thesis statements: one for a summary essay and one for an argument essay.

Description of what author does in the text

Figure 5.4.1: Image created by Yvonne Bruce and Emilie Zickel

The summary thesis is one kind of thesis. For most papers, however, and especially in argumentative and persuasive papers, you will take a more active role in the content of the composition, creating an argumentative thesis (also known as a claim) that expresses your position toward a topic, often in response to what others think about that topic. In some cases, you will be allowed to create a thesis on a topic of your choice; often, you will be required to create a thesis about a topic related to the subject or theme of the class.

Let’s say you have to create an argumentative thesis on a topic like the American Dream or Technology and Society or Climate Change. Maybe you’ve already read some essays or material on these subjects, and maybe you haven’t, but you want to start drafting your thesis with a claim about your subject. Bring to your thesis what you know and what you think about it:



Early Argument Thesis

People can’t seem to live without their phones, but I think spending all that time online is detrimental.

Here we see the writer’s opinion

Figure 5.4.2: Image created by Yvonne Bruce and Emilie Zickel

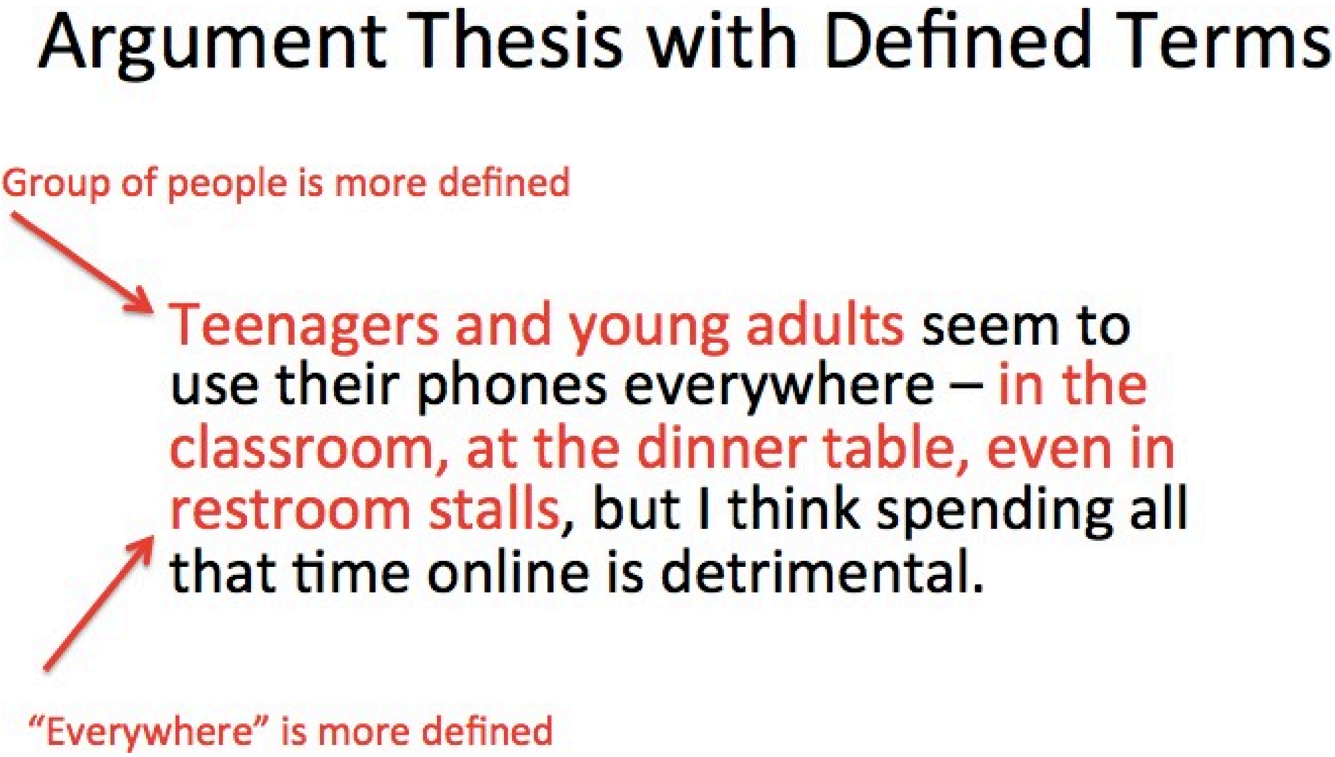
You’re already off to a good start: this thesis demonstrates some knowledge or authority, and it includes different sides to the issue. How can you make it better? Remember, you have to be able to write a paper in support of your thesis, so the more detailed, concrete, and developed your thesis is, the better. Here are a few suggestions for improving any thesis:

1. Define your terms.
2. Aim for specificity and detail.
3. Develop an idea that you can unpack over the course of the paper.

Defining Your Terms

In your draft or working claim above, are there any terms that would benefit from more definition? What do you mean by people, for example? Can that word be replaced with “young people,” or “teenagers” and “young adults”? If you replaced “people” with these more specific terms, couldn’t you also then write your paper with more authority, as you are one of the people you’re writing about?

You might also define "can't seem to live without," which sounds good initially but is too general without explanation, with something more exact that appeals to your reader and can be supported with evidence or explained at greater length in your paragraphs: people "use their phones in the classrooms, at the dinner table, and even in restroom stalls."



Argument Thesis with Defined Terms

Group of people is more defined

Teenagers and young adults seem to use their phones everywhere – in the classroom, at the dinner table, even in restroom stalls, but I think spending all that time online is detrimental.

"Everywhere" is more defined

Figure 5.4.3: Image created by Yvonne Bruce and Emilie Zickel

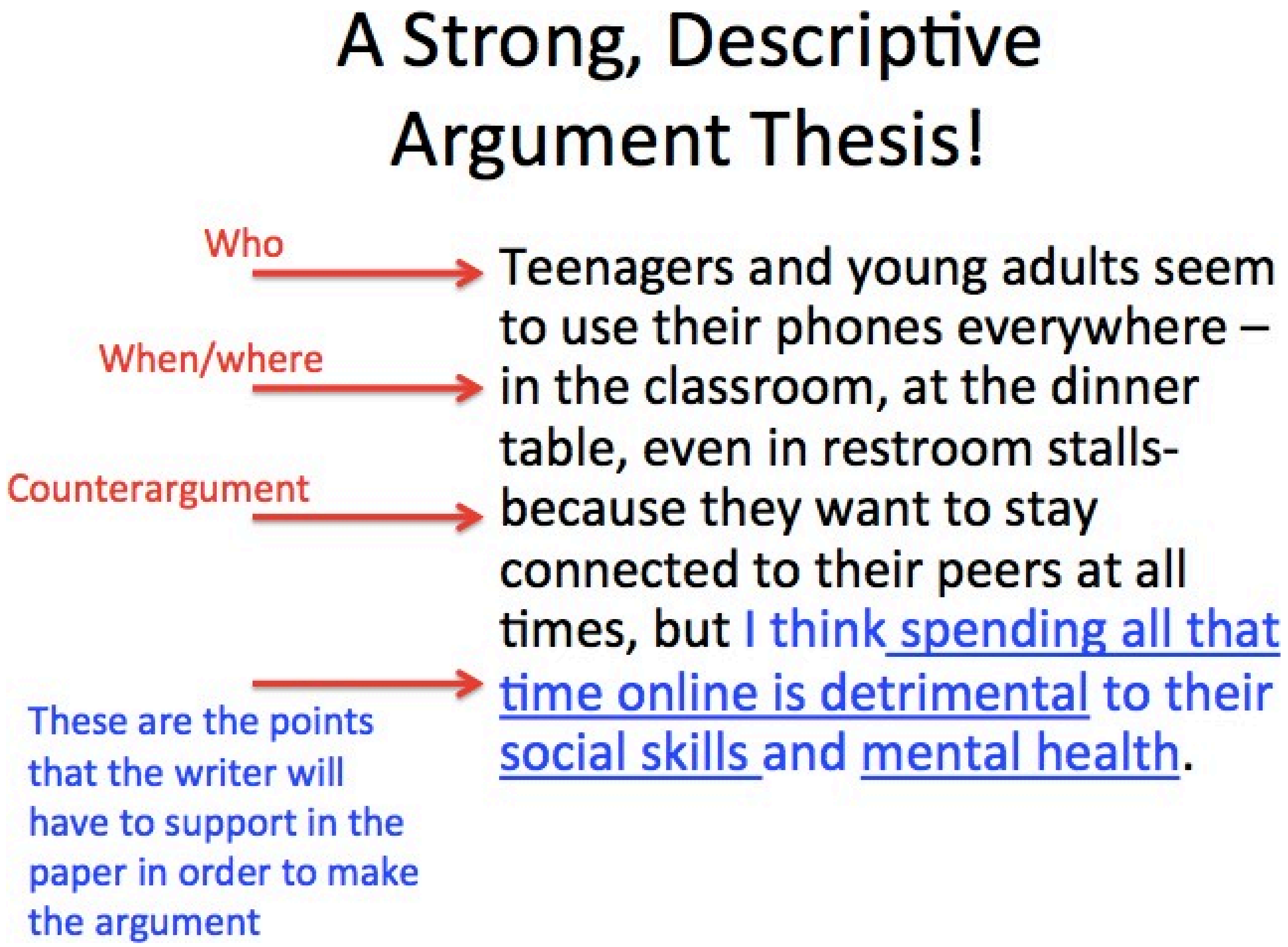
Making Sure Your Thesis Answers Questions or States Your Position

Your thesis should provide your position toward a topic that influences the content of your paper as a whole. Thus, you want your thesis to be something you can unfold or unpack or develop into a much longer work. You want your claim to answer or discuss the question as deeply and fully as possible. You can do this grammatically by adding prepositional phrases and "because" clauses that bring out the specifics of your thinking and tell your reader who, what, when, where, how, and/or why:

"Teenagers and young adults seem to use their phones everywhere—in the classroom, at the dinner table, even in restroom stalls—because they want to stay connected to their friends and peers at all times, but spending that much time online is detrimental to their social skills and mental health."

Notice that this thesis, while not substantially different from the draft or working thesis you began with, has been substantially revised to be more specific, supported, and authoritative. It lays out an organized argument for a convincing paper. Because it is so complete and specific, in fact, it can be easily changed if you find research that contradicts your claim or if you change your mind about the topic as you write and reflect:

"Teenagers and young adults seem to use their phones everywhere—in the classroom, at the dinner table, even in restroom stalls—because they want to stay connected to their friends and peers at all times, and research suggests that this connection has primarily positive psychological and emotional benefits."



A Strong, Descriptive Argument Thesis!

Teenagers and young adults seem to use their phones everywhere – in the classroom, at the dinner table, even in restroom stalls- because they want to stay connected to their peers at all times, but I think spending all that time online is detrimental to their social skills and mental health.

These are the points that the writer will have to support in the paper in order to make the argument

Figure 5.4.4: Image created by Yvonne Bruce and Emilie Zickel

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5.5 CONNECTING THESIS AND ARGUMENT

Amy Guptill

As an instructor, I've noted that a number of new (and sometimes not-so-new) students are skilled wordsmiths and generally clear thinkers but are nevertheless stuck in a high-school style of writing. They struggle to let go of certain assumptions about how an academic paper should be. Some students who have mastered that form, and enjoyed a lot of success from doing so, assume that college writing is simply more of the same. The skills that go into a very basic kind of essay—often called the five-paragraph theme—are indispensable (The Writing Center). If you're good at the five-paragraph theme, then you're good at identifying a clear and consistent thesis, arranging cohesive paragraphs, organizing evidence for key points, and situating an argument within a broader context through the intro and conclusion.

In college you need to build on those essential skills. The five-paragraph theme, as such, is bland and formulaic; it doesn't compel deep thinking. Your professors are looking for a more ambitious and arguable thesis, a nuanced and compelling argument, and real-life evidence for all key points, all in an organically structured paper. ("Organic" here doesn't mean "pesticide-free" or containing carbon; it means the paper grows and develops, sort of like a living thing.)

Figures 5.5.1 and 5.5.2 contrast the standard five-paragraph theme and the organic college paper. The five-paragraph theme, outlined in Figure 5.5.1 is probably what you're used to: the introductory paragraph starts broad and gradually narrows to a thesis, which readers expect to find at the very end of that paragraph. In this idealized format, the thesis invokes the magic number of three: three reasons why a statement is true. Each of those reasons is explained and justified in the three body paragraphs, and then the final paragraph restates the thesis before gradually getting broader. This format is easy for readers to follow, and it helps writers organize their points and the evidence that goes with them. That's why you learned this format.

Figure 5.5.2, in contrast, represents a paper on the same topic that has the more organic form expected in college. The first key difference is the thesis. Rather than simply positing a number of reasons to think that something is true, it puts forward an arguable statement: one with which a reasonable person might disagree. An arguable thesis gives the paper purpose. It surprises readers and draws them in. You hope your reader thinks, "Huh. Why would they come to that conclusion?" and then feels compelled to read on. The body paragraphs, then, build on one another to carry out this ambitious argument. In the classic five-paragraph theme (Figure 5.5.1) it hardly matters which of the three reasons you explain first or second. In the more organic structure, (Figure 5.5.2) each paragraph specifically leads to the next.

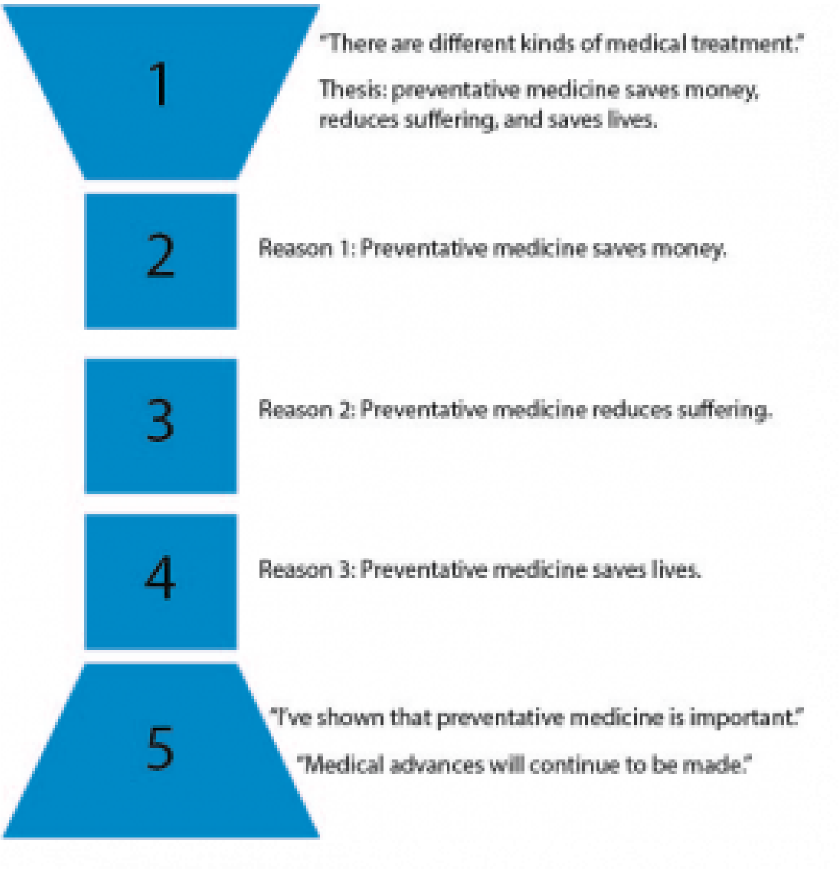
1
"There are different kinds of medical treatment."
Thesis: preventative medicine saves money, reduces suffering, and saves lives.
2
Reason 1: Preventative medicine saves money.
3
Reason 2: Preventative medicine reduces suffering.
4
Reason 3: Preventative medicine saves lives.
5
"I've shown that preventative medicine is important."
"Medical advances will continue to be made."

Figure 5.5.1, The five-paragraph "theme," image Amy Guptill

The last key difference is seen in the conclusion. Because the organic essay is driven by an ambitious, non-obvious argument, the reader comes to the concluding section thinking, "OK, I'm convinced by the argument. What do you, author, make of it? Why does it matter?" The conclusion of an organically structured paper has a real job to do. It doesn't just reiterate the thesis; it explains why the thesis matters.

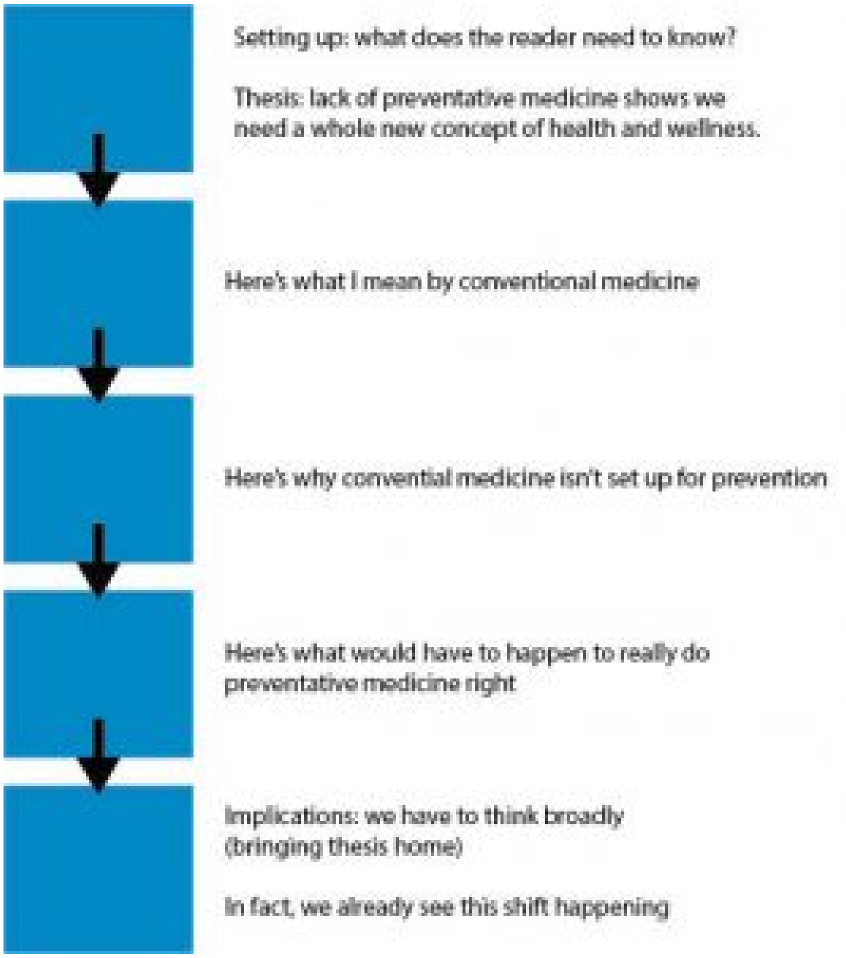
Setting up: what does the reader need to know?
Thesis: lack of preventative medicine shows we need a whole new concept of health and wellness.
Here's what I mean by conventional medicine
Here's why convential medicine isn't set up for prevention
Here's what would have to happen to really do preventative medicine right
Implications: we have to think broadly (bringing thesis home)
In fact, we already see this shift happening

Figure 5.5.2, The organic college paper, image Amy Guptill

The substantial time you spent mastering the five-paragraph form in Figure 5.5.1 was time well spent; it's hard to imagine anyone succeeding with the more organic form without the organizational skills and habits of mind inherent in the simpler form. But if you assume that you must adhere rigidly to the simpler form, you're blunting your intellectual ambition. Your professors will not be impressed by obvious theses, loosely related body paragraphs, and repetitive conclusions. They want you to undertake an ambitious independent analysis, one that will yield a thesis that is somewhat surprising and challenging to explain.

The Three-Story Thesis: From the Ground Up

You have no doubt been drilled on the need for a thesis statement and its proper location at the end of the introduction. And you also know that all of the key points of the paper should clearly support the central driving thesis. Indeed, the whole model of the five-paragraph theme hinges on a clearly stated and consistent thesis. However, some students are surprised—and dismayed—when some of their early college papers are criticized for not having a good thesis. Their professor might even claim that the paper doesn't have a thesis when, in the author's view, it clearly does. That's because the thesis might NOT have the following which illustrates a more organic method of writing:

1. A good thesis is non-obvious. High school teachers needed to make sure that you and all your classmates mastered the basic form of the academic essay. Thus, they were mostly concerned that you had a clear and consistent thesis, even if it was something obvious like "sustainability is important." A thesis statement like that has a wide-enough scope to incorporate several supporting points and concurring evidence, enabling the writer to demonstrate his or her mastery of the five-paragraph form. Good enough! When they can, high school teachers nudge students to develop arguments that are less obvious and more engaging. College instructors, though, fully expect you to produce something more developed.
2. A good thesis is arguable. In everyday life, "arguable" is often used as a synonym for "doubtful." For a thesis, though, "arguable" means that it's worth arguing and there is a certain level of probability involved: it's something with which a reasonable person might disagree. This arguability criterion dovetails with the non-obvious one: it shows that the author has deeply explored a problem and arrived at an argument that legitimately needs 3, 5, 10, or 20 pages to explain and justify. In that way, a good thesis sets an ambitious agenda for a paper. A thesis like "sustainability is important" isn't at all difficult to argue for, and the reader would have little intrinsic motivation to read the rest of the paper. However, an arguable thesis like "sustainability policies will inevitably fail if they do not incorporate social justice" brings up some healthy skepticism. Thus, the arguable thesis makes the reader want to keep reading.
3. A good thesis is well specified. Some student writers fear that they're giving away the game if they specify their thesis up front; they think that a purposefully vague thesis might be more intriguing to the reader. However, consider movie trailers: they always include the most exciting and poignant moments from the film to attract an audience. In academic papers, too, a well-specified thesis indicates that the author has thought rigorously about an issue and done thorough research, which makes the reader want to keep reading. Don't just say that a particular policy is effective or fair; say what makes it so. If you want to argue that a particular claim is dubious or incomplete, say why in your thesis.
4. A good thesis includes implications. Suppose your assignment is to write a paper about some aspect of the history of linen production and trade, a topic that may seem exceedingly arcane. And suppose you have constructed a well-supported and creative argument that linen was so widely traded in the ancient Mediterranean that it actually served as a kind of currency (Lopez-Lazaro). That's a strong, insightful, arguable, well-specified thesis. But which of these thesis statements do you find more engaging?

Version A:

Linen served as a form of currency in the ancient Mediterranean world, connecting rival empires through circuits of trade.

Version B:

Linen served as a form of currency in the ancient Mediterranean world, connecting rival empires through circuits of trade. The economic role of linen raises important questions about how shifting environmental conditions can influence economic relationships and, by extension, political conflicts.

Putting your claims in their broader context makes them more interesting to your reader and more impressive to your professors who, after all, assign topics that they think have enduring significance. Finding that significance for yourself makes the most of both your paper and your learning.

How do you produce a good, strong thesis? And how do you know when you've gotten there? Many instructors and writers find useful a metaphor based on this passage by Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr.:

> There are one-story intellects, two-story intellects, and three-story intellects with skylights. All fact collectors who have no aim beyond their facts are one-story men. Two-story men compare, reason, generalize using the labor of fact collectors as their own. Three-story men idealize, imagine, predict—their best illumination comes from above the skylight.

One-story theses state inarguable facts. Two-story theses bring in an arguable (interpretive or analytical) point. Three-story theses nest that point within its larger, compelling implications. The metaphor is extraordinarily useful even though the passage is annoying. Beyond the sexist language of the time, I don't appreciate the condescension toward "fact-collectors." which reflects a general modernist tendency to elevate the abstract and denigrate the concrete. In reality, data-collection is a creative and demanding craft, arguably more important than theorizing.

The biggest benefit of the three-story metaphor is that it describes a process for building a thesis. To build the first story, you first have to get familiar with the complex, relevant facts surrounding the problem or question. You have to be able to describe the situation thoroughly and accurately. Then, with that first story built, you can layer on the second story by formulating the insightful, arguable point that animates the analysis. That's often the most effortful part: brainstorming, elaborating, and comparing alternative ideas, finalizing your point. With that specified, you can frame up the third story by articulating why the point you make matters beyond its particular topic or case.

Thesis: that's the word that pops at me whenever I write an essay. Seeing this word in the prompt scared me and made me think to myself, "Oh great, what are they really looking for?" or "How am I going to make a thesis for a college paper?" When rehearing that I would be focusing on theses again in a class, I said to myself, "Here we go again!" But after learning about the three story thesis, I never had a problem with writing another thesis. In fact, I look forward to being asked on a paper to create a thesis. —Timothée Pizarro

For example, imagine you have been assigned a paper about the impact of online learning in higher education. You would first construct an account of the origins and multiple forms of online learning and assess research findings about its use and effectiveness. If you've done that well, you'll probably come up with a well-considered opinion that wouldn't be obvious to readers who haven't looked at the issue in depth. Maybe you'll want to argue that online learning is a threat to the academic community. Or perhaps you'll want to make the case that online learning opens up pathways to college degrees that traditional campus-based learning does not. In the course of developing your central argumentative point, you'll come to recognize its larger context; in this example, you may claim that online learning can serve to better integrate higher education with the rest of society, as online learners bring their educational and career experiences together. To outline this example:

- First story: Online learning is becoming more prevalent and takes many different forms.
- Second story: While most observers see it as a transformation of higher education, online learning is better thought of as an extension of higher education in that it reaches learners who aren't disposed to participate in traditional campus-based education.
- Third story: Online learning appears to be a promising way to better integrate higher education with other institutions in society, as online learners integrate their educational experiences with the other realms of their life, promoting the freer flow of ideas between the academy and the rest of society.

Here's another example of a three-story thesis (Haytock):

- First story: Edith Wharton did not consider herself a modernist writer, and she didn't write like her modernist contemporaries.
- Second story: However, in her work we can see her grappling with both the questions and literary forms that fascinated modernist writers of her era. While not an avowed modernist, she did engage with modernist themes and questions.
- Third story: Thus, it is more revealing to think of modernism as a conversation rather than a category or practice.

Here's one more example:

- First story: Scientists disagree about the likely impact in the U.S. of the light brown apple moth (LBAM), an agricultural pest native to Australia (Kay).
- Second story: Research findings to date suggest that the decision to spray pheromones over the skies of several southern Californian counties to combat the LBAM was poorly thought out.
- Third story: Together, the scientific ambiguities and the controversial response strengthen the claim that industrial-style approaches to pest management are inherently unsustainable.

A thesis statement that stops at the first story isn't usually considered a thesis. A two-story thesis is usually considered competent, though some two-story theses are more intriguing and ambitious than others. A thoughtfully crafted and well-informed three-story thesis puts the author on a smooth path toward an excellent paper.

The concept of a three-story thesis framework was the most helpful piece of information I gained from the writing component of our class. The first time I utilized it in a college paper, my professor included "good thesis" and "excellent introduction" in her notes and graded it significantly higher than my previous papers. You can expect similar results if you dig deeper to form three-story theses. More importantly, doing so will make the actual writing of your paper more straightforward as well. Arguing something specific makes the structure of your paper much easier to design.

Peter Farrell

Three-Story Theses and the Organically Structured Argument

The three-story thesis is a beautiful thing. For one, it gives a paper authentic momentum. The first paragraph doesn't just start with some broad, vague statement; every sentence is crucial for setting up the thesis. The body paragraphs build on one another, moving through each step of the logical chain. Each paragraph leads inevitably to the next, making the transitions from paragraph to paragraph feel wholly natural. The conclusion, instead of being a mirror-image paraphrase of the introduction, builds out the third story by explaining the broader implications of the argument. It offers new insight without departing from the flow of the analysis.

I should note here that a paper with this kind of momentum often reads like it was knocked out in one inspired sitting. But in reality, just like accomplished athletes and artists, masterful writers make the difficult thing look easy. As writer Anne Lamott notes, reading a well-written piece feels like its author sat down and typed it out, "bounding along like huskies across the snow." However, she continues,

> This is just the fantasy of the uninitiated. I know some very great writers, writers you love who write beautifully and have made a great deal of money, and not one of them sits down routinely feeling wildly enthusiastic and confident. Not one of them writes elegant first drafts. All right, one of them does, but we do not like her very much (Lamott).

Experienced writers don't figure out what they want to say and then write it. They write in order to figure out what they want to say.

Experienced writers develop theses in dialog with the body of the essay. An initial characterization of the problem leads to a tentative thesis, and then drafting the body of the paper reveals thorny contradictions or critical areas of ambiguity, prompting the writer to revisit or expand the body of evidence and then refine the thesis based on that fresh look. The revised thesis may require that body paragraphs be reordered and reshaped to fit the emerging three-story thesis. Throughout the process, the thesis serves as an anchor point while the author wades through the morass of facts and ideas. The dialogue between thesis and body continues until the author is satisfied or the due date arrives, whatever comes first. It's an effortful and sometimes tedious process. Novice writers, in contrast, usually oversimplify the writing process. They formulate some first-impression thesis, produce a reasonably organized outline, and then flesh it out with text, never taking the time to reflect or truly revise their work. They assume that revision is a step backward when, in reality, it is a major step forward.

> Everyone has a different way that they like to write. For instance, I like to pop my earbuds in, blast dubstep music, and write on a white board. I like using the white board because it is a lot easier to revise and edit while you write. After I finish writing a paragraph that I am completely satisfied with on the white board, I sit in front of it with my laptop and just type it up.
>
> Kaethe Leonard

Another benefit of the three-story thesis framework is that it demystifies what a "strong" argument is in academic culture. In an era of political polarization, many students may think that a strong argument is based on a simple, bold, combative statement that is promoted in the most forceful way possible. "Gun control is a travesty!" "Toni Morrison is the best writer who ever lived!" When students are encouraged to consider contrasting perspectives in their papers, they fear that doing so will make their own thesis seem mushy and weak. However, in academics a "strong" argument is comprehensive and nuanced, not simple and polemical. The purpose of the argument is to explain to readers why the author—through the course of his or her in-depth study—has arrived at a somewhat surprising point. On that basis, it has to consider plausible counter-arguments and contradictory information. Academic argumentation exemplifies the popular adage about all writing: show, don't tell. In crafting and carrying out the three-story thesis, you are showing your reader the work you have done.

The model of the organically structured paper and the three-story thesis framework explained here is the very foundation of the paper itself and the process that produces it. The subsequent chapters, focusing on sources, paragraphs, and sentence-level wordsmithing, all follow from the notion that you are writing to think and writing to learn as much as you are writing to communicate. Your professors assume that you have the self-motivation and organizational skills to pursue your analysis with both rigor and flexibility; that is, they envision you developing, testing, refining, and sometimes discarding your own ideas based on a clear-eyed and open-minded assessment of the evidence before you.

Additional Resources

1. The Writing Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill offers an excellent, readable run-down on the five-paragraph theme, why most college writing assignments want you to go beyond it, and those times when the simpler structure is actually a better choice.
2. There are many useful websites that describe good thesis statements and provide examples. Those from the writing centers at Hamilton College and Purdue University are especially helpful.

Exercises

1. Find a scholarly article or book that is interesting to you. Focusing on the abstract and introduction, outline the first, second, and third stories of its thesis.
2. Here is a list of one-story theses. Come up with two-story and three-story versions of each one.
    1. Television programming includes content that some find objectionable.
    2. The percent of children and youth who are overweight or obese has risen in recent decades.
    3. First-year college students must learn how to independently manage their time.
    4. The things we surround ourselves with symbolize who we are.
3. Find an example of a five-paragraph theme (online essay mills, your own high school work), produce an alternative three-story thesis, and outline an organically structured paper to

carry that thesis out.

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5.6 CONNECTING PURPOSE WITH CLAIMS

Dylan Altman; Anna Mills; and Tracey Watts

Every argument sets out to convince readers or listeners. In that sense, every argument has the same purpose. Yet writers often aim for targeted goals. Sometimes, writers may want an argument not just to convince, but to lead to action. For example, when an argument is part of an advertisement, the goal is clear: "Buy me!" The goal of a stump speech leads to action as well; politicians try to get listeners to cast their votes in support of a candidate. Sometimes, however, the purpose of an argument is simply to wrestle with a topic in order to begin to develop a more informed opinion. Sometimes an argument involves a definition or redefinition of a contested topic. Other times, the purpose of a piece of writing is to encourage more complex critical thinking on a subject, with the hope that more open dialogue will ensue between readers.

Let's imagine that a writer has set out to write about climate change. That writer might simply aim to make people believe that climate change is real, depending on their target audience. Alternatively, in writing to a different audience, the writer might try to convince readers to make drastic changes in their lives to combat climate change. In yet another writing situation, the writer might protest the actions of a particular company that contribute to climate change. The writer's unique purpose will shape the ideas they express, and their purpose will shape the emotional appeals they make as well.

Identifying your purpose will help you to decide how to develop your argument. Whether your purpose is to define, to judge, to identify causes and effects, or to compel action, you will need to build your writing around a key building block of argument: claims.

In argumentative writing, your claims are the backbone of your work. Your claims are your arguments. They are the main ideas that structure your writing. Your thesis statement is a type of claim. Your body paragraphs are organized around claims. Your claims will often be explicitly stated, as in the case of your thesis, which is perhaps the most important sentence in your argumentative essay. Similarly, you might imagine your paragraphs as being structured around mini-thesis statements, or supporting claims. Being able to articulate your claims clearly—both your thesis and your supporting claims—is an essential step in creating a strong, well-organized essay.

Introduction to the Types of Claims

The claims that we use depend on the purpose that we have in writing. We can ask ourselves which of the following best describes our main goal:

- We want to describe the nature of something.

- We want to assess how good or bad something is.
- We want to demonstrate that one thing causes or caused another.
- We want to propose some action.

A writer may want to achieve multiple goals in a single paper. Perhaps our writer working on the topic of climate change wants to identify the effects of a company's specific actions and call for specific changes. Still, if we can decide which goal is ultimately the most important, we can shape the introduction and conclusion with that goal in mind. Each type of argument has particular questions that may be worth addressing.

The four types of arguments below match the four purposes mentioned above:

- Definition arguments describe the nature of something or identify a pattern or trend. Generally speaking, they answer the question, "What is it?"
- Evaluation arguments assess something according to particular criteria. They answer the question, "How good or bad is it?"
- Causal arguments attempt to show that one thing leads to or has led to another. They answer the question, "What caused it?"
- Proposal arguments present a case for action. They answer the question, "What should we do about it?"

Let's look at some examples of arguments divided into these categories. Note that the examples below aren't true claims—at least, not yet. The following ideas describe the purpose that the writer has in coming to the argument. The claims themselves haven't yet been written. Writing them will be the next step.

Definition Argument

- We want to define a contested term, such as terrorism or cancel culture.
- We want to clarify which groups of people the term "Latinx" refers to.
- We want to show how Kurdish communities differ in Iraq, Syria, and Turkey.

Evaluation Argument

- We want to recommend a gaming device.
- We want to convince readers that the Supreme Court decision to give corporations First Amendment rights to free speech was misguided.
- We want to show that a new Alzheimer's drug meets the criteria for emergency use authorization.

Causal Argument

- We want to argue that the attack on the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021, actually made Americans value American democracy more and want to protect it.
- We want to analyze why a team continues its losing or winning streak.
- We want to suggest that the Covid-19 pandemic led to an increase in internet addiction.

Proposal Argument

- We want readers to take the online Harvard Implicit Association Tests and reflect on what the results suggest about their unconscious biases.
- We want legislators to double the gas tax in order to speed up the transition to clean energy.
- We want to make community college free for all Americans.

Exercises

For each claim below, select the category that best describes its purpose. Explain how the claim fits the category.

1. Minecraft play offers many opportunities for creativity and learning.
2. The explosion of mental health content on TikTok has reduced the shame many people feel about their mental health issues.
3. Only apartments where the rent is less than 30% of a minimum wage worker's income can truly be considered "affordable housing."
4. Composting food waste can generate energy with a minimum of greenhouse gas emissions.

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5.7 DEFINITION AND EVALUATION ARGUMENTS

Allison Murray; Anna Mills; Cathy Thwing; and Eric Aldrich

What Is a Definition Argument?

A definition argument may have as its goal to describe the nature of something, whether it be an abstract concept like justice, a historical event, or an ongoing trend. Definition arguments like this are, in fact, arguments because they seek to shape our vision of reality. We can think of them as answering the question "What is it?"

Definition arguments may attempt to explain what is meant by a particular term. Consider the following claim:

Organic, in terms of food, means plants and animals raised without additives or artificial growing conditions.

The argument here hinges upon understanding the definition of the word "organic." In this case, organic is the subject of the argument. The claim goes on to base the argument on definition criteria. The claim states that two definition criteria of "organic" are "raised without additives" and "raised without artificial growing conditions." "What do they mean by 'artificial'?" If you find yourself questioning other terms used in the claim, that might mean your argument will need to dedicate a paragraph or more to defining those terms. An extended argument on organic food would need to explain in detail what distinguishes artificial growing conditions from natural ones. Can greenhouse-grown food be organic? In such a situation, it may benefit the argument to offer the dictionary definition of "organic" as a way to confirm that the writer's and the readers' assumptions are the same.

There are a number of online dictionaries that student authors can derive a definition from, but should the writer wish to ensure trust (ethos) with the audience, the source of the dictionary definition might matter. The dictionary.com site offers this definition for "organic":

> Organic: pertaining to, involving, or grown with fertilizers or pesticides of animal or vegetable origin, as distinguished from manufactured chemicals ("organic").

Readers who respect the history and legacy of the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) might consider its definition more credible. Considered the most definitive and complete dictionary available, the OED offers differentiated definitions of different uses of the word. In the case of "organic," we'd need to look at sub-definition 8c to find one that works for our purposes:

> Organic: of food: produced without the use of artificial fertilizers, pesticides, or other artificial chemicals.

A definition argument can put a more specific subject into a category based on criteria, as in the following:

Though it omits hormones and antibiotics, organic ice cream remains unhealthy because it contains high levels of fat and sugar, while offering little nutritional value.

Here we have a subject—organic ice cream—and a category—unhealthy. Presumably, unhealthy things often contain similar criteria—high levels of fat and sugar, low nutritional value, and industrial additives. Organic ice cream might not contain industrial additives, but because it meets the other two criteria, it can still be considered unhealthy. A good way to test your thesis is to try out examples to see if the criteria work to distinguish things that fit the category from things that don't. Are other things we consider unhealthy full of sugar and/or fat, low in nutrition, and made with industrial additives? Yes. Fast food hamburgers are unhealthy because they contain high levels of fat, low nutritional value, and are full of chemical preservatives.

Definition arguments will need to provide evidence for any generalizations they make about a subject. If they use a specific example, how can they show that the example is typical? They may also need to justify the choice of criteria for the definition. If we argue that the Vietnam War should not be considered a "World War" even though it involved two global superpowers, the U.S. and the Soviet Union, we will need to explain why a criterion like the number of deaths should be considered more important than the number or size of the countries involved.

The Benefits of Definition

Once we understand the value of definition for clarifying terms in an essay, we can start to appreciate the value of definition in shaping an argument, especially one centered around a contentious term. When controversy revolves around an issue, defining terms explicitly and precisely is even more critical. A definition argument can help to clarify where disagreements lie. Even if it doesn't resolve the disagreements, it may at least prevent misunderstandings.

To take an example, let's say the government decides to allow health insurance providers to exclude coverage to individuals with preexisting conditions. The question then arises, What precisely does constitute a preexisting condition? Any diagnosis of cancer, including minor skin cancers? Diabetes? Obesity? Hypertension? Consider how many of our friends and family members have been diagnosed with any of these conditions.

Laws rely on definitions. Many of us are familiar with the purpose of Title IX, which ensured that equal funding should be applied for both male and female athletic programs in schools. However, with the recognition of transgender students and their rights, the U.S. Department of Education offered a statement of clarification to the language of Title IX "explaining that it will enforce Title IX's prohibition on discrimination on the basis of sex to include: (1) discrimination based on sexual orientation; and (2) discrimination based on gender identity" ("Title IX"). Schools, students, and parents can now point to this language in debates about who is protected by Title IX status, and who can be included in the funding of gender-specific sports teams.

Definitions involve emotional associations as well as descriptions of literal meaning. Public opinion can be swayed by casting a person involved in a very public event as "famous" or "infamous," a term that has decidedly negative connotations. In the case of Trayvon Martin, a young black man who was shot by George Zimmerman, a white man, Martin was defined alternately as a "boy in a hoodie" or as a "potential thug." And Zimmerman was defined as "a neighborhood watch leader" or "private citizen" by some, and a "vigilante" by others. In each case, the label implies a definition of the person and his behavior, and this extends the impression built in the mind of the audience.

Strategies for Definition

- Referring to existing definitions: A dictionary definition can be helpful if the term under consideration is new or very unusual or uncommon, words that readers may be unfamiliar with, or whose definitions may have become obscured with modern use. If an argument takes the position that reduced literacy rates in freshman college students make them less apt to learn from a professor who leans toward sesquipedalian speech, yet, such speech is exactly the challenge these students need to pull them away from their social media feeds and engage them in the vigorous mental workout that academia provides, the author is more likely to earn the trust of the audience if a dictionary definition is provided for this uncommon and archaic word: words that are a foot and a half long (O.E.D.).

- Identifying emotional associations (connotations): Emotional associations offer the various levels of meaning a word may have. For example, love can have several variants, such as platonic love, romantic love, familial love, passionate love, self-love, and even more specific ones, such as spirituality, philanthropy, humanity, nationalism/patriotism, and agapé, and each carries its own emotional tone that informs the definition.

- Defining a term based on what it's not (negation): Sometimes complex words are best explained by what they are not, specifically by contrasting the word to another term. Needs are often confused with wants, but needs are anything necessary for survival. For example, people often say "I need a vacation," when what they really mean is "I want a vacation." You may want coffee, but you need water. You may want a new car, but a used one may suit your needs. In an article about sexual predators, Andrew Vachss says that when he tells people about the individuals he prosecutes for abuse against children, people often say, "That's sick." But he clarifies that there is a difference between "sick" and "evil." A mother who hears voices in her head telling her to lock her baby in a closet is sick. A man who sells a child to pornographers is evil. "Sickness," he says, "is the absence of choice," while evil is the volition, the awareness of choice, and the intentional choice to commit a sinister act (Vachss).

- Creating an original definition (stipulation): This use of definition asks the reader to accept an alternate definition from the standard or commonly accepted one. This is usually the best way to utilize definition in an essay, as it allows the author the freedom to put his or her own spin on a key term. But the author must do it responsibly, providing supportive examples. For example, many young people believe that true parental love is the willingness to do anything at all for a child. However, real love isn't expressed by doormat behavior. A parent who does his child's homework so the child receives all "A" grades isn't demonstrating love (note the use of negation here). Rather, true parental love is the willingness to apply fair rules and limits on behavior in order to raise a child who is a good worker, a good friend, and a good citizen.

- Elaborating on a definition (extended definition): There is no rule about how long a definition argument should be. When a simple one-line definition will not suffice, writers can develop a multi-paragraph, multi-page, or multi-chapter definition argument. For example, a newspaper article might explore at length what is meant by the phrase "cancel culture." An entire book each might be needed to explain what is meant by the following terms: "critical race theory," "microaggression," "gender identity," "fascism," or "intersectionality." When the concept under examination is complex, contentious, or weighted by historical examples and emotional connotations, an extended definition may be needed.

Sample Definition Arguments

This sample outline for an essay titled "When Colleges Talk about Diversity, Equity, and Antiracism, What Do They Mean?" shows the structure of one definition argument.

Practice Exercises

How are attitudes to gender changing in today's society? Come up with a definition argument you think has some validity about a current trend related to gender. What kind of evidence could be gathered to support this claim? How would you convince readers that this evidence is typical? You could choose one of the claims below or invent your own.

- People today still associate femininity with weakness and masculinity with strength.
- Women are still more nurturing than men.
- Teenagers today see gender as a spectrum.
- Cisgender people still fear transgender people.

1. Construct a definition with criteria for one of the following terms, or another term of your choice related to gender. Feel free to research the terms to get ideas. Possible terms: masculine, feminine, androgynous, macho, femme, butch, manly, womanly, machista, metrosexual, genderqueer, third gender, transgender.

What Is an Evaluation Argument?

In college, professional life, politics, and everyday life, we constantly must assess how things measure up. We are faced with questions like the following:

- Does our employer treat us fairly?
- Does our local café deserve five stars or four?
- Is the “Free City” program that makes City College of San Francisco tuition-free for residents a success?
- Is a particular hillside a good location for a wind farm?
- Does the president deserve their current approval rating?

To answer each of these questions and convince others that our answer is valid, we would need to make an evaluation argument. Most commonly, evaluation arguments rate their subject on a scale from positive to negative. Evaluation arguments make a claim about the quality of something. We can think of them as answering the question, “How good or bad is it?”

Figure 5.7.1: Photo by Liza Summer from Pexels under the Pexels License.

Criteria

Evaluation arguments usually need to define and justify the criteria they use to make the evaluation. These criteria may consist of moral standards, aesthetic standards, or tests of successful functioning. Depending on how controversial the criteria are, the argument may need to defend and explain why they have been chosen.

How can we support our choice of criteria? We may cite precedent or authoritative sources in the field, or we may discuss the merit of the criteria in themselves by arguing for the good results they lead to and aligning them with values we believe our audience will share.

Judgment

Once we have convinced readers that the criteria for quality are valid, we will need to articulate our judgment about the extent to which the subject meets or doesn't meet those criteria.

Evidence

Finally, the argument will need to provide evidence of the way in which the subject meets or does not meet the criteria.

Ranking Criteria

In cases where there are multiple valid criteria, the writer may need to rank them in order of importance and justify this ranking. For example, an editorial supporting Alyesha Jenkins for mayor would need to explain what the city should be looking for in a mayor at the moment. The editorial might argue that the top priority should be finding someone who has a workable plan to address the homelessness crisis. It might then go on to identify as a secondary priority finding someone who has been an effective leader of a large organization. Finally, it might argue that finding a candidate who will focus on ending police brutality in the city should be the third priority. Given these criteria, the argument might praise Alyesha Jenkins' concrete, popular plan on homelessness and describe her background as a successful city supervisor and head of a law firm. It might note that her record on police brutality is limited, but we still judge her to be a strong candidate.

Types of Criteria

We can classify evaluative arguments by the kind of criteria they use. They may focus on aesthetics, the appearance or appeal of something (a movie, a work of art, or a building). Or they may focus on practical concerns about how something functions or moral judgments based on values.

- Aesthetic Criteria: What makes a great film can be an academic question or an everyday debate among friends going to the movies. Film critics and Film Studies classes try to identify clear aesthetic criteria for award-worthy movies. Film blogger Tyler Schirado, who writes for the San Diego Film festival, details criteria including acting quality, dialogue, pacing, plot coherence, cinematography, production design, and special effects. Each of those criteria could in turn include sub-criteria. For example, the criteria for the quality of the special effects might include both how innovative and how spectacular they are.

- Operational Criteria: Sometimes the criteria that matter are very practical. We use operational criteria when we are looking for certain concrete results. What does the subject we are evaluating do? If we want to evaluate a new car's safety features, we will examine to see how it performs under challenging conditions. When the FDA evaluates and tests a new vaccine, they follow a set of procedures to test how the vaccine affects first cells, then animal bodies, and finally human bodies. The FDA considers the results of all these procedures to help it decide whether to approve the vaccine or not. And if the consumer has confidence in the FDA's standards for data collection, they can use the criteria about the vaccine's past record of immune protection and side effects to help them decide whether or not to get vaccinated.

- Moral Criteria: An evaluation argument based on moral criteria will claim that something is right or wrong. It will need to appeal to shared values or make a case for a particular value that serves as criteria. Some values are nearly universal, such as honesty, reasonableness, and fairness. However, even values that seem universal may be defined differently by different groups. We each grow up in an environment that instills a particular set of family or cultural or religious values. These help to shape our own sense of morality, or personal values and codes that we choose to live by.

As an example, the Motion Pictures Academy includes some moral criteria as well as aesthetic criteria when it selects winners for Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Actors. Responding to the #OscarsSoWhite campaign, the Academy of Motion Pictures decided to incorporate the value of inclusiveness into their criteria. In order to emphasize "the inclusion of people in underrepresented groups, including women, people of color, LGBTQ+ people and those with cognitive or physical disabilities," they developed a new set of criteria for nominations for Best Picture. The criteria state that starting in 2024, "to be eligible for best picture, a film must meet at least two standards across four categories: 'Onscreen Representation, Themes and Narratives,' 'Creative Leadership and Project Team,' 'Industry Access and Opportunities' and 'Audience Development'" (Rottenberg). Each of these new criteria responds to the demands for inclusivity and equity and is evidence that criteria can and should evolve as social morals evolve.

Comparative Evaluation

Many times we will need to evaluate the worth of one subject in relation to another in order to judge which is better. Of course, we will need to decide on the basis for comparison, or the criteria to be used, and make that basis clear. Then we will need to evaluate each subject according to the criteria. In comparisons, ranking the criteria will often be important because one subject may do better on one criterion and worse on another. We'll need to know which criterion is more important in order to decide which comes out ahead overall.

Sample Evaluation Arguments

To get a sense of what research-based evaluation arguments look like in college classes, see this sample evaluation essay, "Universal Health Care Coverage for the United States." Annotations on the essay point out how the author uses evaluation argument strategies.

- Sample evaluation essay "Universal Health Care Coverage for the United States" in PDF version with margin notes

Exercises

Reflect on the following questions to construct your own evaluation argument.

- What makes a person a good role model? Choose your top three criteria.
- How would you rank those criteria in order of importance?
- Choose two prominent public figures from history, pop culture, or politics, dead or alive, who would be interesting to compare as role models.
- Evaluate each person according to the three criteria you identified.
- Which figure comes out as the better role model?
- If you ranked the criteria differently, would the other one come out ahead?
- What is most controversial in your evaluation? Is it the choice of criteria, the ranking of the criteria, or the idea that your figure fits certain criteria?

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5.8 CAUSAL AND PROPOSAL ARGUMENTS

Anna Mills and Darya Myers

Causal arguments attempt to make a case that one thing led to another. They answer the question "What caused it?" Causes are often complex and multiple. Before we choose a strategy for a causal argument, it can help to identify our purpose. Why do we need to know the cause? How will it help us?

Purposes of Causal Arguments

- To get a complete picture of how and why something happened: In this case, we will want to look for multiple causes, each of which may play a different role. Some might be background conditions, others might spark the event, and others may be influences that sped up the event once it got started. In this case, we often speak of near causes that are close in time or space to the event itself, and remote causes, which are further away or further in the past. We can also describe a chain of causes, with one thing leading to the next, which leads to the next. It may even be the case that we have a feedback loop where a first event causes a second event and the second event triggers more of the first, creating an endless circle of causation. For example, as sea ice melts in the arctic, the dark water absorbs more heat, which warms it further, which melts more ice, which makes the water absorb more heat, etc. If the results are bad, this is called a vicious circle.

- To decide who is responsible: Sometimes if an event has multiple causes, we may be most concerned with deciding who bears responsibility and how much. In a car accident, the driver might bear responsibility, and the car manufacturer might bear some as well. We will have to argue that the responsible party caused the event but we will also have to show that there was a moral obligation not to do what the party did. That implies some degree of choice and knowledge of possible consequences. If the driver was following all good driving regulations and triggered an explosion by activating the turn signal, clearly the driver cannot be held responsible.

- To figure out how to make something happen: In this case we need to zero in on a factor or factors that will push the event forward. Such a factor is sometimes called a precipitating cause. The success of this push will depend on circumstances being right for it, so we will likely also need to describe the conditions that have to be in place for the precipitating cause to actually precipitate the event. If there are likely factors that could block the event, we need to show that those can be eliminated. For example, if we propose a particular surgery to fix a heart problem, we will also need to show that the patient can get to a hospital that performs the surgery and get an appointment. We will certainly need to show that the patient is likely to tolerate the surgery.

- To stop something from happening: In this case, we do not need to describe all possible causes. We want to find a factor that is so necessary to the bad result that if we get rid of that factor, the result cannot occur. Then if we eliminate that factor, we can block the bad result. If we cannot find a single such factor, we may at least be able to find one that will make the bad result less likely. For example, to reduce wildfire risk in California, we cannot get rid of all fire whatsoever, but we can repair power lines and aging gas and electric infrastructure to reduce the risk that defects in this system will spark a fire. Or we could try to reduce the damage fires cause by focusing on clearing underbrush.

- To predict what might happen in the future: As Jeanne Fahnestock and Marie Secor put it in *A Rhetoric of Argument*, "when you argue for a prediction, you try to convince your reader that all the causes needed to bring about an event are in place or will fall into place." You also may need to show that nothing will intervene to block the event from happening. One common way to support a prediction is by comparing it to a past event that has already played out. For example, we might argue that humans have survived natural disasters in the past, so we will survive the effects of climate change as well. As Fahnestock and Secor point out, however, "the argument is only as good as the analogy, which sometimes must itself be supported." How comparable are the disasters of the past to the likely effects of climate change? The argument would need to describe both past and possible future events and convince us that they are similar in severity.

Techniques and Cautions for Causal Argument

So how does a writer make a case that one thing causes another? The briefest answer is that the writer needs to convince us that the factor and the event are correlated and also that there is some way in which the factor could plausibly lead to the event. Then the writer will need to convince us that they have done due diligence in considering and eliminating alternate possibilities for the cause and alternate explanations for any correlation between the factor and the event.

Identify Possible Causes

If other writers have already identified possible causes, an argument simply needs to refer back to those and add in any that have been missed. If not, the writer can put themselves in the role of detective and imagine what might have caused the event.

Determine Which Factor Is Most Correlated with the Event

If we think that a factor may commonly cause an event, the first question to ask is whether they go together. If we are looking for a sole cause, we can ask if the factor is always there when the event happens and always absent when the event doesn't happen. Do the factor and the event follow the same trends? The following methods of arguing for causality were developed by philosopher John Stuart Mill, and are often referred to as "Mill's methods."

- If the event is repeated and every time it happens, a common factor is present, that common factor may be the cause.
- If there is a single difference between cases where the event takes place and cases where it doesn't.
- If an event and a possible cause are repeated over and over and they happen to varying degrees, we can check whether they always increase and decrease together. This is often best done with a graph so we can visually check whether the lines follow the same pattern.
- Finally, ruling out other possible causes can support a case that the one remaining possible cause did in fact operate.

Explain How That Factor Could Have Caused the Event

In order to believe that one thing caused another, we usually need to have some idea of how the first thing could cause the second. If we cannot imagine how one would cause another, why should we find it plausible? If we are talking about human behavior, then we are looking for motivation: love, hate, envy, greed, desire for power, etc. If we are talking about a physical event, then we need to look at physical forces. Scientists have dedicated much research to establishing how carbon dioxide in the atmosphere could effectively trap heat and warm the planet.

If there is enough other evidence to show that one thing caused another but the way it happened is still unknown, the argument can note that and perhaps point toward further studies that would establish the mechanism. The writer may want to qualify their argument with "may" or "might" or "seems to indicate," if they cannot explain how the supposed cause led to the effect.

Eliminate Alternative Explanations

The catchphrase "correlation is not causation" can help us to remember the dangers of the methods above. It's usually easy to show that two things happen at the same time or in the same pattern, but hard to show that one actually causes another. Correlation can be a good reason to investigate whether something is the cause, and it can provide some evidence of causality, but it is not proof. Sometimes two unrelated things may be correlated, like the number of women in Congress and the price of milk. We can imagine that both might follow an upward trend, one because of the increasing equality of women in society and the other because of inflation. Describing a plausible agency, or way in which one thing led to another, can help show that the correlation is not random. If we find a strong correlation, we can imagine various causal arguments that would explain it and argue that the one we support has the most plausible agency.

Sometimes things vary together because there is a common cause that affects both of them. An argument can explore possible third factors that may have led to both events. For example, students who go to elite colleges tend to make more money than students who go to less elite colleges. Did the elite colleges make the difference? Or are both the college choice and the later earnings due to a third cause, such as family connections? In his book *Food Rules: An Eater's Manual*, journalist Michael Pollan assesses studies on the effects of supplements like multivitamins and concludes that people who take supplements are also those who have better diet and exercise habits and that the supplements themselves have no effect on health. He advises, "Be the kind of person who takes supplements—then skip the supplements."

If we have two phenomena that are correlated and happen at the same time, it's worth considering whether the second phenomenon could actually have caused the first rather than the other way around. For example, if we find that gun violence and violence within video games are both on the rise, we shouldn't leap to blame video games for the increase in shootings. It may be that people who play video games are being influenced by violence in the games and becoming more likely to go out and shoot people in real life. But could it also be that as gun violence increases in society for other reasons, such violence is a bigger part of people's consciousness, leading video game makers and gamers to incorporate more violence in their games? It might be that causality operates in both directions, creating a feedback loop as we discussed above.

Proving causality is tricky, and often even rigorous academic studies can do little more than suggest that causality is probable or possible. There are a host of laboratory and statistical methods for testing causality. The gold standard for an experiment to determine a cause is a double-blind, randomized control trial in which there are two groups of people randomly assigned. One group gets the drug being studied and one group gets the placebo, but neither the participants nor the researchers know which is which. This kind of study eliminates the effect of unconscious suggestion, but it is often not possible for ethical and logistical reasons.

The ins and outs of causal arguments are worth studying in a statistics course or a philosophy course, but even without such a course we can do a better job of assessing causes if we develop the habit of looking for alternate explanations.

Exercise

Reflect on the following to construct a causal argument. What would be the best intervention to introduce in society to reduce the rate of violent crime? Below are some possible causes of violent crime. Choose one and describe how it could lead to violent crime. Then think of a way to intervene in that process to stop it. What method from among those described in this section would you use to convince someone that your intervention would work to lower rates of violent crime? Make up an argument using your chosen method and the kind of evidence, either anecdotal or statistical, you would find convincing.

Possible causes of violent crime:

- Homophobia and transphobia
- PTSD
- Testosterone
- Child abuse
- Violence in the media
- Role models who exhibit toxic masculinity
- Depression
- Violent video games
- Systemic racism
- Lack of education on expressing emotions
- Unemployment
- Not enough law enforcement
- Economic inequality
- The availability of guns

Proposal Arguments

Proposal arguments attempt to push for action of some kind. They answer the question “What should be done about it?”

In order to build up to a proposal, an argument needs to incorporate elements of definition argument, evaluation argument, and causal argument. First, we will need to define a problem or a situation that calls for action. Then we need to make an evaluation argument to convince readers that the problem is bad enough to be worth addressing. This will create a sense of urgency within the argument and inspire the audience to seek and adopt the proposed action. In most cases, it will need to make causal arguments about the roots of the problem and the good effects of the proposed solution.

Common Elements of Proposal Arguments

Often just after the introduction, the background section discusses what has brought about the need for the proposal—what problem, what opportunity exists for improving things, what the basic situation is. For example, management of a chain of daycare centers may need to ensure that all employees know CPR because of new state mandates requiring it, or an owner of pine timberland in eastern Oregon may want to make sure the land can produce saleable timber without destroying the environment.

While the named audience of the proposal may know the problem very well, writing the background section is useful in demonstrating our particular view of the problem. If we cannot assume readers know the problem, we will need to spend more time convincing them that the problem or opportunity exists and that it should be addressed. For a larger audience not familiar with the problem, this section can give detailed context.

Description of the Proposed Solution

Here we define the nature of what we are proposing so readers can see what is involved in the proposed action. For example, if we write an essay proposing to donate food scraps from restaurants to pig farms, we will need to define what will be considered food scraps. In another example, if we argue that organic produce is inherently healthier for consumers than non-organic produce, and we propose governmental subsidies to reduce the cost of organic produce, we will need to define "organic" and describe how much the government subsidies will be and which products or consumers will be eligible. These examples illustrate the frequency with which different types of argument overlap within a single work.

Methods

If we have not already covered the proposal's methods in the description, we may want to add this. How will we go about completing the proposed work? For example, in the above example about food scraps, we would want to describe how the leftover food will be stored and delivered to the pig farms. Describing the methods shows the audience we have a sound, thoughtful approach to the project. It serves to demonstrate that we have the knowledge of the field to complete the project.

Feasibility of the Project

A proposal argument needs to convince readers that the project can actually be accomplished. How can enough time, money, and will be found to make it happen? Have similar proposals been carried out successfully in the past? For example, we might observe that according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Rutgers University runs a program that sends a ton of food scraps a day from its dining halls to a local farm. If we describe how other efforts overcame obstacles, we will persuade readers that if they can succeed, this proposal can as well.

Benefits of the Proposal

Most proposals discuss the advantages or benefits that will come from the solution proposed. Describing the benefits helps you win the audience to your side, so readers become more invested in adopting your proposed solution. In the food scraps example, we might emphasize that the Rutgers program, rather than costing more, led to $100,000 a year in savings because the dining halls no longer needed to pay to have the food scraps hauled away. We could calculate the predicted savings for our new proposed program as well.

In order to predict the positive effects of the proposal and show how implementing it will lead to good results, we will want to use causal arguments.

Sample Annotated Proposal Argument

The sample essay “Why We Should Open Our Borders” by student Laurent Wenjun Jiang can serve as an example. Annotations point out how Jiang uses several proposal argument strategies.

- Sample proposal essay “Why We Should Open Our Borders” in PDF with margin notes

Exercise

Browse news and opinion websites to find a proposal argument that you strongly support. Once you have chosen a proposal, read it closely and look for the elements discussed in this section. Do you find enough discussion of the background, methods, feasibility, and benefits of the proposal?

Discuss at least one way in which you think the proposal could be revised to be even more convincing.

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5.9 ARGUMENTATIVE REASONING

Adam Falik

Once you have clearly articulated a thesis, you need to support that claim with reasons. Reasons answer the question, Why should the claim be? Reasons justify the claim and, in an argument, support the claim's validity.

The reasons for an argument should follow a "because." That "because" can either be present or implied. Consider this example:

College athletes should be paid [Claim] because they generate income for their school [Reason] while being unable to obtain employment of their own due to the demands of academic and athletic schedules. [Reason]

Reasons are the backbone of your argument. Your argumentative paper will be mostly comprised of the articulation of your claim, an explanation of reasons, and evidence that backs up your reasons.

Not All Reasons Are the Same

Not all reasons are of equal validity. The truth is that some of your reasons may be more urgent or stronger than others. Let's say you make the rather simple claim that a cigarette smoker should quit smoking. Your claim, a cigarette smoker should break the habit and quit smoking, can be supported by (at a minimum) three reasons:

1) Smoking is damaging for one's health
2) Second-hand smoking is damaging to other people's health
3) Cigarette butts have a negative environmental impact on the planet

It can be argued that compared to the risk of heart disease, emphysema, and lung cancer threatening habitual cigarette smokers, as well as the health dangers to those who are impacted by second-hand smoke, the environmental impact of cigarette butts is of lesser value. And that might be true. Though the majority of this paper might be focused on health risks, the environmental impact is still significant and warrants inclusion in the paper. The point is that not all reasons are equal in value, and not all reasons will be supported with equal amounts of evidence.

There is no exact number of reasons that should be included in support of a claim, just as there is no precise number of cited evidence that should support a reason. Generally, quality will reign over quantity. A few strong reasons that are supported by credible evidence are better than lots of reasons that are either unsupported by evidence or supported by weaker evidence.

5.10 SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Amanda Lloyd; Adam Falik; and Doreen Piano

Adding Supporting Evidence to Body Paragraphs

Supporting your ideas effectively is essential to establishing your credibility as a writer, so you should choose your supporting evidence wisely and clearly explain it to your audience.

Present your supporting evidence in the form of paraphrases and direct quotations. Quotations should be used sparingly; that said, direct quotations are often handy when you would like to illustrate a particularly well-written passage or draw attention to an author's use of tone, diction, or syntax that would likely become lost in a paraphrase.

Types of support might include the following:

- Statistics and data
- Research studies and scholarship
- Hypothetical and real-life examples
- Historical facts
- Analogies
- Precedents
- Laws
- Case histories
- Expert testimonies or opinions
- Eye-witness accounts
- Applicable personal experiences or anecdotes

Varying your means of support will lend further credibility to your essay and help to maintain your reader's interest. Keep in mind, though, that some types of support are more appropriate for certain academic disciplines than for others.

Remember that in an argumentative paper, your evidence supports your reason. In the paragraph referred to above with the topic sentence "College athletes often bring in a great deal of income to their college and university through sponsorships," your evidence might be data and statistics of athletes who have brought in sponsorship deals from which their colleges and universities have profited.

Direct quotations and paraphrases must be integrated effortlessly and documented appropriately.

Providing Context for Supporting Evidence

Before introducing your supporting evidence, it may occasionally be necessary to provide some context for that information. You should assume that your audience has not read your source texts in their entirety, if at all, so including some background or connecting material between your topic sentence and supporting evidence is frequently essential.

The information contained in your evidence selection might need to be introduced, explained, or defined so that your supporting evidence is perfectly clear to an audience unfamiliar with the source material. For example, your supporting evidence might contain a reference to a concept or term that is not explained or defined in the excerpt or elsewhere in your essay. In this instance, you would need to provide some clarification for your audience. Anticipating your audience is particularly important when incorporating supporting evidence into your essay.

Now that we have a good idea of what it means to develop support for the main ideas of your paragraphs, let's talk about how to make sure that those supporting details are solid and convincing.

Good vs. Weak Support

When you're developing paragraphs, you should already have a plan for your essay, at least at the most basic level. You know what your topic is, you have a working claim, and you have at least a couple of supporting ideas/reasons in mind that will further develop and support your claim. You need to make sure that the support that you develop for these ideas is solid. Understanding and appealing to your audience can also be helpful in determining what your readers will consider good support and what they'll consider to be weak. Here are some tips on what to strive for and what to avoid when it comes to supporting evidence.

Good Support

- is relevant and focused (sticks to the point)
- is well developed
- provides sufficient detail
- is vivid and descriptive
- is well organized
- is coherent and consistent
- highlights key terms and ideas

Weak Support

- lacks a clear connection to the point that it's meant to support

- lacks development
- lacks detail or gives too much detail
- is vague and imprecise
- lacks organization
- seems disjointed (ideas don't clearly relate to each other)
- lacks emphasis of key terms and ideas

How Much Evidence Do I Need?

Students often ask: How much evidence do I need? The answer is: You need exactly the amount of evidence that makes your reason supportable.

In other words: There is no exact quantity of direct and indirect quotations you should be providing. What matters is that you've supported your idea/reason with good enough support to convince your reader of the integrity of your reason.

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5.11 EXPLAINING EVIDENCE

Amanda Lloyd; Adam Falik; and Doreen Piano

Remember not to conclude your body paragraphs with supporting evidence. Rather than assuming that the evidence you have provided speaks for itself, it is important to explain why that evidence proves or supports the key idea you present in your topic sentence and (ultimately) the claim you make in your thesis statement.

This explanation can appear in one or more of the following forms:

- Analysis
- Evaluation
- Relevance or significance
- Comparison or contrast
- Cause and effect
- Refutation or concession
- Suggested action or conclusion
- Proposal of further study
- Personal reaction

Try to avoid simply repeating the source material in a different way or using phrases like "This quote means" to begin your explanation. Keep in mind that your voice should control your essay and guide your audience to a greater understanding of the source material's relevance to your claim. Also, be mindful of the rhythm of your body paragraphs and the placement of your evidence. Try not to structure the same paragraphs over and over with a topic sentence, a quote, then the explanation of that quote. Seek variety. Paragraphs that repeat themselves in structures run the risk of boring readers.

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5.12 FAILURES IN EVIDENCE: WHEN EVEN "LOTS OF QUOTES" CAN'T SAVE A PAPER

Emilie Zickel

In a strong essay, the author or writer's own thesis and reasoning drive the argument, and then credible, valid evidence is used to support that reasoning. Arguments, in particular, are interactions between writer and audience. The author wants to persuade the audience to accept his or her claim, so he or she tries to provide sufficient compelling evidence that will sway the audience to his or her perspective.

Research questions might be easy to come up with. Claims or thesis statements can be easy to come up with. Even reasons or ideas to support the thesis or claim may be fairly easy to come up with. But for your ideas in a paper to be valid, for them to be accepted by a reader, they must be supported and developed with solid, credible, sufficient, accurate, relevant, and compelling evidence.

Evidence is not simply "a bunch of quotes." Nor is evidence a bunch of facts or statistics from an article, no matter how credible that article may be. For evidence to truly work in the sense of supporting a thesis/claim, it has to be accurate, sufficient to prove your point, directly related to the reason, ethically chosen, current, and credible. That is a lot to think about. It is certainly more than "a quote that looks good."

Here are some things to think about avoiding when attempting to develop a strong source-based essay. Just as understanding what logical fallacies are so you can avoid them in your own writing, understanding what weak evidence is can help you to avoid falling into the trap of using it in your own work.

Failures in evidence occur when a reader says, "I do not accept your evidence." Here is why that might happen:

- The evidence that you have provided is inaccurate: You've misread information or misquoted; you are not interpreting the quoted material in an accurate manner.
- The evidence that you have provided is insufficient: You are using just a small piece of evidence to support your reasoning. You need more. You probably have a "generalization" fallacy.
- The evidence that you have provided is unrelated to the reason: Your evidence does not clearly or directly relate to the point that you are trying to make.
- The evidence that you have provided is incomplete or too narrowly chosen: You have "cherry picked" certain examples or pieces of information to the exclusion of others, so while you do have evidence to support your point, you are also neglecting a lot of other information.
- The evidence that you have provided is old: The information that you are citing is not relevant anymore. It is outdated!
- The evidence that you have provided does not come from an authoritative source: The source of your

evidence is not credible; the person being cited is not an authority on the topic.

One of the bigger issues with evidence is not so much with the evidence itself, but with the way that you integrate it into the paper. A reader needs to understand clearly how and why the evidence you chose relates to the point that you are making. Remember, evidence must always be explained. When you integrate evidence into your papers, it is important to answer the question, “How does this evidence support the point that I am making?” Never assume that the reader sees what you see in your evidence. Always clarify how the evidence supports your reasoning.

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5.13 COUNTERARGUMENT AND RESPONSE

Robin Jeffrey and Adam Falik

A counterargument asks, But what about other perspectives? Are there opinions or even data that support an argument different (counter) to my own? As one researches an argument, it becomes evident that there most always a counterargument that could be made. If your claim is that there should be more laws protecting consumers, someone else is arguing that deregulation is what's more necessary in a free market.

One question that students have is: Is it necessary to include every counterargument in my paper? The answer is: It depends. Anticipating a counterargument and demonstrating that the counterargument does not diminish your own claim is a powerful argumentative tool. At the same time, spending your essay defending your claim against every counterclaim is not an effective way to earn agreement.

Here are some ways counterarguments can be used effectively:

- to summarize opposing views
- to explain how and where you agree with some opposing views while demonstrating that the counterargument does not diminish your own claim.

You must be careful that you are not conveying to a reader that you are NOT rejecting your own claim.

Why Respond to Counterarguments?

Just as it is important to include counterarguments to show that you are fair-minded and balanced, you must respond to the counterargument so that a reader clearly sees that you are not agreeing with the counterargument and thus abandoning or somehow undermining your own claim. You can:

- concede to a specific point or idea from the counterargument by explaining why that point or idea has validity. However, you must then be sure to return to your own claim and explain why even that concession does not lead you to completely accept or support the counterargument.
- reject the counterargument if you find it to be incorrect, fallacious, or otherwise invalid.
- explain why the counterargument perspective does not invalidate your own.

A note about where to put the counterargument:

Some people prefer to have their counterargument right at the start of their essay where they can address it, then spend the rest of their essay building their own case and supporting their own claim. However, it is just as valid to have the counterargument + response appear at the end of the paper, after you have discussed all of your reasons.

It is important to remember that wherever you place your counterargument, you should address it fully.

Address the counterargument(s) fully:

- Explain what the counter perspectives are. Describe them thoroughly. Cite authors who have these counter perspectives.
- Quote them and summarize their thinking.
- Then, respond to these counterarguments.
- Make it clear to the reader of your argument why you concede to certain points of the counterargument or why you reject them. Make it clear that you do not accept the counterargument, even though you understand it. Be sure to use transition phrases that make this clear to your reader.

Counterarguments may include ideas from:

- Someone who disagrees with your claim.
- Someone who draws a different conclusion from any of the facts or examples you present. If so, what is that different conclusion? Explain this different conclusion and then respond to it.
- Someone who questions any of your assumptions or claims? If so, which ones would they question? Explain then respond.
- Someone who offers a different explanation of an issue? If so, what might their explanation be? Describe this different explanation then respond to it.
- Someone who questions the evidence you use to support your claim, or who cites different evidence.

Disagreement does not necessarily mean that you have a weak argument. Good arguments can and do have counterarguments; it is important to discuss them. But if you address a counterargument, you must also respond to them.

How to respond to counterarguments:

- If you agree with some of the counterargument perspectives, you can concede some of their points. ("I

do agree that…," "Some of the points made by are valid.…") You could then challenge the importance/usefulness of those points. "However, this information does not apply to our topic because…"
- If the counterargument perspective is one that contains different evidence than you have in your own argument, you can explain why a reader should not accept the evidence that the counterargument presents.
- If the counterargument perspective is one that contains a different interpretation of evidence than you have in your own argument, you can explain why a reader should not accept the interpretation of the evidence that your opponent (counter-arguer) presents.
- If the counterargument is an acknowledgment of evidence that threatens to weaken your argument, you can explain why and how that evidence does not, in fact, invalidate your claim.

Using transitional phrases in your paper alerts readers when you're about to present a counterargument. It's usually best to put this phrase at the beginning of a paragraph. For example:

- Researchers have challenged these claims with…
- Critics argue that this view…
- Some readers may point to…
- A perspective that challenges the idea that . . .

Transitional phrases will again be useful to highlight your shift from counterargument to response:

- Indeed, some of those points are valid. However, . . .
- While I agree that . . . , it is more important to consider . . .
- These are all compelling points. Still, other information suggests that…
- While I understand . . . , I cannot accept the evidence because . . .

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CHAPTER 6: STRUCTURING, PARAGRAPHING, AND STYLING

6.1 BASIC ESSAY STRUCTURE

Emilie Zickel; Charlotte Morgan; Adam Falik; and Doreen Piano

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Essays written for an academic audience follow a structure with which you are likely familiar: Intro, Body, Conclusion. Here is a general overview of what each of those sections "does" in the larger essay.

Be aware, however, that certain assignments and certain professors may ask for additional content or require unusual formatting, so always be sure to read the assignment sheet as carefully as possible.

Introductory Section

This paragraph is the "first impression" paragraph. It needs to make an impression on the reader so that he or she becomes interested, understands your goal in the paper, and wants to read on. The intro often ends with the thesis.

- Begin by drawing your reader in—offer a statement that will pique their interest in your topic.
- Offer some context or background information about your topic that leads you to your thesis.
- Conclude with the thesis.

Body of the Essay

The body of the essay is where you fully develop the main idea or thesis outlined in the introduction. Each paragraph within the body of the essay enlarges one major point in the development of the overall argument (although some points may consist of several sub-points, each of which will need its own paragraph). Each paragraph should contain the following elements:

- Clearly state the main point in each paragraph in the form of a **topic sentence.**
- Then, support that point with evidence.
- Provide an explanation of the evidence's significance. Highlight the way the main point shows the logical steps in the argument and link back to the claim you make in your thesis statement.

Remember to make sure that you focus on a single idea, reason, or example that supports your thesis in each body paragraph. Your topic sentence (a mini thesis that states the main idea of the paragraph) should contain details and specific examples to make your ideas clear and convincing (Morgan).

Conclusion

Many people struggle with the conclusion, not knowing how to end a paper without simply restating the paper's thesis and main points. In fact, one of the earliest ways that we learn to write conclusions involves the "summarize and restate" method of repeating the points that you have already discussed.

While that method can be an effective way to perhaps begin a conclusion, the strongest conclusions will go beyond rehashing the key ideas from the paper. Just as the intro is the first impression, the conclusion is the last impression—and you do want your writing to make a lasting impression.

Below are some things to consider when writing your conclusion:

- What is the significance of the ideas you developed in this paper?
- How does your paper affect you, others like you, people in your community, or people in other communities?

- What must be done about this topic?
- What further research or ideas could be studied?

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6.2 BODY PARAGRAPHS: AN OVERVIEW

Amanda Lloyd

Body Paragraph Development

The term body paragraph refers to any paragraph that appears between the introductory and concluding sections of an essay. A good body paragraph should support the claim made in the thesis statement by developing only one key supporting idea.

Some ideas will take more time to develop than others, so body paragraph length can and often should vary in order to maintain your reader's interest. When constructing a body paragraph, the most important objectives are to stay on-topic and to fully develop your idea. When constructing a body paragraph, make sure that you never begin or end with a quotation or a paraphrase. Rather, you should think of a body paragraph as conforming to the following pattern.

Typically, a body paragraph contains three main elements:

1. a main idea,
2. supporting evidence, and
3. an explanation of that evidence.

While body paragraphs in some essay assignments (certain summary assignments, for example) may not adhere to this pattern exactly, for the most part, following this basic formula will help you to construct a focused and complete body paragraph.

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6.3 TOPIC SENTENCES

Amanda Lloyd

Function and Elements of a Topic Sentence

A topic sentence is usually the first sentence of a body paragraph. The purpose of a topic sentence is to identify the topic of your paragraph and indicate the function of that paragraph in some way. The topic sentence is often more conceptual than the rest of the paragraph in that it provides the idea of what the rest of the paragraph will be about without the supporting details, which will arrive in the sentences that follow.

In order to create an effective topic sentence, you should do the following:

- Use a transitional device to effortlessly segue from the idea discussed in the previous paragraph.

When choosing a transitional device, you should consider whether your new paragraph will build onto the topic of your previous paragraph, begin to develop a new key idea or sub-claim, or present a counterargument or concession.

- Clearly identify the key idea or reason that you intend to expand upon in your new paragraph.

Even if you are building onto the idea of the previous paragraph, you will still need to identify the sub-claim in your topic sentence. When constructing a topic sentence, you may feel as though you are stating the obvious or being repetitive, but your readers will need this information to guide them to a thorough understanding of your ideas.

- Make a connection to the claim you make in your thesis statement.

It might help to think of your topic sentence as a mini thesis statement. In your body paragraph, you should be expanding upon the claim you make in your thesis. For this reason, you should link your topic sentence to your thesis statement. Doing so tells your readers, “This is the point I mentioned in my thesis that I now intend to support and either prove or explain further.”

To connect to your thesis, you should consider the function of the body paragraph, which will usually depend upon the type of essay you are writing; for example, your topic sentence should suggest whether your goal is to inform or persuade your readers (your topic sentence should indicate whether or not you have an opinion or perspective on the topic).

Here's an example. If you are writing an argumentative paper with the claim "Collegiate athletes should be paid to play for their school teams," then a strong topic sentence might be "College athletes often bring in a great deal of income to their college and university through sponsorships." This topic sentence is a reason which supports the claim. The rest of your paragraph will develop details and give evidence that supports this reason.

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6.4 BREAKING, COMBINING, OR BEGINNING NEW PARAGRAPHS

Melanie Gagich & Emilie Zickel

Paragraph Flow

Like sentence length, paragraph length varies. There is no single ideal length for "the perfect paragraph." There are some general guidelines, however. Some writing handbooks or resources suggest that a paragraph should be at least three or four sentences; others suggest that 100 to 200 words is a good target to shoot for. In academic writing, paragraphs tend to be longer, while in less formal or less complex writing, such as in a newspaper, paragraphs tend to be much shorter. Two-thirds to three-fourths of a page is usually a good target length for paragraphs at your current level of college writing. If your readers can't see a paragraph break on the page, they might wonder if the paragraph is ever going to end or they might lose interest.

The most important thing to keep in mind here is that the amount of space needed to develop one idea will likely be different than the amount of space needed to develop another. So when is a paragraph complete? The answer is, when it's fully developed. The guidelines above for providing good support should help.

Some signals that it's time to end a paragraph and start a new one include that

- You're ready to begin developing a new idea
- You want to emphasize a point by setting it apart
- You're getting ready to continue discussing the same idea but in a different way (e.g., shifting from comparison to contrast)
- You notice that your current paragraph is getting too long (more than three-fourths of a page or so), and you think your writers will need a visual break

Some signals that you may want to combine paragraphs include that

- You notice that some of your paragraphs appear to be short and choppy
- You have multiple paragraphs on the same topic
- You have undeveloped material that needs to be united under a clear topic

Finally, paragraph number is a lot like paragraph length. You may have been asked in the past to write a five-paragraph essay. There's nothing inherently wrong with a five-paragraph essay, but just like sentence length and paragraph length, the number of paragraphs in an essay depends upon what's needed to get the job done. There's really no way to know that until you start writing. So try not to worry too much about the proper length and number of things. Just start writing and see where the essay and the paragraphs take you. There will be plenty of time to sort out the organization in the revision process. You're not trying to fit pegs into holes here. You're letting your ideas unfold. Give yourself—and them—the space to let that happen.

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6.5 TRANSITIONS: DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN IDEAS

Melanie Gagich & Emilie Zickel

Transitioning

So you have a main idea, and you have supporting ideas, but how can you be sure that your readers will understand the relationships between them? How are the ideas tied to each other? One way to emphasize these relationships is through the use of clear transitions between ideas. Like every other part of your essay, transitions have a job to do. They form logical connections between the ideas presented in an essay or paragraph, and they give readers clues that reveal how you want them to think about (process, organize, or use) the topics presented.

Why Are Transitions Important?

Transitions signal the order of ideas, highlight relationships, unify concepts, and let readers know what's coming next or remind them about what's already been covered. When instructors or peers comment that your writing is choppy, abrupt, or needs to "flow better," those are some signals that you might need to work on building some better transitions into your writing. If a reader comments that she's not sure how something relates to your thesis or main idea, a transition is probably the right tool for the job.

When Is the Right Time to Build in Transitions?

There's no right answer to this question. Sometimes transitions occur spontaneously, but just as often (or maybe even more often), good transitions are developed in revision. While drafting, we often write what we think, sometimes without much reflection about how the ideas fit together or relate to one another. If your thought process jumps around a lot (and that's okay), it's more likely that you will need to pay careful attention to reorganization and to providing solid transitions as you revise.

When you're working on building transitions into an essay, consider the essay's overall organization.

Consider using reverse outlining and other organizational strategies presented in this text to identify key ideas in your essay and to get a clearer look at how the ideas can be best organized. See the "Reverse Outlining" section in the "Revision" portion of this text, for a great strategy to help you assess what's going on in your essay and to help you see what topics and organization are developing. This can help you determine where transitions are needed.

Let's take some time to consider the importance of transitions at the sentence level and transitions between paragraphs.

Sentence-Level Transitions

Transitions between sentences often use "connecting words" to emphasize relationships between one sentence and another. A friend and coworker suggests the "something old something new" approach, meaning that the idea behind a transition is to introduce something new while connecting it to something old from an earlier point in the essay or paragraph. Here are some examples of ways that writers use connecting words (highlighted with red text and italicized) to show connections between ideas in adjacent sentences:

To Show Similarity

When I was growing up, my mother taught me to say "please" and "thank you" as one small way that I could show appreciation and respect for others. In the same way, I have tried to impress the importance of manners on my own children.

Other connecting words that show similarity include also, similarly, and likewise.

To Show Contrast

Some scientists take the existence of black holes for granted; however, in 2014, a physicist at the University of North Carolina claimed to have mathematically proven that they do not exist.

Other connecting words that show contrast include in spite of, on the other hand, in contrast, and yet.

To Exemplify

The cost of college tuition is higher than ever, so students are becoming increasingly motivated to keep costs as low as possible. For example, a rising number of students are signing up to spend their first two years at a less costly community college before transferring to a more expensive four-year school to finish their degrees.

Other connecting words that show examples include for instance, specifically, and to illustrate.

To Show Cause and Effect

Where previously painters had to grind and mix their own dry pigments with linseed oil inside their studios, in the 1840s, new innovations in pigments allowed paints to be premixed in tubes. Consequently, this new technology facilitated the practice of painting outdoors and was a crucial tool for impressionist painters, such as Monet, Cezanne, Renoir, and Cassatt.

Other connecting words that show cause and effect include therefore, so, and thus.

To Show Additional Support

When choosing a good trail bike, experts recommend 120–140 millimeters of suspension travel; that's the amount that the frame or fork is able to flex or compress. Additionally, they recommend a 67–69 degree head-tube angle, as a steeper head-tube angle allows for faster turning and climbing.

Other connecting words that show additional support include also, besides, equally important, and in addition.

A Word of Caution

Single-word or short-phrase transitions can be helpful to signal a shift in ideas within a paragraph, rather than between paragraphs (see the discussion below about transitions between paragraphs). But it's also important to understand that these types of transitions shouldn't be frequent within a paragraph. As with anything else that happens in your writing, they should be used when they feel natural and feel like the right choice. Here are some examples to help you see the difference between transitions that feel like they occur naturally and transitions that seem forced and make the paragraph awkward to read:

Too Many Transitions: The Impressionist painters of the late 19th century are well known for their visible brush strokes, for their ability to convey a realistic sense of light, and for their everyday subjects portrayed in outdoor settings. In spite of this fact, many casual admirers of their work are unaware of the scientific innovations that made it possible for this movement in art to take place. Then, In 1841, an American painter named John Rand invented the collapsible paint tube. To illustrate the importance of this invention, pigments previously had to be ground and mixed in a fairly complex process that made it difficult for artists to travel with them. For example, the mixtures were commonly stored in pieces of pig bladder to keep the paint from drying out. In addition, when working with their palettes, painters had to puncture the bladder, squeeze out some paint, and then mend the bladder again to keep the rest of the paint mixture from drying out. Thus, Rand's collapsible tube freed the painters from these cumbersome and messy processes, allowing artists to be more mobile and to paint in the open air.

Subtle Transitions that Aid Reader Understanding: The Impressionist painters of the late 19th century are well known for their visible brush strokes, for their ability to convey a realistic sense of light, for their

everyday subjects portrayed in outdoor settings. However, many casual admirers of their work are unaware of the scientific innovations that made it possible for this movement in art to take place. In 1841, an American painter named John Rand invented the collapsible paint tube. Before this invention, pigments had to be ground and mixed in a fairly complex process that made it difficult for artists to travel with them. The mixtures were commonly stored in pieces of pig bladder to keep the paint from drying out. When working with their palettes, painters had to puncture the bladder, squeeze out some paint, and then mend the bladder again to keep the rest of the paint mixture from drying out. Rand's collapsible tube freed the painters from these cumbersome and messy processes, allowing artists to be more mobile and to paint in the open air.

Transitions between Paragraphs and Sections

It's important to consider how to emphasize the relationships not just between sentences but also between paragraphs in your essay. Here are a few strategies to help you show your readers how the main ideas of your paragraphs relate to each other and also to your thesis.

Use Signposts

Signposts are words or phrases that indicate where you are in the process of organizing an idea; for example, signposts might indicate that you are introducing a new concept, that you are summarizing an idea, or that you are concluding your thoughts. Some of the most common signposts include words and phrases like first, then, next, finally, in sum, and in conclusion. Be careful not to overuse these types of transitions in your writing. Your readers will quickly find them tiring or too obvious. Instead, think of more creative ways to let your readers know where they are situated within the ideas presented in your essay. You might say, "The first problem with this practice is…" Or you might say, "The next thing to consider is…" Or you might say, "Some final thoughts about this topic are…."

Use Forward-Looking Sentences at the End of Paragraphs

Sometimes, as you conclude a paragraph, you might want to give your readers a hint about what's coming next. For example, imagine that you're writing an essay about the benefits of trees to the environment and you've just wrapped up a paragraph about how trees absorb pollutants and provide oxygen. You might conclude with a forward-looking sentence like this: "Trees' benefits to local air quality are important, but surely they have more to offer our communities than clean air." This might conclude a paragraph (or series of paragraphs) and then prepare your readers for additional paragraphs to come that cover the topics of trees' shade value and ability to slow water evaporation on hot summer days. This transitional strategy can be tricky to employ smoothly.

Make sure that the conclusion of your paragraph doesn't sound like you're leaving your readers hanging with the introduction of a completely new or unrelated topic.

Use Backward-Looking Sentences at the Beginning of Paragraphs

Rather than concluding a paragraph by looking forward, you might instead begin a paragraph by looking back. Continuing with the example above of an essay about the value of trees, let's think about how we might begin a new paragraph or section by first taking a moment to look back. Maybe you just concluded a paragraph on the topic of trees' ability to decrease soil erosion and you're getting ready to talk about how they provide habitats for urban wildlife. Beginning the opening of a new paragraph or section of the essay with a backward-looking transition might look something like this: "While their benefits to soil and water conservation are great, the value that trees provide to our urban wildlife also cannot be overlooked."

Evaluate Transitions for Predictability or Conspicuousness

Finally, the most important thing about transitions is that you don't want them to become repetitive or too obvious. Reading your draft aloud is a great revision strategy for so many reasons, and revising your essay for transitions is no exception to this rule. If you read your essay aloud, you're likely to hear the areas that sound choppy or abrupt. This can help you make note of areas where transitions need to be added. Repetition is another problem that can be easier to spot if you read your essay aloud. If you notice yourself using the same transitions over and over again, take time to find some alternatives. And if the transitions frequently stand out as you read aloud, you may want to see if you can find some subtler strategies.

Exercises

Try Out Some New Transition Strategies

Choose an essay or piece of writing, either that you're currently working on, or that you've written in the past. Identify your major topics or main ideas. Then, using this chapter, develop at least three examples of sentence-level transitions and at least two examples of paragraph-level transitions. Share and discuss with your classmates in small groups, and choose one example of each type from your group to share with the whole class. If you like the results, you might use them to revise your writing. If not, try some other strategies.

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6.6 INTROS AND OUTROS

Amy Guptill

In today's world …

Those opening words—so common in student papers—represent the most prevalent misconception about introductions: that they shouldn't really say anything substantive. The five-paragraph format that most students mastered before coming to college suggests that introductory paragraphs should start very general and gradually narrow down to the thesis. As a result, students frequently write introductions for college papers in which the first two or three (or more) sentences are patently obvious or overly broad. Charitable and well-rested instructors just skim over that text and start reading closely when they arrive at something substantive. Frustrated and overtired instructors emit a dramatic self-pitying sigh, assuming that the whole paper will be as lifeless and gassy as those first few sentences. If you've gotten into the habit of beginning opening sentences with the following phrases, firmly resolve to strike them from your repertoire right now:

In today's world…

Throughout human history…

Since the dawn of time…

Webster's Dictionary defines [CONCEPT] as …

For one thing, sentences that begin with the first three stems are often wrong. For example, someone may write, "Since the dawn of time, people have tried to increase crop yields." In reality, people have not been trying to increase crop yields throughout human history—agriculture is only about 23,000 years old, after all—and certainly not since the dawn of time (whenever that was) (Stanford Humanities Center). For another, sentences that start so broadly, even when factually correct, could not possibly end with anything interesting.

I started laughing when I first read this chapter because my go-to introduction for every paper was always "Throughout history…" In high school it was true—my first few sentences did not have any meaning. Now I understand it should be the exact opposite. Introductions should scream to your readers, HEY GUYS, READ THIS! I don't want my readers' eyes to glaze over before they even finish the first paragraph, do you? And how annoying is it to read a bunch of useless sentences anyways, right? Every sentence should be necessary and you should set your papers with a good start.

Aly Button

So what should you do? Well, start at the beginning. By that I mean, start explaining what the reader needs to know to comprehend your thesis and its importance. For example, compare the following two paragraphs:

Five-Paragraph Theme Version:

Throughout time, human societies have had religion. Major world religions since the dawn of civilization include Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Animism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. These and all other religions provide a set of moral principles, a leadership structure, and an explanation for unknown questions such as what happens after people die. Since the dawn of religion, it has always been opposed to science because one is based on faith and the other on reason. However, the notion of embodied cognition is a place where physical phenomena connect with religious ones. Paradoxically, religion can emphasize a deep involvement in reality, an embodied cognition that empowers followers to escape from physical constraints and reach a new spirituality. Religion carefully constructs a physical environment to synthesize an individual's memories, emotions, and physical actions, in a manner that channels the individual's cognitive state towards spiritual transcendence.

Organically Structured Version:

> Religion is an endeavor to cultivate freedom from bodily constraints to reach a higher state of being beyond the physical constraints of reality. But how is it possible to employ a system, the human body, to transcend its own limitations? Religion and science have always had an uneasy relationship as empiricism is stretched to explain religious phenomena, but psychology has recently added a new perspective to the discussion. Embodiment describes the interaction between humans and the environment that lays a foundation for cognition and can help explain the mechanisms that underlie religion's influence on believers. This is a rare moment where science and religion are able to coexist without the familiar controversy. Paradoxically, religion can emphasize a deep involvement in reality, an embodied cognition that empowers followers to escape from physical constraints and reach a new spirituality. Religion carefully constructs a physical environment to synthesize an individual's memories, emotions, and physical actions, in a manner that channels the individual's cognitive state towards spiritual transcendence (Seet).

In the first version, the first three sentences state well-known facts that do not directly relate to the thesis. The fourth sentence is where the action starts, though that sentence ("Since the dawn of religion, it has always been opposed to science because one is based on faith and the other on reason") is still overstated: when was this "dawn of religion"? And was there "science," as we now understand it, at that time? The reader has to slog through to the fifth sentence before the intro starts to develop some momentum.

Training in the five-paragraph theme format seems to have convinced some student writers that beginning with substantive material will be too abrupt for the reader. But the second example shows that a meatier beginning isn't jarring; it is actually much more engaging. The first sentence of the organic example is somewhat general, but it specifies the particular aspect of religion (transcending physical experience) that is germane to the thesis. The next six sentences lay out the ideas and concepts that explain the thesis, which is provided in the last two sentences. Overall, every sentence is needed to thoroughly frame the thesis. It is a lively paragraph in itself, and it piques the reader's interest in the author's original thinking about religion.

Sometimes a vague introductory paragraph reflects a simple, obvious thesis and a poorly thought-out paper. More often, though, a shallow introduction represents a missed opportunity to convey the writer's depth of thought from the get-go. Students adhering to the five-paragraph theme format sometimes assume that such vagueness is needed to book-end an otherwise pithy paper. As you can see from these examples, that is simply untrue. I've seen some student writers begin with a vague, high-school-style intro (thinking it obligatory) and then write a wonderfully vivid and engaging introduction as their second paragraph. Other papers I've seen have an interesting, original thesis embedded in late body paragraphs that should be articulated up front and used to shape the whole body. If you must write a vague "since the dawn of time" intro to get the writing process going, then go ahead. Just budget the time to rewrite the intro around your well-developed, arguable thesis and ensure that the body paragraphs are organized explicitly by your analytical thread.

Here are two more examples of excellent introductory paragraphs written by undergraduate students in different fields. Note how, in both cases, (1) the first sentence has real substance, (2) every sentence is indispensable to setting up the thesis, and (3) the thesis is complex and somewhat surprising. Both of these introductory paragraphs set an ambitious agenda for the paper. As a reader, it's pretty easy to imagine how the body paragraphs that follow will progress through the nuanced analysis needed to carry out the thesis:

From Davis O'Connell's "Abelard":

> He rebelled against his teacher, formed his own rival school, engaged in a passionate affair with a teenager, was castrated, and became a monk. All in a day's work. Perhaps it's no surprise that Peter Abelard gained the title of "heretic" along the way. A 12th-century philosopher and theologian, Abelard tended to alienate nearly everyone he met with his extremely arrogant and egotistical personality. This very flaw is what led him to start preaching to students that he had stolen from his former master, which further deteriorated his reputation. Yet despite all of the senseless things that he did, his teachings did not differ much from Christian doctrine. Although the church claimed to have branded Abelard a heretic purely because of his religious views, the other underlying reasons for these accusations involve his conceited personality, his relationship with the 14-year-old Heloise, and the political forces of the 12th century.

From Logan Skelly's "Staphylococcus aureus":

> Bacterial resistance to antibiotics is causing a crisis in modern healthcare. The evolution of multi-drug resistant Staphylococcus aureus is of particular concern because of the morbidity and mortality it causes, the limited treatment options it poses, and the difficulty in implementing containment measures for its control. In order to appreciate the virulence of S. aureus and to help alleviate the problems its resistance is causing, it is important to study the evolution of antibiotic resistance in this pathogen, the

> mechanisms of its resistance, and the factors that may limit or counteract its evolution. It is especially important to examine how human actions are causing evolutionary changes in this bacterial species. This review will examine the historical sequence of causation that has led to antibiotic resistance in this microorganism and why natural selection favors the resistant trait. It is the goal of this review to illuminate the scope of the problem produced by antibiotic resistance in S. aureus and to illustrate the need for judicious antibiotic usage to prevent this pathogen from evolving further pathogenicity and virulence.

If vague introductory paragraphs are bad, why were you taught them? In essence you were taught the form so that you could later use it to deepen your thinking. By producing the five-paragraph theme over and over, it has probably become second nature for you to find a clear thesis and shape the intro paragraph around it, tasks you absolutely must accomplish in academic writing. However, you've probably been taught to proceed from "general" to "specific" in your intro and encouraged to think of "general" as "vague." At the college level, think of "general" as context: begin by explaining the conceptual, historical, or factual context that the reader needs in order to grasp the significance of the argument to come. It's not so much a structure of general-to-specific; instead it's context-to-argument.

> My average for writing an intro is three times. As in, it takes me three tries at writing one to get it to say exactly what I want it to. The intro, I feel, is the most important part of an essay. This is kind of like a road map for the rest of the paper. My suggestion is to do the intro first. This way, the paper can be done over a period of time rather than running the risk of forgetting what you wanted to say if you stop.
>
> Kaethe Leonard

In conclusion…

I confess that I still find conclusions hard to write. By the time I'm finalizing a conclusion, I'm often fatigued with the project and struggling to find something new to say that isn't a departure into a whole different realm. I also find that I have become so immersed in the subject that it seems like anything I have to say is absurdly obvious. A good conclusion is a real challenge, one that takes persistent work and some finesse.

Strong conclusions do two things: they bring the argument to a satisfying close and they explain some of the most important implications. You've probably been taught to restate your thesis using different words, and it is true that your reader will likely appreciate a brief summary of your overall argument: say, two or three sentences for papers less than 20 pages. It's perfectly fine to use what they call "metadiscourse" in this summary;

metadiscourse is text like "I have argued that..." or "This analysis reveals that…." Go ahead and use language like that if it seems useful to signal that you're restating the main points of your argument. In shorter papers you can usually simply reiterate the main point without that metadiscourse: for example, "What began as a protest about pollution turned into a movement for civil rights." If that's the crux of the argument, your reader will recognize a summary like that. Most of the student papers I see close the argument effectively in the concluding paragraph.

The second task of a conclusion—situating the argument within broader implications—is a lot trickier. A lot of instructors describe it as the "So what?" challenge. You've proven your point about the role of agriculture in deepening the Great Depression; so what? I don't like the "so what" phrasing because putting writers on the defensive seems more likely to inhibit the flow of ideas than to draw them out. Instead, I suggest you imagine a friendly reader thinking, "OK, you've convinced me of your argument. I'm interested to know what you make of this conclusion. What is or should be different now that your thesis is proven?" In that sense, your reader is asking you to take your analysis one step further. That's why a good conclusion is challenging to write. You're not just coasting over the finish line.

So, how do you do that? Remember that a complex thesis situates an arguable claim within broader implications. If you've already articulated a thesis statement that does that, then you've already mapped the terrain of the conclusion. Your task then is to explain the implications you mentioned: if environmental justice really is the new civil rights movement, then how should scholars and/or activists approach it? If agricultural trends really did worsen the Great Depression, what does that mean for agricultural policy today? If your thesis, as written, is a two-story one, then you may want to revisit it after you've developed a conclusion you're satisfied with and consider including the key implication in that thesis statement. Doing so will give your paper even more momentum.

Let's look at the concluding counterparts to the excellent introductions that we've read to illustrate some of the different ways writers can accomplish the two goals of a conclusion:

Victor Seet on religious embodiment:

> Embodiment is fundamental to bridging reality and spirituality. The concept demonstrates how religious practice synthesizes human experience in reality—mind, body, and environment—to embed a cohesive religious experience that can recreate itself. Although religion is ostensibly focused on an intangible spiritual world, its traditions that eventually achieve spiritual advancement are grounded in reality. The texts, symbols, and rituals integral to religious practice go beyond merely distinguishing one faith from another; they serve to fully absorb individuals in a culture that sustains common experiential knowledge shared by millions. It is important to remember that human senses do not merely act as sponges absorbing external information; our mental models of the world are being constantly refined with new experiences. This fluid process allows individuals to gradually accumulate a wealth of religious multimodal information, making the mental representation hyper-sensitive, which in turn contributes to religious experiences. However, there is an important caveat. Many features of religious visions that are attributed to embodiment can also be explained through less complex cognitive mechanisms. The

> repetition from religious traditions exercised both physically and mentally, naturally inculcates a greater religious awareness simply through familiarity. Religious experiences are therefore not necessarily caused by embedded cues within the environment but arise from an imbued fluency with religious themes. Embodiment proposes a connection between body, mind, and the environment that attempts to explain how spiritual transcendence is achieved through physical reality. Although embodied cognition assuages the conflict between science and religion, it remains to be seen if this intricate scientific theory is able to endure throughout millennia just as religious beliefs have.

The paragraph first re-caps the argument, then explains how embodiment relates to other aspects of religious experience, and finally situates the analysis within the broader relationship between religion and science.

From Davis O'Connell:

> Looking at Abelard through the modern historical lens, it appears to many historians that he did not fit the 12th-century definition of a heretic in the sense that his teachings did not differ much from that of the church. Mews observes that Abelard's conception of the Trinity was a continuation of what earlier Christian leaders had already begun to ponder. He writes: "In identifying the Son and Holy Spirit with the wisdom and benignity of God, Abelard was simply extending an idea (based on Augustine) that had previously been raised by William of Champeaux." St. Augustine was seen as one of the main Christian authorities during the Middle Ages and for Abelard to derive his teachings from that source enhances his credibility. This would indicate that although Abelard was not necessarily a heretic by the church's official definition, he was branded as one through all of the nontheological social and political connotations that "heresy" had come to encompass.

O'Connell, interestingly, chooses a scholarly tone for the conclusion, in contrast to the more jocular tone we saw in the introduction. He doesn't specifically re-cap the argument about Abelard's deviance from social norms and political pressures, but rather he explains his summative point about what it means to be a heretic. In this case, the implications of the argument are all about Abelard. There aren't any grand statements about religion and society, the craft of historiography, or the politics of language. Still, the reader is not left hanging. One doesn't need to make far-reaching statements to successfully conclude a paper.

From Logan Skelly:

> Considering the hundreds of millions of years that S. aureus has been evolving and adapting to hostile environments, it is likely that the past seventy years of human antibiotic usage represents little more than a minor nuisance to these bacteria. Antibiotic resistance for humans, however, contributes to worldwide health, economic, and environmental problems. Multi-drug resistant S. aureus has proven itself to be a versatile and persistent pathogen that will likely continue to evolve as long as selective pressures, such as antibiotics, are introduced into the environment. While the problems associated with S. aureus have received ample attention in the scientific literature, there has been little resolution of the problems this pathogen poses. If these problems are to be resolved, it is essential that infection control measures and effective treatment strategies be developed, adopted, and implemented in the future on a worldwide

> scale—so that the evolution of this pathogen's virulence can be curtailed and its pathogenicity can be controlled.

Skelly's thesis is about the need to regulate antibiotic usage to mitigate antibiotic resistance. The concluding paragraph characterizes the pathogen's evolutionary history (without re-capping the specifics) and then calls for an informed, well-planned, and comprehensive response.

All three conclusions above achieve both tasks—closing the argument and addressing the implications—but the authors have placed a different emphasis on the two tasks and framed the broader implications in different ways. Writing, like any craft, challenges the creator to make these kinds of independent choices. There isn't a standard recipe for a good conclusion.

Form and function

As I've explained, some students mistakenly believe that they should avoid detail and substance in the introductions and conclusions of academic papers. Having practiced the five-paragraph form repeatedly, that belief sometimes gets built into the writing process; students sometimes just throw together those paragraphs thinking that they don't really count as part of the analysis. Sometimes though, student writers know that more precise and vivid introductions and conclusions are ideal but still settle on the vague language that seems familiar, safe, and doable. Knowing the general form of academic writing (simplified in the five-paragraph theme) helps writers organize their thoughts; however, it leads some student writers to approach papers as mere fill-in-the-blank exercises.

I hope you will instead envision paper-writing as a task of working through an unscripted and nuanced thought process and then sharing your work with readers. When you're engaged with the writing process, you'll find yourself deciding which substantive points belong in those introductory and concluding paragraphs rather than simply filling those paragraphs out with fluff. They should be sort of hard to write; they're the parts of the paper that express your most important ideas in the most precise ways. If you're struggling with intros and conclusions, it might be because you're approaching them in exactly the right way. Having a clear, communicative purpose will help you figure out what your reader needs to know to really understand your thinking.

Additional Resource

The Writing Center at the University of North Carolina offers excellent advice on writing introductions and conclusions.

Exercise

Browse a handful of articles on websites that feature examples of strong writing, such as longreads.com, newyorker.com, and theatlantic.com. Evaluate the quality of the introductions and conclusions that you see, based on the principles explained in this chapter.

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6.7 TONE, VOICE, AND POINT OF VIEW

Monique Babin; Carol Burnell; Susan Pesznecker; Nicole Rosevear; Jaime Wood; Adam Falik; and Doreen Piano

Hey, how you doin'?

Hello, how are you today?

Which of the above greetings sounds most formal? Which sounds the most informal? What causes the change in tone?

Your voice can't actually be heard when you write, but it can be conveyed through the words you choose, the order you place them in, and the point of view from which you write. When you decide to write something for a specific audience, you often know instinctively what tone of voice will be most appropriate for that audience: serious, professional, funny, friendly, neutral, etc.

For a discussion of analyzing an author's point of view when reading a text, see this Point of View in the "Writing about Texts" section from *The Word on College Reading and Writing* (Burnel, et al.).

What is point of view, and how do I know which one to use?

Point of view can be tricky, so this is a good question. Point of view is the perspective from which you're writing, and it dictates what your focus is. Consider the following examples:

- I love watching the leaves change in the fall. (First person point of view)
- You will love watching the leaves change color. (Second person)
- The leaves in fall turn many vibrant colors. (Third person)

Which of the above sentences focuses most clearly on the leaves? Third person, right? The first-person sentence focuses on what "I" love, and the second-person sentence focuses on what "you" will love.

- First person uses the following pronouns: I, me, my, us, we, myself, our, ours…. Any words that include the speaker/writer turn the sentence into first person.
- Second person uses any form of the word "you," which has the effect of addressing the reader.
- Third person uses pronouns like he, she, it, they, them…. Any words that direct the reader to a person or thing that is not the writer or reader turn the sentence into third person.

That's a lot to think about. When is it okay to use each of these points of view?

- When the writer is using the first person, this indicates a personal tone that is focused on the writer him/

herself.

- When the writer is using the second person, this indicates a direct tone and indicates that the writer knows the reader well and is writing to them.
- When the writer is using the third person, this indicates a more formal universal tone that is used for writing about events, people, and issues outside of the reader and writer.

Many of your college instructors will ask you to write in third person only and will want you to avoid first or second person. Why do you think that is? One important reason is that third-person point of view focuses on a person or topic outside yourself or the reader, making it the most professional, academic, and objective way to write. The goal of third-person point of view is to remove personal, subjective bias from your writing, at least in theory. Most of the writing you will do in college will require you to focus on ideas, people, and issues outside yourself, so third person will be the most appropriate. This point of view also helps your readers stay focused on the topic instead of thinking about you or themselves.

The best answer to your question is that the point of view you choose to write in will depend on your audience and purpose. If your goal is to relate to your audience in a personal way about a topic that you have experience with, then it may be appropriate to use first-person point of view to share your experience and connect with your audience.

The least commonly used point of view is second person, especially in academic writing, because most of the time you will not know your audience well enough to write directly to them. The exception is if you're writing a letter or directing your writing to a very specific group whom you know well. (Notice that I'm using second person in this paragraph to directly address you. I feel okay about doing this because I want you to do specific things, and I have a pretty good idea who my audience is: reading and writing students.) The danger of using second person is that this point of view can implicate readers in your topic when you don't mean to do that. If you're talking about crime rates in your city, and you write something like, "When you break into someone's house, this affects their property value," you are literally saying that the reader breaks into people's houses. Of course, that's not what you mean. You didn't intend to implicate the readers this way, but that's one possible consequence of using second person. In other words, you might accidentally say that readers have done something that they haven't or know, feel, or believe something that they don't.

PRO TIP:

Even when you intend to use third person in an academic essay, it's fine in a rough draft to write "I think that" or "I believe" and then to delete these phrases in the final draft. This is especially true for the thesis statement. You want to eliminate the first person from the final draft because it moves the focus—the subject and verb of the sentence—to the writer rather than the main point. That weakens the point because it focuses on the least important aspect of the sentence and also because it sounds like a disclaimer. I might say "I think" because I'm not sure, or "I believe" because I want to stress the point that this is only my opinion. Of course, it's okay to use a disclaimer if you really mean to do so, and it's also fine to use first person to render personal experience or give an anecdote. Overall, though, you should remove "I think" and "I believe" because it is implied and redundant. When you write (for instance) that “recycling will have a positive impact on the environment,” there’s no need to write “I think that recycling will have a positive impact on the environment.” The reader will understand you believe the impact positive because you will back up the statement with evidence.

Remember to Remove the Passion

The impact of your paper, and the success of an argument, should be made structurally, not through tone. In other words, if your argumentative paper has a clearly articulated claim with good reasons, and those reasons are supported by strong evidence, it will be a convincing argument. Be wary of sullying the quality of your argument with words and tone that seek to insult an opposing argument. Do not claim that your idea is “obvious” or “self-evident” and that another approach is “wrong” or “stupid.” Passion does not win the day (or the argument). In your writing seek dispassion, the cool, collective mind of an academic writer who seeks the assent of readers with carefully constructed and evidence-supported arguments.

Does Anything Else Affect the Tone of My Writing?

Yes! Many times writers are so focused on the ideas they want to convey that they forget the importance of something they may never think about: sentence variety. The length of your sentences matters. If you start every sentence with the same words, readers may get bored. If all of your sentences are short and choppy, your writing may sound unsophisticated or rushed. Some short sentences are nice, though. They help readers’ brains catch up. This is a lot to think about while you’re writing your first draft though, so I recommend saving this concern for your second or third draft.

Visit the Purdue OWL page “Strategies for Variation” for some examples of sentence variety and exercises that will improve your sentence variety superpowers.

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6.8 A REVIEW OF THE FIVE-PARAGRAPH ESSAY

Julie A. Townsend

Many writers will be able to detail the five-paragraph format.

- The introduction previews the entire essay.
- The thesis statement goes at the end of the introduction and describes what the three body paragraphs will be about.
- The body paragraphs discuss each topic described in the thesis statement in detail.
- There should be transitions between each body paragraph.
- The conclusion revisits key points made in the essay and could be the introduction re-worded in a different way.

These are sample answers from writers who describe what they have learned about the five-paragraph format. The five-paragraph format is a reader-friendly organizational structure that writers can rely on if they need to get information quickly and formally across to a wide audience. For instance, the five-paragraph format might be useful when writing a report to a supervisor with the purpose of explaining progress on a project. The introduction gives the most important information at the beginning, and each paragraph is clearly related to one topic. The conclusion leaves the reader with a summary and a possible call to action.

Problems with the Five-Paragraph Format

Donald Murray, in his article “Teach Writing as a Process Not a Product,” argues that writing should be taught as “the process of discovery through language. It is the process of exploration of what we know and what we feel about what we know through language. It is the process of using language to learn about our world, to evaluate what we learn about our world, to communicate what we learn about our world” (4). However, when writers use writing to discover more about a topic, the five-paragraph format can be limiting because of the following:

- Writers usually decide on the three main body paragraphs before they start drafting.
- With three large topics to change from, writers are less likely to dig deep into a specific topic.
- Writers may use the five-paragraph format in ways that avoid detail and make their essays

indistinguishable from other essays on the same topics.

For instance, a writer might want to discuss communication on social media. They decide before they start writing that their three main topics will be Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. By the time they write a few details about Facebook, they move on to Instagram. There is not enough space for the writer to get into details and differentiate ideas on their topic and to describe observations, experiences, and research in depth. When writers start with three main topics, it's also hard to find the space to teach the reader something new.

Discovery through Writing

Writing is an opportunity to share unique experiences with readers. If writers feel like they are not sharing anything valuable through their writing, they should reconsider their stance on the assignment or schedule a meeting with their instructor so that they can orient themselves more meaningfully to the assignment. Often, five-paragraph format writing is uninspired. Writers race to jot down what they know on three loosely related subjects so that they can finish the essay. The writer is not learning through the writing and neither is the reader. The main problem with the five-paragraph format is that it discourages writers from discovering what they could write on one focused and specific topic.

When to Use the Five-Paragraph Format

Published essays, in any genre, that use the five-paragraph organization are very rare. It might be interesting for writers to pay attention to how published material that they read on their own time is organized. Because first-year writing is a context where writers are encouraged to learn and teach through their writing, the five-paragraph format might not be the best choice for organization. However, when writers are in situations that demand them to relay information quickly, the five-paragraph format can be useful. Formulaic writing is not uninventive or inherently bad. Different genres use various kinds of formulaic writing, and it's important for writers to adhere to conventions and pay attention to how essays are organized in the genre they are writing in.

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6.9 MOVING BEYOND THE FIVE-PARAGRAPH FORMAT

Julie A. Townsend

How to Get Started Writing without the Five-Paragraph Format

If writers are not going to use the five-paragraph format, then how should they get started with the writing process? While it might seem logical to start writing the essay with the introduction, there are downsides to starting with the introduction if the writer has not already done extensive thinking or planning for the essay:

- The writer does not know exactly what the essay is about yet, so they might have to rewrite the introduction to match what they end up writing.
- The writer may end up writing multiple introductions while trying to find a way to summarize and introduce a topic they have not yet written on.
- The writer may feel stuck and experience writer's block (Thelin, Writing Without Formulas, 91).

Instead of beginning the writing process with the introduction to the essay, writers could:

- Free write
- Write the body of the essay
- Make a working outline
- Create a list of what they want to include
- Follow the steps of the writing process (as suggested in section 3.1 "The Writing Process")

What Essays Could Look like without the Five-Paragraph Format

The LB Handbook describes different kinds of organizational patterns for writers, including chronological, general to specific, specific to general, climactic, problem-solution, and spatial (21). The following sections detail these techniques. Writers often use multiple kinds of organization within one essay, using one technique for one paragraph, one technique for another paragraph, multiple techniques in a single paragraph, and a technique for the overall organization and flow of the essay.

Chronological

Writers who use chronological organization for their essays write about events that took place first in the beginning of the essay and then move to events that occurred later, following the order in which the events took place. Chronological order could be interesting for writers to purposefully play around with in their writing. Could the writer start at the end or the middle of the event to draw the reader in or make their structure more interesting? Writers might use chronological for sections of their essay in which they detail events that have already taken place or to describe historical events relevant to their topic.

Example of Chronological Organization

If a writer wants to describe how they learned German, for example, they would start with the first time they heard the language and progressively describe the events (in order) and milestones in their journey of learning the language.

General to Specific

With general-to-specific organization, the writer starts with a broad perspective and then moves in more closely to their subject. This organization meets imagined readers at a level of specificity that they can easily connect with. The writer then gets more detailed, bringing the reader with them, and zooming in on the specific topic they are describing.

Example of General-to-Specific Organization

If a writer wants to describe how college students use Moodle (or Brightspace/Canvas, etc.) to communicate (AND they want to reach a wider audience than college students and instructors), they could begin by describing the broader topic of how college courses use technologies, then proceed into more specific details of Moodle or the course management system as they write more.

Specific to General

When using specific-to-general organization, the writer starts with details of their topic and then moves the focus to a broader context as they continue to write.

- Writers can start with their findings or their main point and then work backward, describing how the more specific points fit into a larger context.

Writers can start with very minute details of the situation they want to describe. Readers may not know exactly what the writer is describing, but as they continue reading, the writer reveals the context by zooming out more.

Example of Specific-to-General Organization

If a writer wants to describe communication in soccer, they could begin by describing an exciting minute of gameplay and how players communicate during those intense moments. The writer could include jargon to make the situation more realistic to the reader. Then, as the writer moves farther away from the details, they can define the jargon for the reader, and contextualize the communication by putting it in the context of the soccer game and the soccer culture.

Problem-Solution

In problem-solution format, writers describe a problem and then describe the solution to the problem. Not every essay topic can utilize problem-solution organization because there might not be a problem or a solution involved with the topic.

Example of Problem-Solution Organization

If a writer wants to discuss health literacy and why it's important, they could start by describing problems that occur when adults do not have health literacy, then they could describe how health literacy could be learned.

Spatial

In spatial organization, writers describe their subject based on its location in space with other objects. To use this technique, writers could identify a concrete space to describe. Writers could also imagine their topic and how it relates to geography, describing relevant events in an order that progresses from east to west or north to south, depending on their purpose.

Example #1—Spatial Organization

If a writer wants to describe the impact of social media, he could include a spatial description of the screen a user sees on Instagram, for example. What appears on screen as users scroll through the app they are investigating? What's on the top and bottom of the screen? What's on the left and right? How does that layout organize a person's path through the app and the experience they have?

Example #2—Spatial Organization

If a writer is discussing a workplace, they could start from one corner of a workstation and move systematically through the space describing each part and section making sure to use enough details to allow the reader to envision exactly where the writer is describing.

Climactic

Most writers will be familiar with movies, video games, novels, or plays being climactic. Climactic plots have the most action-filled scenes, major twists, or character deaths towards the end, around 75-90% of the way through the plot. Climactic college writing can vary widely. In climactic organization, the thesis statement will most likely not be at the end of the introduction but towards the end of the essay. According to Thelin, if the writer has a controversial stance, it might be best to save their conclusion towards the end (95). Saving a controversial finding until the end of the essay gives the writer time to get the reader feeling and understanding the topic like they do. However, topics don't need to be controversial for writers to use climactic organization.

Example of Climactic Organization

If a writer wants to describe how social media can be addictive, they could save their findings until they are almost finished with the essay. The beginning of the essay could include descriptions, observations, and research. Then, after the writer has drawn a clear picture of social media for the reader, they can reveal their finding that social media may be addictive.

Application to Your Own Writing

Read the essay that you are working on. Create an outline for what you have written. In the outline, label the organizational techniques that you have used. These may be from the list above or may not be listed. Do your best to describe how the essay is organized in each section. Keep in mind that you will likely have more than one kind of organization in your essay.

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CHAPTER 7: REVISING AND REFINING

7.1 REVISING YOUR DRAFT(S)

Melanie Gagich & Emilie Zickel

You have a draft! In many ways, you have done a lot of the hard work by getting ideas down on paper or on the screen.

There are many steps to drafting and revising, so try to resist going straight to the editing, in other words, looking for grammar errors or a misplaced or misused word. Those are important things to look at eventually, but in the early stages of revision, you have the opportunity to focus more on major concerns (we sometimes call them global concerns): idea development, essay focus, coherence among your ideas, whether or not you are meeting the assignment goal and purposes.

Here are some strategies for approaching the first revision, the "shape up" phase of your draft. There is a lot of opportunity here, for you to add, delete, rearrange, expand, and realize what you would like to rethink or express differently.

Early Draft Questions: Reading Your Draft to Look at Structure and Content

In your introductory section of the essay:

- Do you have a working claim? Does that claim respond to the question on the assignment sheet?
- Are you beginning the paper with an introductory paragraph that leads the reader up to your claim?
- Is your claim at the end of the intro?

The body of the essay:

- Does each paragraph focus on only one idea? In an argumentative or persuasive paper, paragraphs often explore reasons, which support your claim. When you begin to discuss a new idea/reason, do you make a paragraph break?
- Do all of your reasons support your claim, and are your reasons supported by evidence?
- Have you cited the sources that you have integrated into the draft as evidence?
- Do you have a Works Cited page for those sources you referenced?

The conclusion of the essay:

- The conclusion may be the last thing you write. Some writers choose to take sentences that feel out of place or perhaps repetitive and paste them into a draft conclusion paragraph that can be edited later. Do you already have a conclusion? If so, great. If not, keep working on it for the final draft.

As you continue working on your paper, try using your rhetorical skills and examining your work.

Early Draft Revisions: Reading Rhetorically

- What is your main point? Is the point held consistently throughout the text, or does it wander at any point?
- What information do you provide to support the central idea? Making a list of each point will help you analyze. Each paragraph should address one reason, and all paragraphs should relate to the text's central idea.
- What kind of evidence are you using? Is your evidence based more on fact or opinion? Which type of evidence does this assignment require? Where does your evidence come from? Are the sources authoritative and credible?
- What is your main purpose? Note that this is different than the text's main idea. The text's main idea (above) refers to the central claim embedded in the text. Your purpose, however, refers to what you hope to accomplish in your essay (or assignment). Do you need to be objective or persuasive? Be sure to revisit the assignment if you are not clear on what the assignment's purpose is!
- What is your tone in the piece? Authoritative? Sarcastic? Are you using simple language? Informal language? Are you too passionate? Sometimes one's outrage or belief in the righteousness of their claim prevents the reasonableness of an argument. Make sure that your claim is supported by reasons and well-researched evidence versus merely personal belief in the integrity of your claim. Does the language feel positive or negative? Most importantly, is the tone that you are using appropriate for the audience for your text?

Once you have gone through your own early draft review, peer reviews, and any other read-throughs and analyses of your draft, you may be ready for the final stage of revision. This is not simply editing—checking for misspelled words or missing commas.

Once again, you have the opportunity to "re-see" your paper, to look closely and deeply at it to make sure that it is making sense, that it flows, that it is meeting the core assignment requirements, to re-envision what the paper can be. You still have time to make major changes, such as providing additions or deleting entire sections. Those are all wonderful things to do at this final revision stage in order to make your paper stronger.

Later Draft Revisions: Making Final Changes and Getting

Ready to Submit the Assignment

- Carefully consider all feedback—Based on that feedback from readers (peer reviewers, tutors, your instructor, friends, etc.), where can you make your essay more reader-friendly? Where does it need more effort and focus?
- Revisit the assignment—If there are evaluation criteria, use them to evaluate your own draft. Identify in the paper where you are adhering to those criteria, where you feel like you still need work.
- Consider your sources—Are you engaging with required source materials as much or as deeply as you need to be? Would your paper be stronger if you reread the sources another time to better understand them? Do you need more source support in the paper? Do you need to enhance your source integration (signal phrases, citations)?
- Revisit feedback on previous papers—Often, we make consistent errors in our writing from paper to paper. Read over feedback from other papers—even from other classes—and review your paper with special attention to those errors. There is still time to come talk to your professor about fixing them if you don't understand how to avoid them!
- Visit the Writing Center—It never hurts to have an objective pair of eyes look over your work. Bring the assignment sheet with you so that the Writing Center tutors can see what the instructor's requirements for the assignment are. Communicate to the tutor about your key areas of concern or areas of focus.
- Read your paper aloud, slowly—This can help you to hear any missing words or components. We often miss things when we only read because we read so quickly. If, when reading aloud, something sounds off, it probably is. Revisit those sentences that sound clunky on the tongue.
- Ask for instructor feedback—If there are areas of your paper that you are struggling with, talk to your professor and ask for some guidance. It is best to visit office hours or schedule an appointment with your professor several days before the due date of the essay.

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7.2 PEER REVIEW AND RESPONDING TO OTHERS' DRAFTS

Emilie Zickel

Students tend to have a love or hate relationship to peer review. Some have had wonderful, helpful, rich histories with classmates offering feedback on their work; others have the perspective that peer review is pointless.

When it works, both giving and receiving peer feedback can be a great learning opportunity. If you look at other people's work in progress, you undoubtedly get some ideas about how you could do something different or better in your own draft. But even if you are looking at a draft that is weaker than yours, you may learn a lot: about what writing looks like when it is not working, perhaps why it is not working, or even what specific choices or revisions that writer could make to strengthen the draft. Identifying what makes things work—so important in the learning process—can be hard to detect in our own work.

Remember that in peer review, you don't need to cast judgment on a classmate's work.

You don't need to take on the role of a "grader" or offer suggestions to fix the paper. You don't need to correct things. Sometimes, what is more valuable is if you share your experience as a reader of the draft, explaining what felt easy and clear to you, and also where you struggled to understand what the writer was trying to accomplish. Be honest, accurate, detailed, and descriptive. Write in such a way that you offer your genuine readerly perspective to your partner, not a list of directions or directives.

Rhetorical Reading Questions for Peer Feedback

The use of rhetorical reading questions can offer feedback on the effectiveness of the text-in-progress. Ask yourself the following while reading your own or a peer's draft:

- What is the writer's main point? Can you see what your partner's main point is in this draft? Is the point held consistently throughout the text, or did you get lost while reading at any point? If so, can you point out where reference to or reiteration of the main point would have helped your reading experience?

- What information does the writer provide to support the central idea? Did you need more information to feel like the central idea was well supported? Do all paragraphs relate to the text's central idea?

- What kind of evidence does the writer use? Is it based more on fact or opinion? Can you clearly identify where this evidence comes from? Are the sources authoritative and credible?
- Is the writer working towards achieving the assignment's purpose? This is a question that is easiest to answer if you fully understand the assignment's purpose. What are the goals of the assignment? What are the goals of this particular writer? Do those goals overlap?
- Describe the tone in the draft. Is it friendly? Authoritative? Does it lecture? Is it biting or sarcastic? Does the author use simple language, or is it full of jargon? Does the language feel positive or negative? Now, consider the audience for this essay. Does the tone seem appropriate for that audience?

Using "I" Statements to Offer Feedback on Others' Work

Offer observations of assignment goals met / not met:

1. I see your thesis/claim at the end of your intro paragraph
2. I see transition phrases at the beginning of each new paragraph
3. I can see that you (fill in the blank), which is a goal of this paper
4. In your paragraph I see….but I do not see….
5. I do not see a Works Cited

Express your experience as a reader:

1. My understanding is that the thesis/claim of this paper should (fill in the blank). I did not clearly see this in your thesis. Instead, I see (explain).
2. I was confused by this sentence (share the sentence), and I took it to mean (explain how you read that sentence).
3. In the paragraph I thought that, based on what you said in the first sentence, the whole paragraph would discuss X. But it looks to me like at the end of the paragraph, you begin discussing Y, which felt to me like a new and different idea.

Express places where, as a reader, you were drawn into the writing:

1. I thought that the second paragraph was really clear and interesting because….
2. I like the way that you structured paragraph X because ….

3. I appreciate your use of (signal phrases? citations? MLA format? transitions? etc.) because I have been struggling with that in my own writing. Thanks for the example.

Phrases that can be ineffective:

These types of phrases are telling the writer what to do and/or simply offering judgment. They are "you" statements, not "I" statements. Try to avoid these types of peer assessment phrases:

- You should fix…
- The assignment says to but you didn't do that…
- You need more…
- You need less…
- To make the paper better, you need to…

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7.3 PROOFREADING AND EDITING YOUR FINAL DRAFT

Sarah M. Lacy and Emilie Zickel

You have drafted, received feedback, revised, redrafted, received more feedback, revised, redrafted…and now you are ready to polish the paper up and hand it in. To help you engage with this step, consider using a variety of the following strategies:

Proofreading and Editing Strategies

- **Close/specific reading**
    - This strategy is always important to complete, as it requires intense analysis of your paper and prose. Use any rhetorically based reading skills you have learned and apply these to this close read.
    - Be careful not to only rely on this tactic. It can be very easy to accidentally overlook an issue if you are only reading the essay in one way. Make sure to use this strategy in conjunction with any of these other options.
- **Reading aloud**
    - This strategy is specifically helpful when checking the flow of your sources once integrated into your own work. By reading aloud, you can *hear* how you have synthesized the sources amongst your own work, allowing you to check that there is no break in the narrative.
    - Reading aloud also forces you to experience your writing in a different medium; in so doing, many structural and word choice issues can become clear, among others.
- **Shift your starting point**
    - What this means is that you start reading over your essay in the middle of the essay, rather than always from the beginning.
    - Reading an essay out of order can help your mind experience each part of the essay in

    a new way, keeping you from becoming tired during a read through.

- **Print the paper, then edit**
    - Only working on an assignment through one medium (a computer screen, tablet, etc.) can cause your eyes to gloss over the same error over and over again. By printing out your work, you are allowing yourself a chance to physically see your work, which often leads to the recognition of additional errors.
- **Walk away**
    - Sometimes the best move is to give yourself a day or two away from your paper and then come back to it with fresh eyes. Doing so will allow you to gain some perspective on your topic and some psychological distance from your work.
    - Note that this means you will need to give yourself plenty of time before the paper is due.

In addition to practicing proof-reading and editing strategies, it is also a good idea to create a checklist of common errors that many writers make. Below is a general checklist for the final editing stage of a paper. Any assignment will have additional specific requirements, and those should be found on the assignment sheet. What follows is a general checklist for ensuring general submission readiness:

Final Editing Checklist

- **Document format**
    - Is your paper laid out in the formatting that the assignment requires? (MLA, APA, CMS, etc.). If you are not sure of how to meet the formatting guidelines, Google can help! There is a plethora of information out there about how to format documents, and image searches can give you a visual example.
- **Spacing**
    - Almost all of the papers that you write in college will require double spacing throughout. Have you checked to be sure that your paper is double spaced without

any additional spaces after the header, the title, or any body paragraph?

- **Indentations**
    - Indenting a new paragraph is a rhetorical move that signals to the reader that you are beginning a new idea in a new paragraph. You can hit tab at the beginning of each paragraph to indent.
- **Thesis**
    - Is your thesis at the end of the Intro section? Does it directly respond to the assignment question?
- **Transition phrasing**
    - Have you used transitional phrases at the beginning of new body paragraphs (except for the very first paragraph to follow the intro) to help guide the reader from one idea to the next?
- **Source integration**
    - Are you carefully introducing all source material that you have quoted, paraphrased, or summarized? When you cite, are your citations formatted according to the style guide required by the assignment?
- **Works Cited**
    - Even if you have used only one source in the paper, you must include a Works Cited page. Is your Works Cited in alphabetical order by the first letter in the work that you are referencing? Is the Works Cited formatted according to what the assignment requires (MLA, APA, CMS, etc.)?
- **Grammar check**
    - Have you gone through the essay to ensure that you've corrected spelling or wording errors?

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7.4 CLARITY AND CONCISION

Amy Guptill

Writing like You Drive

This and the following chapter discuss sentence-level composition, the kinds of things that many people associate with "writing." Writing guides, especially those targeted at college students, offer excellent advice on sentence construction and word choice. However, many student writers get hung up on sentence-level expression, thinking that only elegant, erudite sentences will earn top grades. Or worse, some students assume that they'll never produce strong papers if they do not already have some kind of inborn gift for wordsmithing. While it is true that some people can produce extraordinarily elegant and graceful prose, it is also true that anyone can learn to write effectively in ways that will persuade and satisfy readers. Producing and reading elegant writing is a pleasure, but what really matters in academic writing is precision.

Focusing first or only on sentence-level issues is a troublesome approach. Doing so is like driving while looking only at the few feet of the road right in front of the bumper. Experienced drivers instead take in the larger scene and more effectively identify and avoid potential hazards with ongoing course corrections (Borowsky et al.). Writing well is like that. When you've put in the time and effort to take in the bigger picture of your analysis, most of the micro-scale moves happen automatically. That is, if you have a well-developed thesis and a carefully sequenced argument organized into cohesive and coherent paragraphs, many of the sentence-level issues take care of themselves. It's easier to write effective sentences when their purpose is clear. You'll still have to edit for clarity, concision, and mechanics, but if the thinking process behind the writing is well developed, editing shouldn't be a huge chore. It can actually be a satisfying part of the process. One common metaphor notes that a good edit is like the last twist of a camera lens that brings the whole picture into focus.

One approach that often leads to a difficult writing process and a clunky result is the pursuit of "academese": an effort to write in an ornamented and "scholarly" way. As Michael Harvey explains, the desire to sound more academic might prompt a student to write "To satisfy her hunger for nutrition, she ate the bread" rather than simply "She was hungry, so she ate the bread." It is true that a lot of academic writing is laden with unnecessary jargon, but the culture is shifting among scholars to favor plainer language and insist on clarity. Your professors are much more likely to find a self-consciously highbrow writing style tedious than impressive. As the saying goes, any fool can make simple things complicated; it takes a genius to make complicated things simple.

My hope with this chapter is to help you see those habits for yourself and, most importantly, how your readers experience them. If you've fallen prey to habits of academese, I hope this chapter helps you develop a more straightforward writing style, one well-suited to nuanced thinking and effective communication. And while I don't want you to think of sentence-level wordsmithing as some kind of abstract, enchanted virtue, I do want you to understand that clarity and concision are more than aesthetics. Convoluted or wordy prose may contain some insightful or intriguing ideas, but if you can render those ideas in clear and concise prose, then you will inevitably develop those ideas even further in the course of writing. Unclear and bloated prose isn't just tedious to your reader; it's a needless obstacle to your own thinking.

One of our professors' primary reasons for assigning writing assignments is to evaluate how thoroughly we have digested the assigned reading material and lectures. They are not as interested in our ability to write Shakespearean prose as they are in our ability to absorb information, wrestle with it until we can comprehend it, and then convey that understanding logically in writing. This is why writing assignments often start with something like, "Drawing on Locke's narrative…" or "Given what you've read about Darth Vader's aversion to democratic governance…."

It is important to note that this process presupposes that we actually read the assigned readings and take notes during class lectures and discussions. Unsurprisingly, the hardest writing assignments I have had in college were the ones for which I was least prepared. I can try my darnedest to write beautifully, but if I have not put in the necessary time to actually read (and reread) the assigned material, I will have nothing meaningful to say and my professors will see straight through my bloviating.

> That being said, the writing process is actually a highly effective exercise for digesting material and developing a cohesive argument. Often it is not until I start writing that I realize the holes in my thinking and the areas that I need to go back and study more thoroughly. This chapter provides many great practical pointers for editing our papers in order to produce clear, refined arguments and should be returned to frequently.
>
> Peter Farrell

The best way to achieve clarity and concision in writing is to separate the drafting process from the revision process (University of North Carolina). Highly effective writers routinely produce vague, tortuous, and bloated drafts, and are happy to do so. It usually means that they're onto an interesting idea. Similarly, writers often write the same idea three or four different ways as they're getting their thoughts down on paper. That's fine. In fact, that's better than fine because each repetition helps to develop key ideas and alternative approaches to the argument. A snarly first draft is often a great achievement. One just needs to take the time to develop relevant ideas and make them clear to the reader. For that reason, I write this section of the chapter envisioning someone who has already cranked out a very rough draft and is now in the process of revising for clarity and concision.

Revising for Clarity: Who Did What to Whom?

What makes a complex line of thinking easy to follow? The tricks of cohesion and coherence are a big help. Williams and Bizup offer another key point. They explain that readers experience writing as clear when the "character" of a sentence is also its grammatical subject and the key "action" a grammatical verb. They provide this fanciful example:

> Once upon a time, as a walk through the woods was taking place on the part of Little Red Riding Hood, the Wolf's jump out from behind a tree caused her fright (29).

Grammatically, the subject of the first part is "a walk through the woods," and the verb is "taking place." The character, though, is obviously Little Red Riding Hood, and the action is walking. A much more straightforward version—"As Little Red Riding Hood walked through the woods"—makes the character the subject and the action the key verb. That example goes out of its way to be silly, but consider this example from a website offering free college papers:

> Another event that connects the colonist and the English together is the event of a hated King in England trying to take away freedom and go back to the old ways. The idea of how much power the King had struck Parliament. After that, the Parliament and the people made the King sign the Magna Carta, which limits the amount of power the King has. The Magna Carta also affected the rights of the American colonies. It practically took away all relationships between the King and the colonies. After the relationship was broken, America broke off from England (Mv22091).

Apparently, the author is claiming that the colonists (in the 1700s?) pushed back against the power of the English crown in a manner similar to the Parliamentarians in 1215 (after having apparently been "struck" by an "idea" of "how much power the King had"). Grammatically, the subjects are an "event" and an "idea" rather than the characters, colonists, the king, and Parliament. The third sentence is refreshingly straightforward in structure (though vague on details). The fifth and sixth sentences are fairly straightforward, but also incredibly vague: the Magna Carta predated the American colonies by at least 400 years (Stenton); how does that document relate to the American Revolution? The last sentence essentially says that after the relationship was broken, the relationship was broken. If the author were to rewrite the passage to make the grammatical subjects match the characters, he or she would be prompted to clarify what exactly the king, the Parliament, the English populace, and the American colonists did (and to who), something which the author of the above passage may not actually understand. This example illustrates how clarifying "who did what to whom" for the reader also makes writers clarify it for themselves. Writing clearly involves thinking clearly, and clear rigorous thinking is why your professors assign you writing in the first place.

While the Magna Carta example is comically bad, here's one that is more or less logical but would still benefit from greater clarity:

> IgE-dependent allergic hypersensitivity reactions such as allergic asthma and food allergy involve mast cells which

> are typically regarded as troublesome cells as a result. Further, the allergic sensitization-process also involves a role for mast cells. Recent findings show that their functionality is not only pro-inflammatory, but can on the contrary have suppressive or immunomodulatory effects in allergic inflammation.

The above passage isn't a terrible slog, and it's fairly clear that the whole passage is about mast cells. But here's a version of the same passage—the real version as it were—which demonstrates that the passage feels a lot clearer when mast cells, the "characters" driving the narrative, are also the grammatical subject of the sentence and the referent for the key verbs:

> Mast cells are typically regarded as troublesome cells due to their prominent role in IgE-dependent allergic hypersensitivity reactions such as allergic asthma and food allergy. Further, it seems that mast cells are also able to play an additional role in the allergic sensitization-processes. Recent findings show that mast cell functionality is not only pro-inflammatory, but can on the contrary have suppressive or immunomodulatory effects in allergic inflammation (Kraneveld et al. 96).

Both versions of the passage are consistently about mast cells, but the second version makes that consistency much more obvious to readers as mast cells are the main character of every sentence. That clear consistency allows us to devote more of our brain power to recalling technical terms (like immunomodulatory) and comprehending the key ideas. That makes it both easier and more interesting to read.

To further illustrate the principle, let's take a nicely straightforward passage and rewrite it so that the characters are objects (rather than subjects) and the actions are nouns (rather than verbs). Here's the nicely clear original:

> What most people really feel nostalgic about has little to do with the internal structure of 1950s families. It is the belief that the 1950s provided a more family-friendly economic and social environment, an easier climate in which to keep kids on the straight and narrow, and above all, a greater feeling of hope for a family's long-term future, especially for its young (Coontz 34).

In these two sentences, the character is a belief rather than a person or thing. However, the passage is still clear to the reader because it keeps the character consistent and explains what that character does (creates nostalgia) to who (people at large). Imagine if the author wrote this instead:

> People feel nostalgic not about the internal structure of 1950s families. Rather, the beliefs about how the 1950s provided a more family-friendly economic and social environment, an easier climate in which to keep kids on the straight and narrow, and above all, a greater feeling of hope for a family's long-term future (especially for its young) are what lead to those nostalgic feelings.

This second version says substantially the same thing, but it's tedious to read because the character changes abruptly from "people" to "beliefs" (which works against cohesion) and one has to get to the end of the sentence to learn how these beliefs fit in. The key point is this: one of the best things you can do to revise for greater clarity is to recast a passage so that the characters are the grammatical subjects and the key actions are the verbs.

Concision and Grace

Concision is particularly important in introductions and conclusions, as those framing parts of the paper are often the most egregiously bloated. The general rule introduced there holds for any writing: every word and sentence should be doing some significant work for the paper as a whole. Sometimes that work is more to provide pleasure than meaning—you needn't ruthlessly eliminate every rhetorical flourish—but everything in the final version should add something unique to the paper. As with clarity, the benefits of concision are intellectual as well as stylistic: revising for concision forces writers to make deliberate decisions about the claims they want to make and their reasons for making them.

Michael Harvey notes that fluffy, wordy prose does not necessarily result from an underdeveloped writing process. Sometimes it reflects the context of academic writing:

> [M]any of us are afraid of writing concisely because doing so can make us feel exposed. Concision leaves us fewer words to hide behind. Our insights and ideas might appear puny stripped of those inessential words, phrases, and sentences in which we rough them out. We might even wonder, were we to cut out the fat, would anything be left? It's no wonder, then, that many students make little attempt to be concise—[and] may, in fact, go out of their way not to be.... (1).

Effortful thinking is something most people naturally try to avoid most of the time. It's both arduous and anxiety provoking to go beyond existing knowledge and assumptions to venture into unknown territory. In some ways, too, the general structure of education conditions students to approach papers as blanks to be filled rather than open-ended problems to explore. When students actively avoid concision, it's often because they want to avoid the hard thinking concision requires, they assume that writing is all about expressing opinions rather than undertaking a rigorous thought process, or they fear that they can't adequately perform and communicate an ambitious analysis.

One of the first things you will learn about writing in college is that you have to be concise. It doesn't matter whether the paper is two pages or ten; concision is key. If you start to lose your reader, expect a bad grade. Professors want to see how well you can argue a point and this includes how gracefully the paper flows as well as how long the reader's attention is kept. If you can incorporate concision, cohesion, and grace into each paper you write, then good grades are sure to follow.

Kaethe Leonard

Many writing guides describe editing strategies that produce a vivid, satisfying concision. Most of the advice boils down to three key moves:

1. Look for words and phrases that you can cut entirely. Look for bits that are redundant: ("each and every," "unexpected surprise," "predictions about the future"), meaningless ("very unique," "certain factors," "slightly terrifying"), or clichéd ("as far as the eye can see," or "long march of time").
2. Look for opportunities to replace longer phrases with shorter phrases or words. For example, "the way in which" can often be replaced by "how," and "despite the fact that" can usually be replaced by "although." Strong, precise verbs can often replace bloated phrases. Consider this example: "The goal of Alexander the Great was to create a united empire across a vast distance." And compare it to this: "Alexander the Great sought to unite a vast empire."
3. Try to rearrange sentences or passages to make them shorter and livelier. Williams and Bizup recommend changing negatives to affirmatives. Consider the negatives in this sentence: "School nurses often do not notice if a young schoolchild does not have adequate food at home." You could more concisely and clearly write, "School nurses rarely notice if a young schoolchild lacks adequate food at home." It says the same thing, but is much easier to read which makes for a happier and more engaged reader.

Good parallelism can also help you write shorter text that better conveys your thinking. For example, Stacy Schiff writes this in her best-selling biography of Cleopatra:

> A goddess as a child, a queen at eighteen, a celebrity soon thereafter, she was an object of speculation and veneration, gossip and legend, even in her own time (Schiff 1).

Imagine if, instead, Schiff wrote this:

> Cleopatra was seen as divine when she was a child. She became the sovereign ruler at eighteen, and she became well known throughout the ancient world early in her reign. People speculated about her, worshipped her, gossiped about her, and told legends about her, even in her own time.

The second version says the same thing, but the extra words tend to obscure Schiff's point. The original ("goddess as a child, queen at eighteen, celebrity soon thereafter") effectively uses parallelism to vividly convey the dramatic shifts in Cleopatra's roles and her prominence in the ancient world.

Reading with Concision and Grace in Mind

There is less tolerance for academese than there used to be in scholarly communities; however, a lot of landmark texts were written in a time when there wasn't such a high value placed on clarity and concision. In your studies, then, you will probably have to engage with important texts that violate almost all the advice given here.

Consider the following example from Talcott Parsons, a sociological theorist noted for both his intellectual force and utterly impenetrable writing style. In reading this passage, imagine "ego" and "alter" as two people interacting:

> Communication through a common system of symbols is the precondition of this reciprocity or complementarity of expectations. The alternatives which are open to alter must have some measure of stability in two respects: first, as realistic possibilities for alter, and second, in their meaning to ego. This stability presupposes generalization from the particularity of the given situations of ego and alter, both of which are continually changing and are never concretely identical over any two moments in time. When such generalization occurs, and actions, gestures, or symbols have more or less the same meaning for both ego and alter, we may speak of a common culture existing between them, through which their interaction is mediated (105).

Here's a version after I edited for concision using the three moves described above:

> Reciprocity, or complementary expectations, depends on a common system of symbols. The symbolic alternatives for alter must be stable, in that they are both realistic for alter and meaningful to ego. That is, actions, gestures, or symbols must have a shared and persistent meaning for ego and alter even though ego and alter are in different situations and are constantly changing. When meanings are shared and persistent, we may say that the interaction between alter and ego is mediated by a common culture.

The revised version is about 30 percent shorter, and it demonstrates how concision makes one's points come through more clearly. You will almost certainly have to read works of authors who did not prioritize clarity and concision (or even cohesion and coherence), and that's a drag. But knowing how wordiness interferes with clarity can help you distill essential meanings from challenging texts. In many ways, writing well and reading incisively are two facets of the same cognitive skill set.

Grace

Academic writing is not wholly utilitarian. An elegant and apt turn of phrase is satisfying both to write and to read. While you can't often summon elegance out of nowhere, you can learn a few structures that are often pleasing to the reader's ear because they harmonize what you're saying with how you're saying it. Here are two rhetorical tricks that you can use to reinforce your points.

1. **Balance.** Readers often find balanced sentences and phrases pleasing. The Cleopatra example above ("goddess as a child, queen at eighteen, celebrity soon thereafter") illustrates parallelism, which is one kind of balance: using parallel structures to convey a parallel idea. This parallelism not only helps Schiff be powerfully concise; it quickly and vividly conveys the idea that Cleopatra led a remarkable life.

   Williams and Bizup offer another example of an elegant sentence in which the two parts are balanced in their structure:

A government that is unwilling to listen to the *moderate* hopes of its *citizenry* must eventually answer to the *harsh justice* of its *revolutionaries*.

The same sentence with the parallel parts marked:

A government that is unwilling to listen to the moderate hopes of its citizenry must eventually answer to the harsh justice of its revolutionaries.

The balanced structure and contrasting language reinforce the author's either-or point: "listen" or "answer"; "moderate hopes" or "harsh justice"; "citizenry" or "revolutionaries." The balanced structure adds rhetorical force to the argument.

2. **Emphasis.** Read these sentences out loud, or imagine yourself doing so:

   Version 1: But far and away, the largest weight-inducing food, out-stripping all others, was the potato chip (Moss 328).

   Version 2: But far and away, the potato chip was the largest weight-inducing food, out-stripping all others.

The first version places a particular rhetorical emphasis on "the potato chip" because it comes last in the sentence after a three-part build-up. The second version says the exact same thing, and it isn't hard to see that "potato chip" is the key part of the sentence. However, the rhetorical emphasis on "the potato chip" is somewhat weaker. This common rhetorical trick is to put the part you want to emphasize at the very end of the sentence.

These are just two rhetorical structures that scholars have identified. You can find others (Google "rhetorical device") that you can bring into your repertoire. Most people can't set out to write elegantly per se, and you certainly shouldn't spend your writing time crafting elegantly balanced sentences that have little to do with your argument or analysis. But the more familiar you are with these rhetorical structures, the more often you can recognize and use them.

Exercises

Rewrite these passages to make the "characters" the grammatical subjects and the key "actions" the verbs. That is, make them clearer.

- A. The scarcity of research funds for nutritional scientists means that offers by food

companies to fund such research may be especially attractive. The implicit pressure to shape the language of the findings to avoid alienation between scholars and companies is worrisome to consider.
- B. While educational experiences are an obvious benefit of tribal colleges, the needs tribal communities have for economic development, cultural vitality, and social ties are also addressed by educational institutions.

Take these straightforward passages and make them less clear without changing the meaning. Turn verbs into nouns and make subjects into objects.

- A. “Statisticians prepared to use spatial models need to keep the role of the models in perspective. When scientific interest centers on the large-scale effects, the idea is to use a few extra small-scale parameters so that the large-scale parameters are estimated more efficiently” (Cressie 435).
- B. “Social scientists will be led astray if they accept the lies organizations tell about themselves. If, instead, they look for places where the stories told don’t hold up, for the events and activities those speaking for the organization ignore, cover up, or explain away, they will find a wealth of things to include in the body of material from which they construct their definitions” (Becker 118).

Edit these passages for concision, using the three moves described above. Be sure to preserve all of the meaning contained in the original.

- A. Each and every student enrolled in our educational institutions deserves and is entitled to competent instruction in all of the key academic areas of study. No student should be without ample time and help in mastering such basic skills.
- B. If you really have no choice in regard to avoiding a long and extended bureaucratic process in making your complaint, it is very important that you write down and document every aspect of the case for use by all of the parties involved in the process.

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7.5 GRAMMAR OVERVIEW

Rachel Rickel

Let’s face it: knowing when and how to use a comma—let alone a semicolon—can get all of us worried and upset. High school seemed so long ago. That class, maybe English, where the teacher droned on and on about adjectives and adverbs, clauses and conjunctions, and perhaps even went into prepositions, is slightly hazy in your memory. We get it; there is a lot to keep track of. Yet, your college instructors are going to expect you to use all of these elements appropriately in your college papers. Not only will your grammar and use of mechanics in your writing be important to your academic career, but they will also be important to your everyday life when you are out and about composing inner-office memos and emails to colleagues. This text is not meant to be the answer to all of your sentence structure questions; however, the items covered here should serve as an overview for your basic grammar problems when it comes to drafting your papers.

Parts of Speech

Before knowing anything about setting up a sentence and properly punctuating it, you should know the terminology for the building blocks of the English language. Grammarians sort the different types of words that make up the English language into different categories that make up what we call the parts of speech. The main categories are:

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https://louis.pressbooks.pub/englishcomp2/?p=792#h5p-1

Each of these items is then broken down further into smaller and more specific categories. We will not go into that much detail here, but there are additional resources that can guide you through more of the intricate parts of speech, such as the OWL’s overview of parts of speech page, which you can look over here.

How Do I Write a College-Level Sentence?

Some of the bigger items to focus on in your writing will be determining if you are making some of the most common mistakes, such as writing in run-ons and fragments. How can you determine which is which? The first step is recognizing what goes into writing clauses—both independent and dependent. Typically there will be subjects and verbs involved. For recognizing the different parts that make up sentences, see the Writing Center's helpful tips here.

After you visit the Writing Center's web page, you should be able to recognize if a grouping of words can stand alone as a full sentence. Check your knowledge with the small set of phrases below:

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https://louis.pressbooks.pub/englishcomp2/?p=792#h5p-2

After being able to recognize what constitutes a full sentence, you should be aware of the common problems that most of us have when it comes to writing: those pesky run-on sentences and sentence fragments.

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For a refresher on how to use the most common forms of punctuation, you may wish to see an in-depth explanation here.

After looking over the various forms of punctuation, try to test your skills by punctuating the paragraph below:

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How to Recognize and Use FANBOYS (Also Known as Coordinating Conjunctions)

Your instructor will often point out in your papers that you have either run-on sentences, or that you have not included the appropriate punctuation with the necessary coordinating conjunctions. They may even call the coordinating conjunctions FANBOYS, which is a mnemonic device for remembering the seven most common coordinating conjunctions: For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So. As you may remember from the definition of coordinating conjunctions earlier in the section, these are linking words that work to join other groups of words, such as clauses—especially independent clauses.

Here are two independent clauses: I like cheese. I do not like bleu cheese.

We can combine them to make something a little more complex by adding a comma and a coordinating conjunction in between like so: I like cheese, but I do not like bleu cheese.

If you would like to learn more about coordinating conjunctions, you may watch a series of videos by Khan Academy here.

After reading the information above and possibly watching the videos, I suggest you try the activity below in order to make sure you are truly comfortable with the concept of Coordinating Conjunctions, or FANBOYS.

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CHAPTER 8: MULTIMODAL READING AND VISUAL RHETORIC

8.1 READING TRADITIONAL AND NEW MEDIA

Johnny Cook

Throughout college, you will be asked to read and respond to a variety of books, essays, articles, and other texts. However, some classes may ask you to read and respond to different types of traditional media such as visual art, graphic novels, music, television, films, and radio or media such as websites, infographics, social media platforms, podcasts, and YouTube videos. Though we may not always be conscious of it, many of us are already engaged in an understanding of culture through various forms of media; we interact daily with all kinds of media and then spend social time discussing our thoughts and reactions to them. "Reading" media makes use of our existing cultural knowledge while engaging our critical thinking and analysis skills. Applying critical reading skills to visual media can differ from reading a traditional text such as an academic essay, however. Here is a three-step process that you can use to analyze media.

Describe the literal content of the media object.

Content is the literal information being communicated by a media object. This might mean describing the types of sounds or lyrics in a song, the setting and characters in a film or television show, or images from a piece of visual art. Think of describing the content as summarizing the information in an object as opposed to interpreting the information. Use straightforward statements to avoid interpretation. For example, you might describe an exhibit in a modern art museum as such: This picture focuses on a bridge and a river. There are two people standing on the bridge. Using simpler statements will help keep the content and form of the object separate.

Explain the form of the media object.

Formal qualities of a media object are the delivery system for an object's content. To discuss the form of an object, you will need to consider the way the object has been organized and how to describe that organization. Think of this as describing the "shape" of the media object. To do this, use descriptive statements that explain how an object appears. Let's return to the picture from before. The painting is very large and takes up the entire wall. It is made of many bright, unnatural colors, and appears to be made with a computer instead of a paintbrush. Your description should aim to explain how the object is being presented to the audience.

Synthesize content and form.

Once you have generated some ideas about the information in the media object (Content) and how that information is presented (Form), you can synthesize the two by combining your observations into a claim about the object. A good starting point is to consider what the goals of the creator may have been: Why did the author present this content in this form? Answering your own questions will help guide you towards a more complete understanding of the object. From this point, you can begin to draft a thesis statement about the purpose and meaning of the media object you are analyzing.

Reading media will help you to think critically about what the object is trying to communicate and how it influences you as a reader. Analyzing media can also help you explore and understand your identity as an individual or a student and how that relates to the culture surrounding you. However, while writing about various forms of media, remember to reference evidence from the object, as there will otherwise be no basis for your claims. If you are analyzing a film, you may need to cite dialogue or reference the cinematic techniques of a scene as evidence for your conclusions about the meaning of the film. For a piece of music, lyrics, instrumentation, or the structure of the song may be the evidence you include. Once you have completed this process, you should review the object to ensure your claims about the meaning of the piece are supported by your observations on the content and form.

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8.2 WHAT IS MULTIMODALITY?

Melanie Gagich

In college writing classes, you often write "traditional" essays. These traditional essays often look the same: paragraphs made up of black, Times New Roman font spaced evenly on a page of white paper. However, in addition to writing, or composing, traditional essays, you might also be asked to compose a multimodal text. A multimodal text is one that "exceed[s] the alphabetic and may include still and moving images, animations, color, words, music and sound" (Takayoshi and Selfe 1). This type of composing practice has been integrated in many First-Year Writing classrooms across the US since the 1990s. Examples of digital multimodal texts (sometimes described as "new media") include websites, infographics, podcasts, and videos, while non-digital multimodal texts might take the form of posters, collages, zines, comic books, or graphs. While this is not an exhaustive list, it does demonstrate how common multimodal texts are both inside and outside of the classroom.

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"What is Multimodality?" by Sean Tingle

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8.3 DIGITAL COMPOSITION AND MULTIMODAL TEXTS

Jennifer Schaller and Tammy Wolf

Almost every aspect of our communication is, in some way, digitally based. To be a writer in the 21st century means that you are a digital composer. Digital composition involves writing based in digital creation that incorporates multimodal elements. If you type your research essay on a computer using Google Docs, then you are a digital composer. But digital composition goes beyond the standard essay typed into a word processor—it includes using other digital tools and elements to explore the topic and persuade your audience. To begin with, most digital texts are considered multimodal. In this chapter, we will discuss multimodality within the digital composition realm, but you should know that multimodal texts can be created without a digital device.

What Are Multimodal Texts?

Multimodal texts utilize sensory elements to further their rhetorical purpose and persuade an audience. These can include audio, visual, and/or physical elements. You can create a multimodal text using a digital technology tool, but you can also create a multimodal text by hand as well. The following are some examples of digital multimodal composition:

- Infographic
- YouTube video
- Podcast
- Website
- Blog
- Text message
- Word Document

And since we're looking at types of multimodal texts, let's also look at some examples of multimodal composition that take place outside of the digital realm:

- Collage
- Poster
- Speech

- Sculpture
- Painting
- Architectural models

Why Use Digital Composition and Multimodal Texts?

Since our world communicates through mostly digital means, learning how to compose in a digital environment is key to your success not only in school, but also in your current and future jobs, and as a member of society.

In addition to multimodal assignments preparing you for your future writing endeavors, multimodal assignments also allow students to use what they know. Melanie Gagich, in her essay “An Introduction to and Strategies for Multimodal Composing,” writes that students already have knowledge of multimodal composition. She writes in her essay, “Understanding that you are already composing multimodally in many digital spaces will help you transfer that knowledge and experience into your academic assignments. This understanding might also help alleviate any fears or anxiety you may have when confronted with an assignment that disrupts what you think writing should look like” (Gagich 74). If creating a multimodal text seems new to you, chances are you already have an applied understanding of multimodality, just by virtue of living and socializing in the 21st century.

Gagich continues and writes:

> Perhaps the most significant reason for learning how to compose multimodally is that it provides “real-life” skills that can help prepare students for careers. The United States continues to experience a “digital age” where employees are expected to have an understanding of how to use technology and communicate in various ways for various purposes. Takayoshi and Selfe argue that “[w]hatever profession students hope to enter in the 21st century . . . they can expect to read and be asked to help compose multimodal texts of various kinds . . .” (3). Additionally, professionals are also using the benefits of digital tools and multimodal composing to promote themselves, their interests, research, or all three. Learning how to create a multimodal text will prepare you for the workforce by allowing you to embrace the skills you already have and learn how to target specific audiences for specific reasons using various modes of communication. (74)

Gagich writes that there are five steps to creating a multimodal text:

1. Determine your rhetorical situation.
2. Review and analyze other multimodal texts.
3. Gather content, media, and tools.
4. Cite and attribute information appropriately.
5. Begin drafting your text.

Making Visual Choices

According to *Foundations of Communication*, it may be a cliché to say, "A picture is worth a thousand words," but visual images have power. Good communication is a multisensory experience. Pre-literate children gravitate toward books with engaging pictures. As adults we graduate to denser books without pictures, yet we still visualize ideas to help us understand the text. That's because a strong image in a poem or a story appeals both to the readers' senses and emotions or intellect. Advertisers favor visual media—television, magazines, and billboards—because they are an effective way to hook an audience. Websites rely on color, graphics, icons, and a clear system of visual organization to engage Internet surfers. Visuals bring ideas to life for many readers and audiences in multiple ways:

- As a link between raw data and usable knowledge
- To provide concrete, vivid, and quick representations
- To save space
- To speak in a universal language
- To be persuasive

There are many types of visuals you can incorporate in digital and physical multimodal composition to illustrate and emphasize your point. The rest of this section describes how visuals can support and enhance your ideas in a multimodal text.

Symbols

Symbols include a range of items that can be either pictographic or abstract. In the image above, mathematical symbols and the image of a heart are used to convey the concept of love.

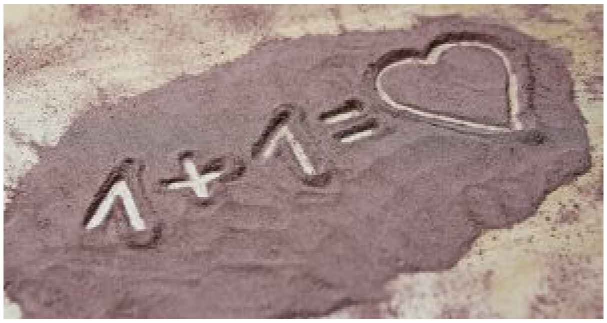

Figure 8.3.1: One Plus One Equals Love. Image "Love" by NoName_13 on Pixabay under a Pixabay Content License

It's a visual way to represent love, which is an abstract noun that means different things to a wide range of people.

Maps

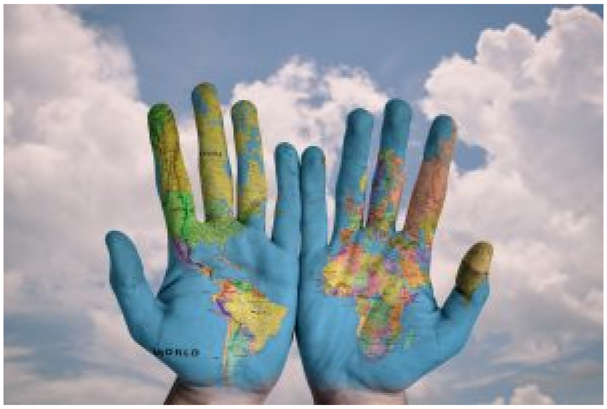

Figure 8.3.2: I've Got the Whole World in My Hands. "Las manos, Mundo y Mapa" by stokpic from Pixabay under a Pixabay Content License

Maps sometimes include map charts or statistical maps. In the image to the right, two human palms are displayed, and a map of the world is painted onto them. In the background there is a blue sky with white, fluffy clouds. A map can represent more than geography. This map is a representation of our world, but the image could also speak to lines drawn by humans. One ironic feature of this picture is that the world's territorial lines are drawn over the lines of two human hands. The image could also speak to matter, how nearly three-fourths of the world is made of water, and how up to 60% of the human body is made of water. Could the image speak to the interconnectedness of all beings on earth? That's up to the reader to interpret. Images can also persuade.

Graphs and Tables

Graphs can take a variety of forms, the most common being line graphs, bar graphs, and pie charts.

Figure 8.3.3: The Modern Office Anywhere. Image by Goumbik on Pixabay under a Pixabay Content License

In the graphs above, the creator is using visual representations of numbers to represent growth and decline in their topic. Graphs are a helpful way to visually illustrate change.

Diagrams

This visual illustrates a process. One example of a diagram would be a flow chart. The diagram below illustrates a workflow process.

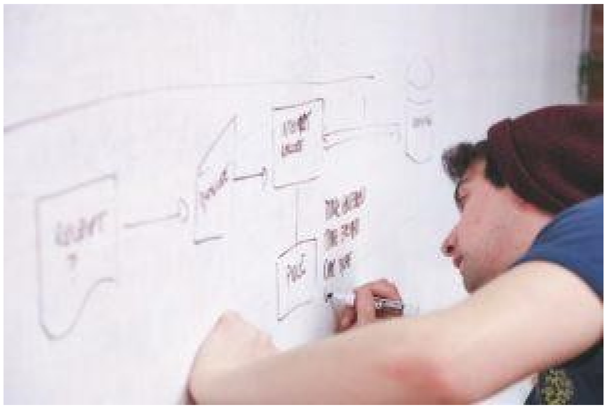

Figure 8.3.4: Image by Startup Stock Photos from Pexels licensed CC0

Photographs

Photographs (still or moving) depict concrete objects, tell a story, provide a scenario, and persuade an audience.

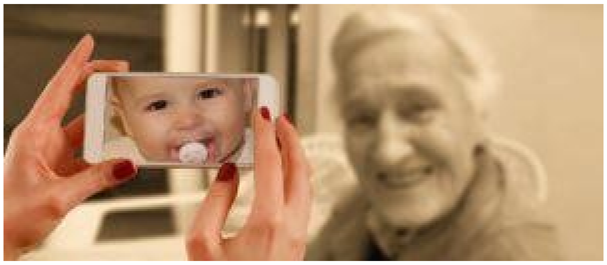

Figure 8.3.5: The History of Photography in Three Generations. Image by geralt on Pixabay under a Pixabay Content License

In the image to the right, a picture of a baby is displayed clearly on a smart phone in the foreground. In the background of the picture, an elderly woman smiles, and her face is blurry. There is contrast between the baby, whose image is clear, and the woman, whose image is blurred. The contrast piques the viewer's interest. Contrasting images, colors, and subjects can draw a reader into an image and force them to ask questions.

Illustrations

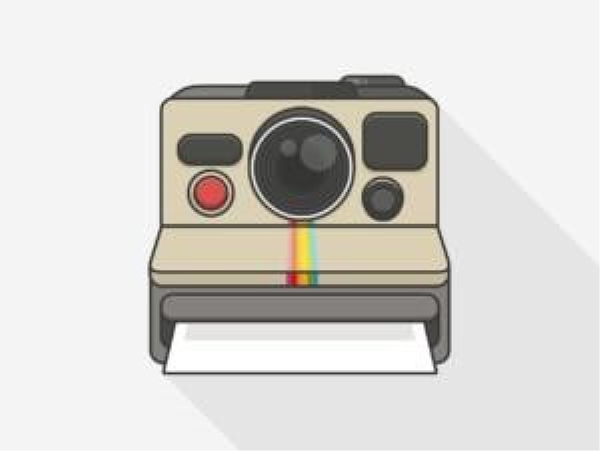

Figure 8.3.6: What Is a Polaroid, Again? Image by Sara Torda on Pixabay under a Pixabay Content License

Illustrations can be realistic or abstract. The illustration pictured here displays a cartoonish picture of a Polaroid camera, the iconic camera from the eighties. For some readers, the illustration may invoke nostalgia, while for younger viewers, the camera may have a slightly historical feel. The reception of the illustration varies depending on the audience; regardless, the illustration can help persuade a wide range of audience members.

Why Use Visuals?

There are a number of reasons you might consider including visuals in documents, presentations, and other communications. Four reasons are detailed below:

Decorative: Visuals that do not represent objects or actions within the text but are added, instead, for aesthetic effect are considered decorative. Decorative visuals are often added to gain attention or increase the audience's interest. Visuals can be used this way but can detract from the message you are trying to communicate and, thus, should be used with caution.

Representational: These visuals physically represent or physically resemble objects or actions in the text and are relevant to the content of the text. For example, rather than giving a detailed textual description of a new playground, you might include an image or render of the new playground and use the text to highlight specific features or information.

Analogical: Analogical visuals are used to compare and contrast two things and explain their likeness or correspondence. For example, a marketing consultant might try to clarify the difference between targeted marketing and mass marketing by including images of a single fisherman with a single fishing rod and line next to an image of a bigger boat with a fishing net. By using the fishing analogy, the marketing consultant is attempting to connect possible prior understanding of the audience, a visual, and the concepts of targeted marketing versus mass marketing.

Organizational: The purpose of organizational images is to provide structure to information, visually define relationships, and illustrate connections. A chart of the hierarchical structure of a company is one example of an organizational image.

Communication Purpose	**Consider These Visuals**
Depict an object	Photo, 3D Model, Illustration
Persuade an audience	Photo, Illustration, Chart (showing statistics)
Demonstrate a procedure	Photo, Illustration, Flowchart
Explain a process	Diagram, Symbol, Illustration
Make comparisons	Bar Graph, Line Graph, Table
Demonstrate trends or data	Line Graph
Organize information	Map, Table

There are many considerations to keep in mind when choosing visuals. When possible, use a variety of types of visuals, but remember that any visuals you use should enhance the content of the text. For example, only add photos if viewing the photos will clarify the text. Near each visual, explain its purpose concisely. Do not expect your readers to figure out the values of the visuals on their own.

For repositories of openly licensed photos, you can search Wikimedia Commons and Pixabay. Website creation software like WordPress, social media applications like Twitter, and other types of software like graphics makers such as Canva and video creators like Powtoon have their own repositories of free images you can use as well.

Making Audio Choices

Including audio in your multimodal project can enhance your text and move a reader both logically and emotionally. Audio enhances your message. You may want to consider the following audio choices:

- Music
- Spoken word
- Sound effects

Music: From pop to classical to Bollywood, music can be any use of vocalizations or instrumentals. Music can help convey theme in a video or podcast, and music can help heighten tension and advance plot in a story.

Spoken word: Spoken word audio choices include recording a voice over of the written text or a narration.

Sound effects: Sound effects include any kind of sound, from nature or manmade. A couple of examples include crickets, glass shattering, or applause. Sound effects can help characterize people and convey action. Sound effects can also affect the tone of a text, creating humor or suspense.

National Public Radio develops a wide range of podcasts that integrate music, narration, and sound effects to tell stories, as in this sample podcast episode aired on the NPR show Hidden Brain.

Why Use Audio?

There are a number of reasons you might consider including audio in documents, presentations, and other communications. According to the Advisory Group on Computer Graphics (AGOCG), using audio in multimedia has the following advantages:

It can convey meaning, providing an extra channel of information. It allows redundancy to be incorporated into the presentation of information, so that if the meaning is unclear to a user using visual information alone, the audio may clarify it.

Different learners use different learning strategies, and audio can provide additional information to support different learning styles—for example, some users may learn more by hearing than reading a piece of text.

Audio can add a sense of realism. Cultural associations with music allow you to convey emotion, time period, geographic location, etc.

It is useful for directing attention to important events. Non-speech audio may be readily identified by users—for example, the sound of breaking glass to signify an error. Since audio can grab the user's attention so successfully, it must be used carefully so as not to unduly distract from other media.

It can add interest to a presentation or program.

Ease of communication—users may respond better to the spoken word than other media. For example, in a company presentation, 'sound bytes' from satisfied customers can be used.

The AGOCG also writes that there can be disadvantages to using audio:

- Like most media, files can be large.
- Audio can be easily overused, and when sounds are continually used users tend to tune them out.
- For most people, audio is not as memorable as visual media.
- Good quality audio can be difficult to produce, and like other media most commercial audio, particularly music, is copyright.
- Users must have appropriate hardware and software.

Accessibility

Being a digital writer means that you have to be consciously aware of your audience and their ability or inability to participate in the texts that you create. Not everyone can view a meme or infographic and not everyone can hear the sound on a YouTube video.

Closed Captions

Whenever possible, include captions for all videos that you create. This allows those who are hearing-impaired and deaf to access your message. You can edit the videos yourself to add captions, or you can use a platform like YouTube that will auto-generate captions that you can edit.

Audio Description

If you are making a video that contains scenes with any type of action, you will want to create an audio description.

Transcript

For any type of audio or video, you want to consider including a transcript of the spoken dialogue.

Alternative Text

For any photo or graphic you include in your text, make sure to provide alternative text by right-clicking on the image in Word, and then selecting edit Alt-text. Using Alt-text is a principle of web accessibility. Users with screen readers will be read an alt attribute to better understand an on-page image.

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8.4 VISUAL RHETORIC

Jennifer Schaller; Tammy Wolf; Tracey Watts; and Will Coviello

Below is a graphic display located in the lobby of a building. The display attempts to connect the key values of an organization to images, using visual rhetoric. Some of the instances are effective ("Teamwork"), while others don't quite achieve the desired effect. Identify the images that work and those that fall short. For example, what does a gazebo dock have to do with accountability? Could the author have used an alternate image instead?

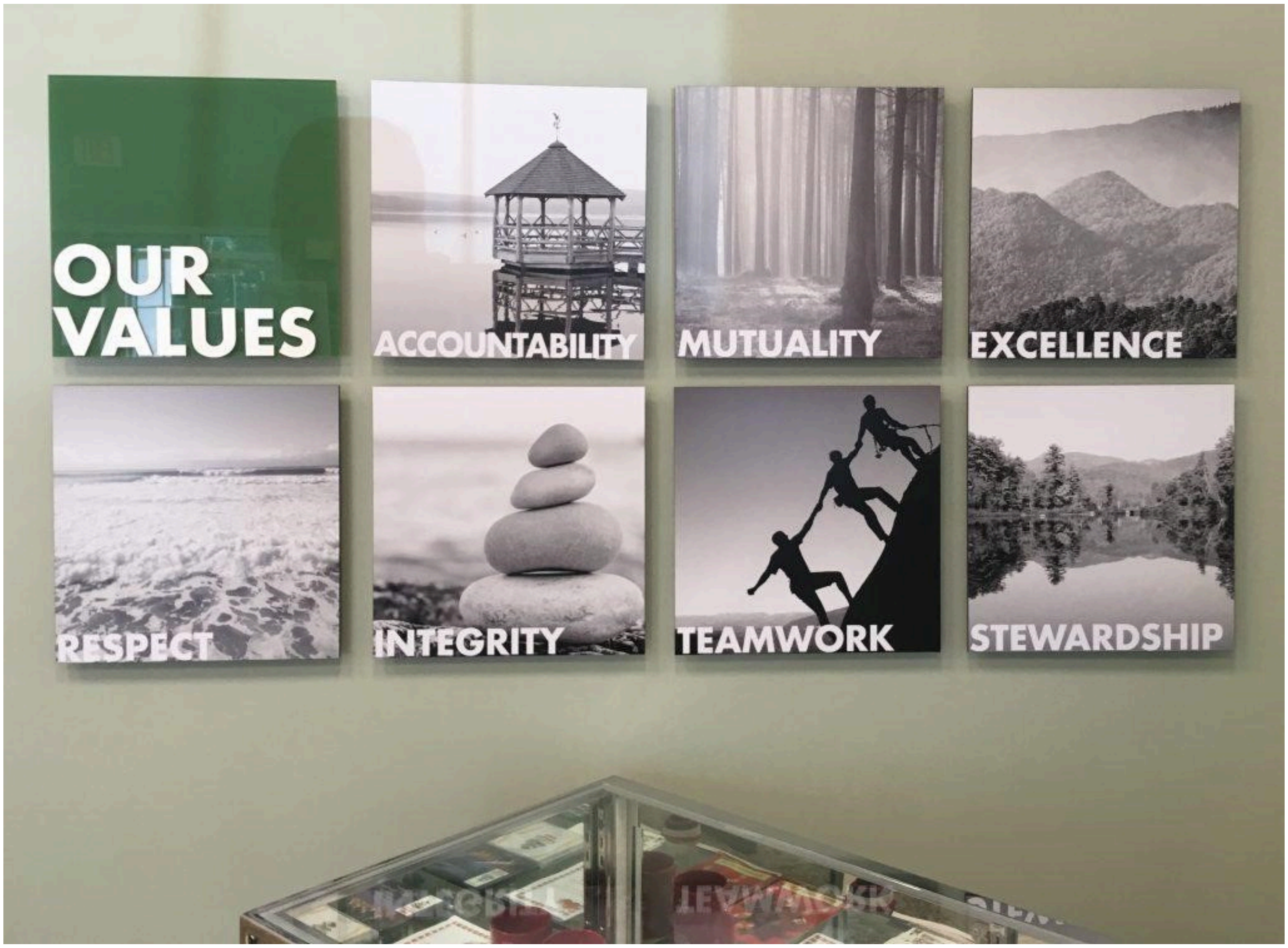


Figure 8.4.1: This Is Your Bank. From Visual Rhetoric by Granite State College licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Visual Rhetoric Defined

Visual rhetoric is a special area of academic study unto its own. It has a long history in the study of art and semiotics (the study of symbols), and it is related to the classical study of oral rhetoric, which includes persuasive speeches and legal arguments. You may recall that rhetoric, more informally, can be understood as the practice of using language effectively to persuade. In speaking and in writing, effective rhetoric often relies on use of the appeals—pathos, ethos, and logos. Visual rhetoric works similarly. In the realm of visual rhetoric, images also use the appeals in order to communicate ideas and influence audiences.

For the purpose of our studies, we will define the phrase "visual rhetoric" as the means by which visual imagery can be used to achieve a communication goal. As in classical rhetoric, this goal is often to influence people's attitudes, opinions, and beliefs. Visual rhetoric might be understood as the study of the impression that visuals make upon a viewer. We can examine many categories of images, including advertisements, photographs, political cartoons, and even memes, when studying this impact.

Visual imagery can often be symbolic, especially when the images represent concepts or values that have a common meaning in society. One example is the American flag. The American flag in an image frequently stands for patriotism, as in the United States Marine Corps War Memorial pictured below.

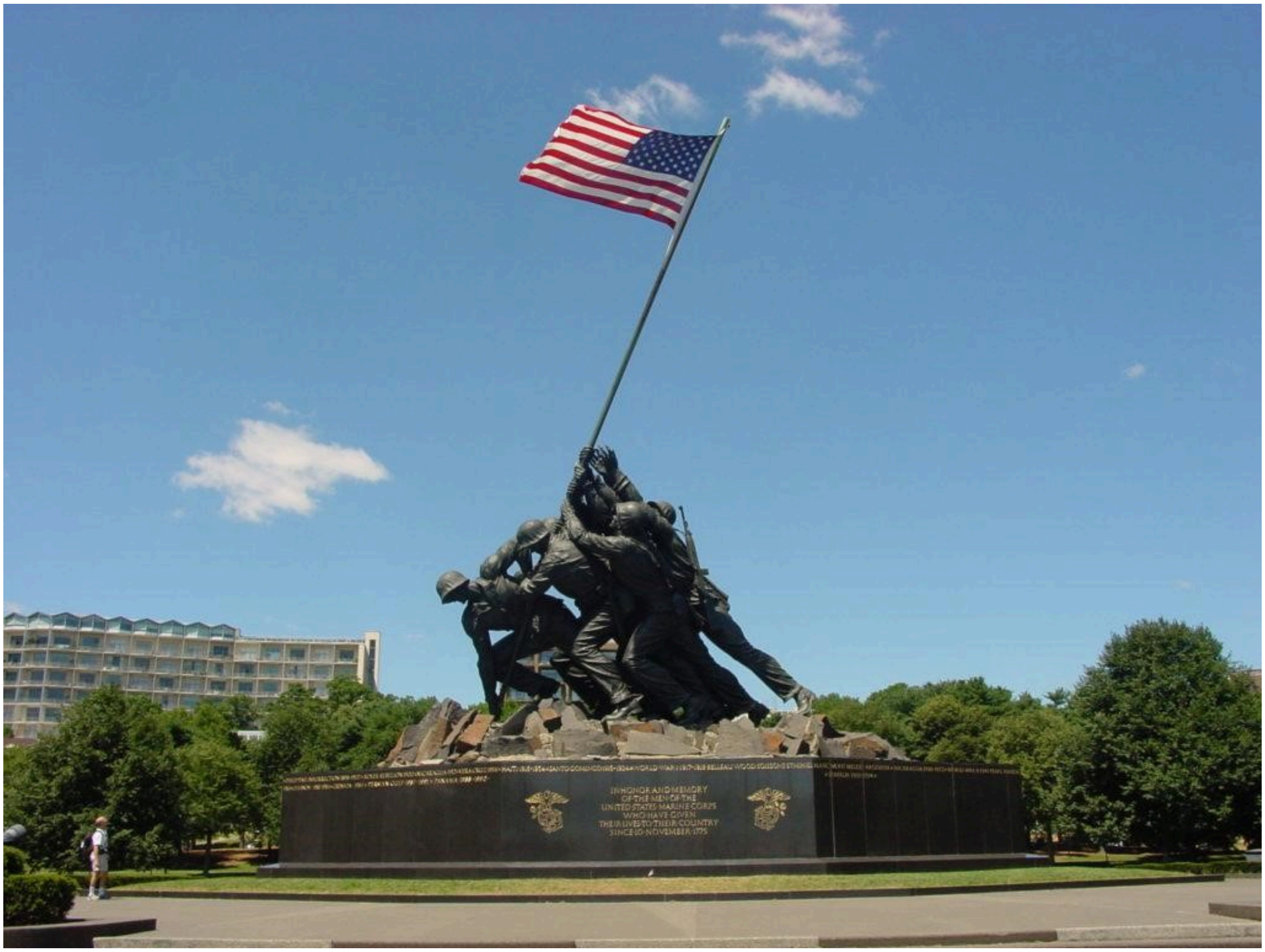


Figure 8.4.2: Iwo Jima Memorial, Washington, DC. Image by Christopher Hollis, Wikimedia Commons. Released in the Public Domain

The sculpture depicted by this image is a three-dimensional interpretation of a historical photograph taken during World War II, which depicted six U.S. Marines raising an American flag on Mount Suribachi during the Battle of Iwo Jima. The original photograph, which won a Pulitzer Prize in 1945, is widely recognized as an iconic World War II image. In the photograph, as in the later sculpture, the American flag conveys a sense of hope, enduring effort, and patriotism.

The political cartoon below, published in 2020, makes a clear reference to the Iwo Jima photograph in order to highlight the heroic sacrifices of healthcare workers, whom the cartoon compares to U.S. Marines.

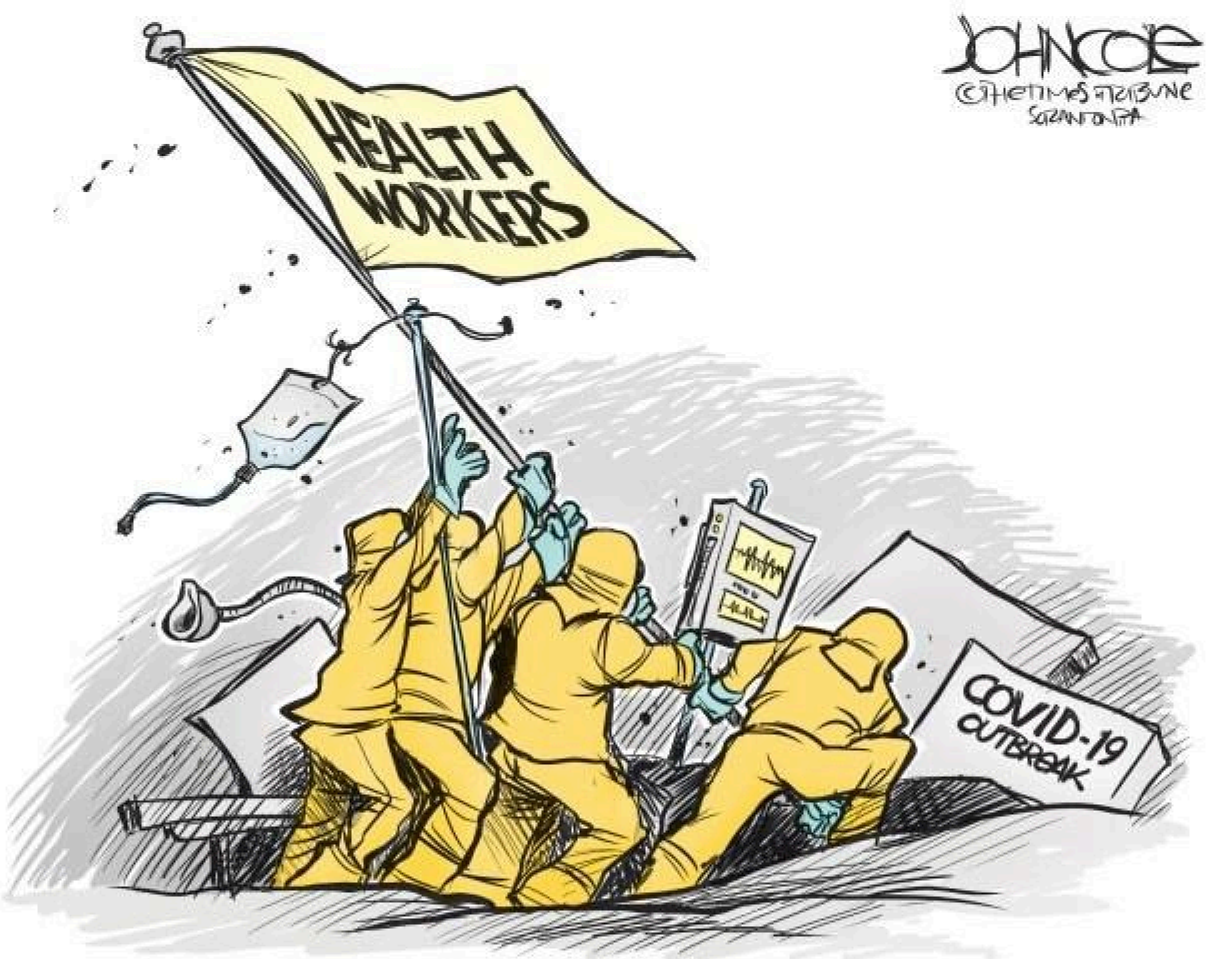


Figure 8.4.3: Cartoon by John Cole, March 2020. Materials are included on the basis of fair use as described in the Code of Best Practices for Fair Use in Open Education.

The culture we live in influences our responses to images, and even within a shared culture, people from different groups might interpret images differently. While the Iwo Jima photo, the USMC War Memorial, and the 2020 political cartoon all convey a meaning that most viewers can comprehend with little disagreement, it is possible for people from different backgrounds to react to and use images in opposing ways. A national flag, for example, as shown in the images that follow, can be used to emphasize the patriotism of an action or event. It can be used to critique a moment in which actions fall short of patriotic ideals.

The context of an image is also important. The author of visual media, just like a writer working with written text, needs to provide readers with additional information about what an image relates to in order for the image to produce its intended effect. In other words, a picture of a flag, in isolation, may not convey a clear meaning. It is up to the author to surround the image with enough information (text or speech) so that the reader can form the connections between the image and the message that the author intends to convey.

We can explore this concept by analyzing specific images. The examples below depict flags to convey a variety of distinct messages. Some of the messages are designed to align with the conventional perception of the national flag. These messages convey a sense of patriotism, duty, or idealism. Other examples use the flag as a commentary on an event that stands in opposition to the ideals that the flag traditionally represents. The reader understands the message at a glance without much cognitive deliberation—because that is the natural reflex of human visual sensory perception.

How might you describe the message of each image below? Which images use the flag to send traditional messages about patriotism? Which images make protests? How would you describe the message that each image sends? How would you describe the values that the creator of each image might embrace?

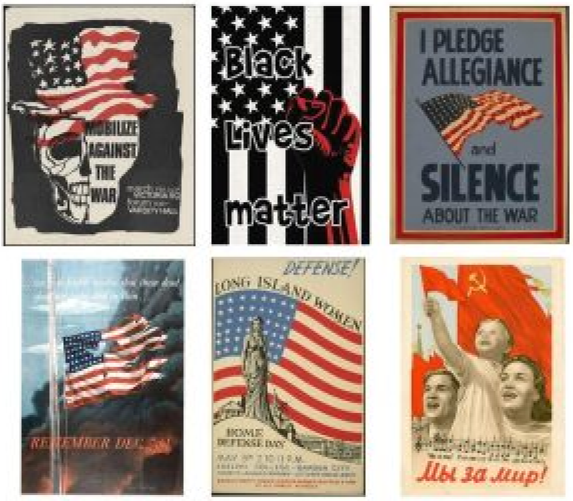


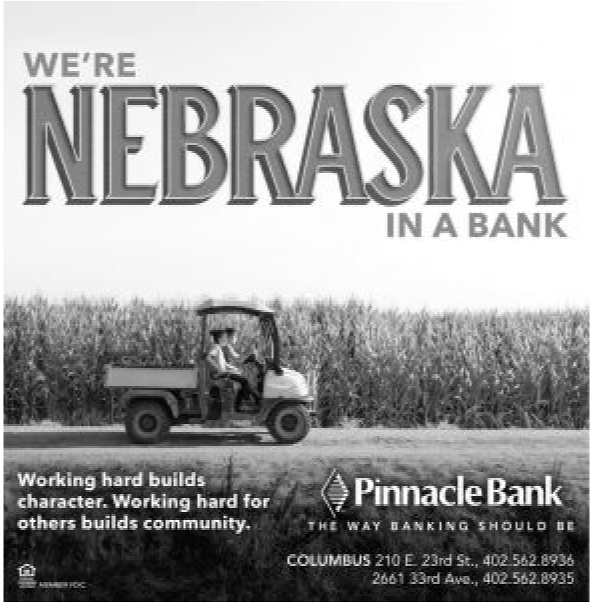
Figure 8.4.4: Examples of flags used to punctuate various messages of patriotism and protest. All images CC0—Public Domain

The vocabulary of visual rhetoric is already familiar to readers who have studied the rhetorical appeals:

- Logos: An appeal to logic meant to convince an audience by use of logic or reason.
- Pathos: An emotional appeal meant to persuade an audience by appealing to their emotions.
- Ethos: An ethical appeal meant to convince an audience of the author's credibility or character.

This video offers a more in-depth review of the rhetorical appeals.

We can analyze many categories of images when we examine visual rhetoric in practice. Advertisements are a class of images that we see on a daily basis, and we interact with their visual rhetoric perhaps without even realizing that we are doing so. Advertisements frequently use rhetorical appeals in order to connect with specific audiences, whom they target as potential customers. In the print ad below for Pinnacle Bank, the image shown has no relationship to banking itself. However, the image works to persuade the viewer that the bank has ethos, or credibility, by using images that the bank hopes will attract a specific demographic of individuals or businesses. Who do you think the target audience for the ad may be? Can you identify values that the target audience might embrace? How does the bank use imagery to build credibility among a target audience?



WE'RE
NEBRASKA
IN A BANK

Working hard builds character. Working hard for others builds community.

Pinnacle Bank
THE WAY BANKING SHOULD BE

COLUMBUS 210 E. 23rd St., 402.562.8936
2661 33rd Ave., 402.562.8935

MEMBER FDIC

Figure 8.4.5: Banking on a Good Harvest. © Pinnacle Bank—All Rights Reserved. Material included on the basis of fair use as described in the Code of Best Practices for Fair Use in Open Education.

In this ad, Pinnacle Bank has selected a farm image, as opposed to a bank image, in order to acknowledge the audience's interests, traditions, and livelihood. In doing so, the bank hopes to promote feelings of trust, connection, and mutual understanding, even though the occupations of banker and farmer couldn't be more different.

In developing a thorough analysis of how visual objects, such as advertisements and political posters, use rhetorical devices, we might ask the following questions:

- Message: What overall argument is the image or visual text trying to make? We can usually determine the message of an item based on visual clues, including the interaction between visual details and written text.

- Purpose: Are there specific goals or outcomes that the creator of the item may be trying to reach? There is often quite a bit of overlap between message and purpose, but key distinctions between these two categories can be made as well. In the case of advertisements, the purpose is often to expand the consumer base. However, in some advertisements, especially contemporary ads, the purpose might involve rebranding or sending a political message.

- Context: Are there historical or cultural details that we should recognize as important to the message? In analyzing an advertisement, should we be aware of the brand's pre-existing reputation or its prior advertising campaigns? Many corporations repeatedly emphasize specific core values in their advertising. Others update their strategies and messages over time. Political and cultural messages may be apparent in visual images as well, whether overtly or in subtle ways.

- Details: What should we notice about the concrete, visual aspects of the item? What choices were made regarding color or font, for example? What choices were made in the writing of the individual lines of text or dialogue? Are there certain details about the characters in the image that stand out?
- Problems: Does the item have blind spots? Does it mischaracterize or misunderstand certain characters or themes? Does it make assumptions that may be problematic or culturally insensitive?

We might use this 2015 video from Mattel, titled "Imagine the Possibilities," to put these concepts into practice. In the ad, Mattel sends a message that playing with Barbie dolls can help young girls imagine themselves as successful professionals. The purpose of the ad isn't just to sell more Barbies, though doing so is certainly part of the plan. In addition to boosting sales, Mattel is likely hoping to rebrand the toy by moving away from the stereotype of Barbie dolls as superficial and materialistic.

We can develop context by noting that earlier decades saw the company focusing on advertising more materialistic, luxury items, such as Barbie's Dream House. However, in the 21st century, our culture has become more wary of narratives that depict women largely as housewives. In response, Mattel's advertisement shows the brand moving toward a focus on women's career prospects. In "Imagine the Possibilities," the five young female actors imagine themselves as working professionals.

We can take a close look at the details of the ad to note that the young girls are succeeding in fields that have traditionally been male dominated. Three girls work in STEM-related fields; one is a biology professor, another is a vet, and the third is a museum docent working in the field of paleontology. One of the other two girls is a coach for a men's soccer team. The other is a CEO. While Mattel is clearly working to appeal to consumers who want their daughters to break the glass ceiling, the ad does have some problems. The girls are frequently given silly lines that emphasize their naivete. Additionally, the girls working in the sciences offer incorrect "facts" that children their age should know. Ultimately, one gets the sense that Mattel wants to empower these girls—but hasn't quite figured out how to do so. The ad also lacks diversity. While many of the secondary actors in the ad are people of color, the ad is much less inclusive in its casting of the primary actors.

Exercise

Many brands work to communicate a set of core values in their advertisements over time. Coca-Cola, for example, often aims to link its products to concepts like patriotism or unity. Watch the ads linked below and examine how each sends the message that Apple products offer people a sense of individuality and freedom. As you discuss the ads, try to identify exactly what Apple is offering people freedom from. Does Apple's emphasis on freedom reflect the nature of the relationship that you have with products like the ones that Apple offers?

"1984"

"Homework"

"Bounce"

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CHAPTER 9: THE RESEARCH PROCESS

9.1 DEVELOPING A RESEARCH QUESTION

Emilie Zickel

> *"I write out of ignorance. I write about the things I don't have any resolutions for, and when I'm finished, I think I know a little bit more about it. I don't write out of what I know. It's what I don't know that stimulates me."* —Toni Morrison, author and Northeast Ohio native

Think of a research paper as an opportunity to deepen (or create!) knowledge about a topic that matters to you. Just as Toni Morrison states that she is stimulated by what she doesn't yet know, a research paper assignment can be interesting and meaningful if it allows you to explore what you don't know.

Research, at its best, is an act of knowledge *creation,* not just an extended book report. This knowledge creation is the essence of any great educational experience. Instead of being lectured at, you get to design the learning project that will ultimately result in you experiencing and then expressing your own intellectual growth. You get to read what you choose, and you get to become an expert on your topic.

That sounds, perhaps, like a lofty goal. But by spending some quality time brainstorming, reading, thinking, or otherwise tuning into what matters to you, you can end up with a workable research topic that will lead you on an enjoyable research journey.

The best research topics are meaningful to you:

- Choose a topic that you want to understand better.
- Choose a topic that you want to read about and devote time to
- Choose a topic that is perhaps a bit out of your comfort zone
- Choose a topic that allows you to understand others' opinions and how those opinions are shaped.
- Choose something that is relevant to you, personally or professionally.
- Do not choose a topic because you think it will be "easy"—those can end up being even quite challenging

The video below offers ideas on choosing not only a topic that you are drawn to, but a topic that is realistic and manageable for a college writing class.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://louis.pressbooks.pub/englishcomp2/?p=148#oembed-1

"Choosing a Manageable Research Topic" by Pfaul Library is licensed under CC BY

Brainstorming Ideas for a Research Topic

Which question(s) below interest you? Which question(s) below spark a desire to respond? A good topic is one that moves you to think, to do, to want to know more, to want to say more.

There are many ways to come up with a good topic. The best thing to do is to give yourself time to think about what you really want to commit days and weeks to reading, thinking, researching, more reading, writing, more researching, reading, and writing on.

1. What news stories do you often see, but want to know more about?
2. What (socio-political) argument do you often have with others that you would love to work on strengthening?
3. What would you love to become an expert on?
4. What are you passionate about?
5. What are you scared of?
6. What problem in the world needs to be solved?
7. What are the key controversies or current debates in the field of work that you want to go into?
8. What is a problem that you see at work that needs to be better publicized or understood?
9. What is the biggest issue facing [specific group of people: by age, by race, by gender, by ethnicity, by nationality, by geography, by economic standing? choose a group]
10. If you could interview anyone in the world, who would it be? Can identifying that person lead you to a research topic that would be meaningful to you?
11. What area/landmark/piece of history in your home community are you interested in?
12. What in the world makes you angry?
13. What global problem do you want to better understand?
14. What local problem do you want to better understand?
15. Is there some element of the career that you would like to have one day that you want to better understand?
16. Consider researching the significance of a song, or an artist, or a musician, or a novel/film/short story/comic, or an art form on some aspect of the broader culture.

17. Think about something that has happened to (or is happening to) a friend or family member. Do you want to know more about this?
18. Go to a news source (*New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Christian Science Monitor, etc.*) and skim the titles of news stories. Does any story interest you?

From Topic to Research Question

Once you have decided on a research topic, an area for academic exploration that matters to you, it is time to start thinking about what you want to learn about that topic.

The goal of college-level research assignments is never going to be to simply "go find sources" on your topic. Instead, think of sources as helping you to answer a research question or a series of research questions about your topic. These should not be simple questions with simple answers, but rather complex questions about which there is no easy or obvious answer.

A compelling research question is one that may involve controversy, or may have a variety of answers, or may not have any single, clear answer. All of that is okay and even desirable. If the answer is an easy and obvious one, then there is little need for argument or research.

Make sure that your research question is clear, specific, researchable, and limited (but not too limited). Most of all, make sure that you are curious about your own research question. If it does not matter to you, researching it will feel incredibly boring and tedious.

The video below includes a deeper explanation of what a good research question is as well as examples of strong research questions:

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://louis.pressbooks.pub/englishcomp2/?p=148#oembed-2

"Creating a Good Research Question" by CII GSU

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9.2 COMING UP WITH RESEARCH STRATEGIES

Rashida Mustafa; Emilie Zickel; and Johannah White

You have chosen a topic on your own, from parameters provided by your instructor or from an assigned topic. You have taken that topic and developed it into a research question or a hypothesis that is arguable and manageable for the length of the assignment. Now it is time to begin your research. But before heading to your favorite search engine and academic databases, first think about what kinds of information you want and/or need.

You may want to begin by asking yourself questions relating to your chosen topic so that you can begin sifting through and perusing sources that you will use to further your understanding of the topic. When you begin the research phase of your essay, you will come across an array of sources that look helpful in the beginning, but once you have a clearer idea of your research topic (it may change as you research), you might see that the sources you were once considering using in your essay are now irrelevant. To make your research efficient, start your research with a research strategy.

A **research strategy** involves deciding what you need to know to answer your research question.

- What kinds of sources do you need?
- What can different kinds of sources—popular or academic, primary/secondary/tertiary—offer you?
- Whose perspectives could help you to answer your research question?
- What kinds of professionals/scholars will be able to give you the information you seek?
- What keywords should you be using to get the information that you want?

What Should I Be Looking For?

As you seek sources that can help you to answer your research question, think about the types of "voices" you need to hear from.

- Scientists/researchers who have conducted their own research studies on your topic
- Scholars/thinkers/writers who have also looked at your topic and offered their own analyses of it
- Journalists who are reporting on what they have observed
- Journalists/newspaper or magazine authors who are providing their educated opinions on your topic
- Critics, commentators, or others who offer opinions on your topic

- Tertiary sources/fact books that offer statistics or data (usually without analysis)
- Personal stories of individuals who have lived through an event
- Bloggers/tweeters/other social media posters

Any of these perspectives (and more) could be useful in helping you to answer your research question.

Wikipedia

Wikipedia, the place that we have all been told to avoid, can be a great place to get ideas for a research strategy.

Wikipedia can help you to identify key terms, people, events, arguments, or other elements that are essential to understanding your topic. The information that you find on Wikipedia can also offer ideas for keywords that you can use to search in academic databases. Spending a bit of time on Wikipedia can help you to answer essential questions such as:

- Do you have an overview of the topic?
- Are you up-to-date on the current situation/most recent information on your topic?
- Do you know about key events that have shaped any controversies surrounding your topic?

Wikipedia is a wealth of information and much of it can be accurate and valuable. A 2005 study by the journal *Nature* claimed that the information found on Wikipedia is as accurate as that found in Encyclopedia Britannica. So why shouldn't you cite Wikipedia as a source in your research paper?

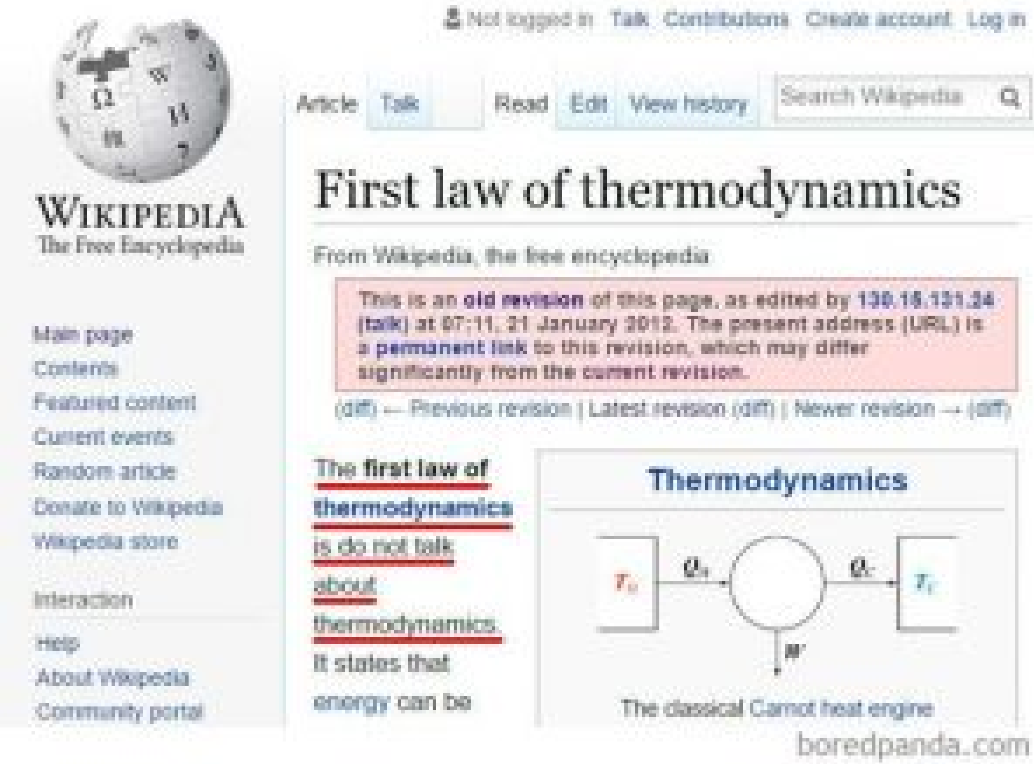
First, because the authorship of the material is unknown.

Second, because the authorship is unknown, the authority of the author is unknown, hence the material is easily called into question. If we do not know who wrote something, we don't know what his/her qualifications are to write it. In college-level work, we strive to learn from recognized experts in our subject areas.

Third, because Wikipedia is considered an online encyclopedia and college-level papers seek higher quality source materials such as peer-reviewed and academic journals, books from scholarly publishers, and other materials (data sets, reports) that demonstrate a student's ability to recognize accuracy within source material.

Additionally, Wikipedia possesses the pitfall of being an online "crowd-sourced" resource. On the web, being a "crowd-sourced" resource means that any member of its community can modify it. The problem is two-fold: members of the community do not sign their work—all members remain anonymous. Though modification is overseen by the nonprofit Wikimedia Foundation, hot topic pages, celebrity pages, as well as popular and culturally dissenting events often lead to pages frequently altered with troll-like vandalism.

In this excerpt of a vandalized Wikipedia page, you can see that it is not only celebrity and culturally divisive pages that invite modification. Someone has made a joke of the entry to echo the sentiment of the film *Fight Club*, which may not prove useful to you when doing research on a physics paper.


WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia
Not logged in
Talk
Contributions
Create account
Log in
Article
Talk
Read
Edit
View history
Search Wikipedia
Main page
Contents
Featured content
Current events
Random article
Donate to Wikipedia
Wikipedia store
Interaction
Help
About Wikipedia
Community portal
Thermodynamics
T_H
Q_H
Q_C
T_C
W
boredpanda.com

First law of thermodynamics

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

This is an **old revision** of this page, as edited by 130.15.131.24 (talk) at 07:11, 21 January 2012. The present address (URL) is a **permanent link** to this revision, which may differ significantly from the current revision.

(diff) ← Previous revision | Latest revision (diff) | Newer revision → (diff)

The **first law of thermodynamics** is do not talk about thermodynamics. It states that energy can be

The classical Carnot heat engine

Figure 9.2.1: First Law of Thermodynamics, Fight Club edition

How to Use Wikipedia—as a Resource, Not a Source

Should you cite Wikipedia? NO.

Should you be using a Wikipedia page as a source? NO.

BUT Wikipedia can give you some wonderful access to the context surrounding your topic and help you to get started. Wikipedia pages provide reference links to most of its information, which you can click on, read, and evaluate for yourself if it is a credible source. In fact, the most valuable part of Wikipedia is the “References Available” section at the bottom of every page. That is where you can start judging the sources used to produce what you have read.

The video below offers more tips on how you can integrate Wikipedia into your research strategy:

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://louis.pressbooks.pub/englishcomp2/?p=666#oembed-1

"Using Wikipedia for Academic Research" by Michael Baird (Cooperative Library Instruction Project) is licensed under CC BY.

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9.3 BASIC GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH IN ACADEMIC DATABASES

Emilie Zickel and Johannah White

The vast majority of your professors will expect you to use academic research databases for research papers in college. Getting used to doing research in an academic database can be challenging, especially if you have only used Google for research. Becoming fluent in using academic databases takes practice but will prove invaluable for any topic you research and write about.

We have all been spoiled by Google, which has been designed to provide us what we want before we have even fully articulated (or sometimes even know) what we want. Academic databases do not have the same sort of funding as Google, which profits by algorithms that deliver desired information (and advertising) in nanoseconds. But what our academic databases lack in immediate gratification, they deliver in peer-reviewed high-caliber content.

The search strategies offered in the videos below offer basic but important information about using research databases effectively. While the content on the rest of this page applies most specifically to Academic Search Complete (the company that makes the database is called EBSCO), the tips are relevant to any research database. If you really want to learn how to master database searching, the best advice is to make an appointment with a librarian. They can offer you specialized training.

How Can You Use an Academic Research Database Effectively?

- Avoid typing your whole research question into the search field. Databases don't use language the same way Google does. Use only keywords—short terms that describe the information you are looking for. Use one box per keyword/keyword combination, e.g., "graffiti" or "20th century American art."
- Use several keywords at once, and be willing to change each word for a synonym if you hit a dead end with one set of words. Synonyms are important. Databases interpret your searches literally. They cannot interpret your search terms and make associations between them.
- Use "AND" to retrieve more results or "OR" to limit your results. You will see these "operators" in dropdown menus between your search term boxes.
- Use the database's own Subject Terms to help you to refine your searches within that database. These subject terms help you discover more specific search results. They function like tagging a person in Facebook. Use the correct subject term in your search and you will find ALL results with that term in

the database.

The video below explains what doing all of those things means in a practical sense.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://louis.pressbooks.pub/englishcomp2/?p=674#oembed-1

"Tracking Down Articles" by Research Therapists

What Is Academic Search Complete?

Academic Search Complete is one of the more user-friendly databases for conducting college research. It is a great "starter" database because it provides an array of both popular and scholarly information on a very wide range of topics, and chances are that you will find something useful for your project there. In Academic Search Complete, you can find articles from some of the more well-known newspapers and magazines as well as news videos from the Associated Press. You will also find scholarly articles from a wide variety of academic disciplines, such as biology, psychology, education, sociology, political science, business, and literature, among others.

When you realize how many filters, called "facets," you can apply to your search query so that you limit your search results to your desired types of information, it is easy to see how valuable this database (or database researching in general) can be. Google is great at delivering large quantities of information, but academic databases are excellent at delivering high-quality information given their specific facets—separating peer-reviewed information from popular, filtering your results to see all results from one valuable author/source, or separating journal articles or books out from the mass of results. This can save you time and improve your focus on your desired materials.

The video below offers a quick overview of how you can use Academic Search Complete to

- Limit your search results to only get peer reviewed (scholarly) articles
- Limit your search results to get articles that are accessible via download ("full-text")
- Refine your searches so that you get the information more relevant to your research project
- Refine your search to specific dates so that only articles from a certain time period are found
- Access articles that you find
- Locate article abstracts
- Find subject terms and understand how they can be useful to your research strategy

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://louis.pressbooks.pub/englishcomp2/?p=674#oembed-2

"Academic Search Complete Database in 3 Minutes" by Seminole State Library

A Note about Google Scholar vs. Academic Search Complete

Many students report using and liking Google Scholar. If Google Scholar works for you—and it certainly can work well—then by all means continue to use it along with Academic Search Complete. What may happen, however, is that while you can find article titles via Google Scholar searches, you may not get access to the full article because you do not have a paid subscription to the journal in which the article is published.

Academic Search Complete, and the many, many other academic research databases that can be accessed from your university library's databases page, will give you access to most articles. If you find a title via Google Scholar that you cannot access, try to find it in Academic Search Complete or, if available, use your library's citation finder feature (often on the library homepage).

Do not ever pay for an academic article when you can get access to it through your university library. If the library does not have access to the article as full-text in their databases, you can request it via your library's Interlibrary Loan service. It is free to students but may take a few days to receive it. Starting your research process earlier rather than later gives you the most choice in the materials you use in your assignment.

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9.4 USING EFFECTIVE KEYWORDS IN YOUR RESEARCH

Robin Jeffrey and Johannah White

Good research involves using creativity in your searching. If you have taken the time to think through what types of information you want and what types of sources you want that information from, then you are already off to a great start in terms of searching creatively.

But another key step in good research is in thinking about using effective keywords. Keywords are just what they sound like—the keys to doing quality searches that reveal the information you need.

Some Tips for Getting the Results That You Want from a Search

- **Use quotation marks.** Are you searching for a phrase? Put it in quotation marks: "textbook affordability" will get you results for that exact phrase.
- **Use AND/+.** Are you searching for two terms that you think are topically related? Use AND (or +) to connect them: education AND racism, or education + racism, will only bring up results that include both terms.
- **Use NOT/- to limit what you don't want.** Are you searching for a term that's commonly associated with a topic you don't want to learn about? Use NOT (or -) in front of the keyword you don't want results from: articles NOT magazines, or articles – magazines, will bring up results that are about articles, but exclude any results that also include the term magazines.
- **Use an asterisk to get a variety of word endings**. Do you want to get back as many results on a topic as possible? Use * at the end of a word for any letters that might vary: smok*, will bring up results that include the term smoke, smoking, and smokers.
- Remember to **search *terms*,** not entire phrases or sentences. Databases do not understand whole sentences like you and I. They only understand keywords, subject headings, the names of authors and titles of newspapers, magazines, journals, and books. And do test out synonyms for your core keywords. This video helps to explain how you can play around with key terms:

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://louis.pressbooks.pub/englishcomp2/?p=154#oembed-1

"Search Keywords Tutorial" by Ray W. Howard Library at Shoreline Community College

Research Strategy: Coming Up with Keywords for Your Topic

1. What are three core keywords (using the guidelines in the video above) that you can use in a search for your topic?
2. Synonyms can save your search. If the database does not recognize your search term, it will not give good (or any) search results. If you search again using the synonym for your term, you may find a lot of good material.
3. Is there a phrase related to your research topic that you would benefit from searching "in quotation marks"?
4. What are your NOT words—the words that you want to exclude from your search?
5. Looking at the keywords you've generated so far, are there any words in which a hash sign would be helpful? Example: wom#n would bring results including the words "woman" and "women."

PRO TIP: Using a worksheet or making notes about your search terms, especially the most successful ones, will help you go through your search process.

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9.5 KEEPING TRACK OF YOUR SOURCES AND WRITING AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Johannah White and Robin Jeffrey

Keeping Track of Your Sources

Throughout the process of research, it is easy to get lost in a sea of information. Here are some tips and tools that you can use throughout the stages of your research process to keep sources organized.

As you find articles, keep them! Here are some options that you can store articles that you find:

Always keep a working digital bibliography of the sources that you are considering or using. If you construct your Works Cited as you go along, you will save yourself a lot of time and effort.

1. **Import sources** that you may want to use to Zotero, a free software tool that you can download to store, cite, and organize potential sources. Or if you are not interested in Zotero, you can try to…
2. **Create a Google Doc or a Word file** to keep track of the sources that you want to read. Copy and paste the full citation (many databases, like Academic Search Complete, can create a Works Cited reference for you). Or, if you are using a source that you found via Google Scholar, copy and paste the URL of the source (it will need to be cited properly by author name, article title, source, etc. if you use it in a paper).
3. If you are searching in Academic Search Complete or any EBSCO database, **use the Create a "Folder"** feature found at the top right-hand side of your screen, to save the search results that look interesting. Before you leave your search session, DON'T FORGET to email yourself the citations of articles you have saved. Most often, the full text will accompany the citation. When you do this, you will have the option to choose what citation style you would like to use. If you close your web page before sending the citations, your saved articles will be gone.
4. **Print**. If you have read the abstract of an article and you are fairly sure it will be useful, go ahead and print it out. You may want to have a folder dedicated to your research project where you keep print outs of all the articles you plan to use. You will end up saving yourself time if you add the Works Cited info in with all of your other sources.

Components of an Annotated Bibliography

An annotation often offers a summary of a source that you intend to use for a research project as well as some assessment of the source's relevance to your project or quality and credibility. Here are the key components of a typical annotation:

Works Cited Reference

You will provide the full bibliographic reference for the source: author, title, source title, and other required information depending on the type of source. This will be formatted just as it would be in a typical Works Cited.

Summary of the Source

- After the works cited reference, begin to discuss the source. Begin with a summary of the source.
- At the very beginning of your summary, mention the title of the text you are summarizing, the name of the author, and the central point or argument of the text. Describe the key sections of the text and their corresponding main points. Try to avoid focusing on details; a summary covers the essential points.
- Use signal phrases to refer to the author(s)
- Always maintain a neutral tone and use the third-person point of view and present tense (i.e., *Tompkins asserts…*).
- Keep the focus of the summary on the text, not on what you think of it, and try to put as much of the summary as you can in your own words. If you must use exact phrases from the source that you are summarizing, you must quote and cite them.
- **Check your Annotated Bibliography assignment sheet for additional content requirements.** Instructors often require more than a simple summary of each source. Do you need to go beyond summarizing each source? Do you need to evaluate the source's credibility or relevance? Do you need to offer an explanation of how you plan to integrate the source in your paper? Do you need to point out similarities or differences with other sources in the annotated bibliography? Any (or all) of those things *may* be required in an annotated bibliography, depending on how or if your instructor has designed this assignment as part of a larger research project.

Formatting

Annotated bibliographies require formatting, which is different depending on what type of style guide you must adhere to: MLA, APA, CMS, etc. Be sure to check the formatting and style guidelines (resources abound online, including visual models) for your annotated bibliography assignment.

The Annotated Bibliography Samples page on the Purdue OWL offers examples of general formatting guidelines for both an MLA and an APA Annotated Bibliography.

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CHAPTER 10: SOURCES AND RESEARCH

10.1 TYPES OF SOURCES: PRIMARY, SECONDARY, TERTIARY

Melanie Gagich & Emilie Zickel

Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Sources

This chapter will help you learn about the difference between those types of sources. Here is a quick and useful reference:

https://youtu.be/tN8S4CbzGXU

"Scholarly and Popular Sources" by Carnegie Vincent Library is licensed under CC BY

The determination of a text as "popular" or "scholarly/academic" is one way to classify it and to understand what type of information you are engaging with. Another way to classify sources is by considering whether they are primary, secondary, or tertiary. Popular sources can be primary, secondary, or tertiary. Scholarly sources, also, can be primary, secondary, or tertiary.

What Is a Primary Source?

Primary sources are texts that arise directly from a particular event or time period. They may be letters, speeches, works of art, works of literature, diaries, direct personal observations, newspaper articles that offer direct observations of current events, survey responses, tweets, other social media posts, **original scholarly research** (meaning research that the author or authors conduct themselves) or any other content that comes out of direct involvement with an event or a research study.

Primary research is information that has not yet been critiqued, interpreted, or analyzed by a second (or third, etc.) party.

Primary sources can be popular (if published in newspapers, magazines, or websites for the general public) or academic (if written by scholars and published in scholarly journals).

Examples of primary sources:

- journals, diaries

- blog posts
- a speech
- data from surveys or polls
- scholarly journal articles in which the author(s) discuss the methods and results from their own original research/experiments
- photos, videos, sound recordings
- interviews or transcripts
- poems, paintings, sculptures, songs, or other works of art
- government documents (such as reports of legislative sessions, laws or court decisions, financial or economic reports, and more)
- newspaper and magazine articles that report directly on current events (although these can also be considered secondary)
- investigative journalism (sometimes considered Secondary as well)

What Is a Secondary Source?

Secondary sources summarize, interpret, critique, analyze, or offer commentary on primary sources.

In a secondary source, an author's subject is not necessarily something that he or she directly experienced. The author of a secondary source may be summarizing, interpreting, or analyzing data or information from someone else's research or offering an interpretation or opinion on current events. Thus, the secondary source is one step away from that original, primary topic/subject/research study.

Secondary sources can be popular (if published in newspapers, magazines, or websites for the general public) or academic (if written by scholars and published in scholarly journals).

Examples of secondary sources:

- book, movie, or art reviews
- summaries of the findings from other people's research
- interpretations or analyses of primary source materials or other people's research
- histories or biographies
- political commentary
- newspaper and magazine articles that mainly synthesize others' research or primary

materials (remember, newspaper and magazine articles can also be considered primary, depending on the content)

What Is a Tertiary Source?

Tertiary sources are syntheses of primary and secondary sources. The person/people who compose a tertiary text are summarizing, compiling, and/or paraphrasing others' work. These sources sometimes do not even list an author. Often you would want to use a tertiary source to find both primary and secondary sources. Keep in mind, too, that it may sometimes be difficult to categorize something as strictly tertiary, and it may depend on how you decide to use the item in your research and writing. Your instructors will often not accept the sole use of tertiary sources for your papers. Instead, you should strive to only use tertiary sources to find more academic sources, as they often have titles of other works and links (if they are web-based) to more academic primary and secondary sources that you can use instead.

Tertiary sources can be popular or academic depending on the content and publisher.

Examples of tertiary sources include:

- encyclopedias
- fact books
- dictionaries
- guides
- handbooks
- Wikipedia

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://louis.pressbooks.pub/englishcomp2/?p=160#oembed-1

"Primary, Secondary, & Tertiary Sources" by sccclibrary

Now that you know what kinds of sources exist, it is important to remember that various disciplines find certain types of evidence to be more acceptable and appropriate than others. For instance, while the Humanities may consider anything from passages of text to art appropriate evidence, certain sciences may prefer data and statistics. What is most important to remember, no matter the discipline for which you are writing and pulling evidence, is that the evidence is never enough by itself. You must always be sure to explain why, and how, that evidence supports your claims or ideas.

Thinking about Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Sources and Your Research Strategy

1. What kinds of primary sources would be useful for your research project? Why? Where will you find them? Are you more interested in popular primary sources or scholarly primary sources—and why?
2. What kinds of secondary sources could be useful for your project—and why? Are you more interested in popular secondary sources or scholarly secondary sources—and why?
3. What kinds of tertiary sources might you try to access? In what ways would this tertiary source help you in your research?

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10.2 READING POPULAR SOURCES

Adam Falik; Doreen Piano; Robin Jeffrey; and Amanda Lloyd

What Is a Popular Source?

When we say that a source is "popular," it does not necessarily mean "well liked."

Popular sources are articles that are written for a general audience. The word "popular" comes from the Latin word for "people," or "populus." Think of popular as being "of the people." These sources are published so that members of the general public can access, read, and understand the content. There is little jargon or highly specific or technical vocabulary.

Sometimes popular sources are freely available to the public, and sometimes the content is available only with a paid subscription.

Popular sources include newspaper articles, magazine articles, websites, webpages, letters to the editor, blog posts, television, videos, and more.

Reading Newspaper Articles, Magazine Articles, and Website Articles

"Fake news!" "Media bias!"

We hear charges like these often, mostly in reference to the types of popular sources that we can find on the internet, on TV, on the radio, or in print. We should not be tempted to write off all popular sources as somehow "bad." We should, however, be willing to evaluate any popular source's authority and credibility before choosing to accept its validity or choosing to include it in an academic assignment.

How can we evaluate newspaper, magazine, and website sources? Use rhetorical reading skills to understand both the text and its context before you incorporate it into any assignment.

Understand the Authority

Publisher. Who published this article? Remember that a publisher is not always the same as the author of a particular text. Does the publishing source cater to a particular audience? Does the publisher have some sort of ideological identity or bias? A bit of research on who published the article you are looking at (which newspaper, magazine, website, or organization) can give you some insight into any purpose or agenda that may shape the content of the article.

Author. Is the author an expert on the topic? A journalist? Someone who has direct experience with the topic or someone who is offering secondhand commentary or analysis?

Assess the Accuracy of the Text

Identify the author's main claim. Pay attention to what the author uses to support his or her claim—do you see relevant, evidence-based support or just emotional examples?

- Do you see statistics used consistently and fairly, with an explanation of where they came from?
- Does the author consider opposing viewpoints, and if so, how thoroughly?
- Do you see logical fallacies in the author's argument?

Assess the Overall Quality of the Explanation, If the Article Is Explanatory

Identify the author's thesis. Pay attention to how balanced the author's explanation is—does he or she present all sides equally so as to avoid clear judgment? Does the author effectively summarize sources used? (Please note that magazine and newspaper writing style does not require the types of in-text citations that we use in our papers).

Currency

Depending on the information you are using, the currency of the site could be vital. Check for the date of publication or the date of the latest update. Most of the links on a website should also still work—if they no longer do, that may be a sign the site is too out of date to be useful.

Relevance

Perhaps the article is interesting or easy to read. But is there something about the text itself or its context that makes it useful for your assignment? This is the source's relevancy.

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10.3 READING ACADEMIC SOURCES

Melanie Gagich & Emilie Zickel

Academic sources (also called scholarly sources) are different from what most of us read each day. We are constantly exposed to "popular" media—news websites, TV channels, magazines and newspapers. It is generally only in college that we get exposure and access to scholarly articles and books.

An academic source (scholarly source) is material that is

- **Authoritative**: The article has been produced by an expert in his or her field (often this means that a person has a Ph.D. in his or her field and/or works as a researcher or professor at colleges or universities), and therefore has the authority that expertise affords.
- **Peer-reviewed:** The article has been rigorously read and reviewed by other experts or authorities in that same field, and it is published only after that rigorous review.
- **Published in a scholarly research journal**: Academic articles are often published in special journals that focus on one academic discipline or one topic of study. These articles are published for an audience who is also highly involved in that academic discipline (often other people who have Ph.D.s in the same field or are pursuing studies within it). While in recent years some freely accessible open-source peer-reviewed journals have begun publishing, most scholarly research journals require a paid subscription. As a college student, you have access to many academic articles because your university pays for access to academic research databases that give students and faculty members access to these scholarly research journals.

Academic articles tend to be more challenging to read than popular sources. They often contain specialized vocabulary or jargon that is used within a particular academic field. They tend to be longer than a typical popular source article in a newspaper or magazine. They may contain many in-text citations, diagrams, tables, or other visual representations of data that the reader is called upon to interpret for him/herself.

While academic articles can be intimidating to read, there are strategies that you can use to effectively engage these challenging texts, as Karen Rosenberg discusses in her essay "Reading Games: Strategies for Reading Scholarly Sources."

Moreover, there are ways in which academic articles can be critiqued and evaluated just like popular articles.

Considerations for Evaluating Academic Sources

While academic sources are often deemed credible because they come out of a rigorous process of peer review-before-publication and are written both by and for the academic community, we should still take time to examine and evaluate such sources before we use them. Yes, even scholarly sources contain embedded biases.

Author

Has he or she written extensively on the topic that is addressed in this paper? Often you can check the Works Cited to see if the author has any previous publications on the topic addressed in the current paper. If so, that could be an indication of the author's long-term experience and expertise with this research topic or question.

Length of the Article

Sometimes articles will be labeled in academic databases as "scholarly articles" even though they are only a couple of pages long. If your article seems rather short and does not follow the general structure of an academic article (Abstract, Literature Review, Methodology, Results, Discussion, Conclusions, List of Works Cited), then you should spend time considering whether or not the article is a relevant or credible source for the purposes of your assignment? Is there a more thorough or detailed source that you could use?

Date of Publication

How current is the article? If you are looking for a historical perspective on your topic, then an older article may be useful. But if you need current information and your article is 10 or 15 years old, is it as relevant and useful for your assignment?

Relevance

Perhaps you have a wonderful academic article that is authoritative, credible, interesting, and full of compelling research. But if the article is not answering your research question or the assignment question in any meaningful way, perhaps the source is not relevant to you. Just because a source is "good" does not mean that it is good for your particular assignment.

Joe Moxley's article "Credibility & Authority: How to Be Credible & Authoritative in Research, Speech & Writing" is an excellent resource for thinking about how to approach a critique of scholarly work. His article can be found by clicking on the hyperlink above and by going directly to the *Writing Commons* website.

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10.4 A DEEPER LOOK AT SCHOLARLY SOURCES

Emilie Zickel

While reading academic articles (scholarly journal articles) can be one of the more intimidating aspects of college-level research projects, the purpose, format, and style of scholarly/academic journal articles are rather straightforward and patterned. Knowing the template that scholarly articles follow can enhance your reading and comprehension experience and make these reading materials much less intimidating. Moreover, understanding the purpose of scholarly publication can help you to understand what matters most in these articles.

Basic Format

Information in academic journal articles is presented in a formal, highly prescribed format, meaning that scholarly articles tend to follow a similar layout, pattern, and style. The pages often look stark, with little decoration or imagery. We see few photos in scholarly articles. The article title is often fairly prominent on the first page, as are the authors' names. Sometimes there is a bit of information about each author, such as the name of his or her current academic institution or academic credentials. At either the top or bottom of the first few pages, you can find the name of the scholarly journal in which the article is published.

Abstract

On the first page of the article, you will often find an abstract, which is a summary of the author's research question, methodologies, and results. While this abstract is useful to you as a reader because it gives you some background about the article before you begin reading, you should not cite this abstract in your paper. Please read these abstracts as you are initially seeking sources so that you can determine whether or not reading the article will be useful to you, but do not quote or paraphrase from the abstract.

Works Cited

At the end of academic articles, you will find a list of Works Cited (also called a List of References). This is generally quite long, and it details all of the work that the author considered or cited in designing his or her own research project or in writing the article. Helpful hint: reading the Works Cited in an article that you find to be particularly illuminating or useful can be a great way to locate other sources that may be useful for your own research project. If you see a title that looks interesting, see if you can access it via your university library!

Literature Review

Scholarly sources often contain "literature reviews" in the beginning section of the article. They are generally several paragraphs or pages long. Some articles are only Literature Reviews. These Literature Reviews generally do not constitute an author's own work. Instead, they are summaries and syntheses of other scholars' work that has previously been published on the topic that the author is addressing in his or her paper. Including this review of previous research helps the author to communicate his or her understanding of the context out of which his or her research comes.

Like the abstract, the Literature Review is another part of a scholarly article from which you should generally not quote. Often, students will mistakenly try to cite information that they find in this Literature Review section of scholarly articles. But that is sort of like citing a SparkNotes version of an essay that you have not read. The Literature Review is where your author, in his or her own words, describes previous research. He or she is outlining what others have said in their own articles, not offering his or her own new insight (and what we are interested in in scholarly articles is the new information that a researcher brings to the topic). If you find that there is interesting information from the sources that your author discusses in the Literature Review, then you should locate the article(s) that the author is summarizing and read them for yourself. That, in fact, is a great strategy for finding more sources!

The "Research Gap"

Somewhere near the end of the Literature Review, authors may indicate what has not been said or not been examined by previous scholars. This has been called a "research gap" in the social sciences—a space out of which a scholar's own research develops. The "research gap" opens the opportunity for the author to assert his or her own research question or claim. Academic authors who want to publish in scholarly research journals need to define a research gap and then attempt to fill that gap because scholarly journals want to publish new, innovative, and interesting work that will push knowledge and scholarship in that field forward.

Scholars must communicate what new ideas they have worked on: what their new hypothesis, or experiment, or interpretation, or analysis is.

The Scholar(s) Add(s) His/Her/Their New Perspective

Typically, the bulk of an academic article focuses on the author's original work and analysis. This is the part of the article where the author(s) add to the conversation, where they try to fill in the research gap that they identified. This is also the part of the article that is the primary research. The author(s) may include a discussion of their research methodology and results, or an elaboration and defense of their reasoning, interpretation, or analysis. Scholarly articles in the sciences or social sciences may include headings such as "Methods," "Results," and "Discussion" or synonyms of those words in this part of the article. In arts or humanities journal articles, these headings may not appear because scholars in the arts and humanities do not necessarily perform lab-based research in the same way as scientists or social scientists do. Authors may reference others' research even in this section of original work and analysis, but only to support or enhance the discussion of the scholar's own discussion. This is the part of the scholarly article that you should cite from, as it indicates the work your author or authors have done.

Conclusion

To conclude a scholarly journal article, authors may reference their original research question or hypothesis once more. They may summarize some of the points made in the article. We often see scholars concluding by indicating how, why, or to whom their research matters. Sometimes, authors will conclude by looking forward, offering ideas for other scholars to engage in future research. Sometimes, they may reflect on why an experiment failed (if it did) and how to approach that experiment differently next time. What we do not tend to see is scholars merely summarizing everything they discussed in the essay, point by point. Instead, they want to leave readers with a sense of why the work that they have discussed in their article matters.

As you read scholarly sources, remember

- to look for the author's research question or hypothesis
- to seek out the "research gap": why did the author have this research question or hypothesis?
- to identify the Literature Review (if there is one)
- to identify where the author stops discussing previous research and begins to discuss his or her own
- Most importantly: remember to always try to understand what new information this article brings to the scholarly "conversation" about this topic.

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10.5 CONDUCTING YOUR OWN PRIMARY RESEARCH

Melanie Gagich

Up until this point, Chapter 10 has described the differences between types of sources and helped you to learn how to read academic sources. However, to conclude the chapter, this section provides you with information about *how* academic research is conducted by academics in the social sciences. It is possible that at some point in your college career, you will be asked to conduct research yourself, and in that case, this chapter will be very useful. Yet, even if you are not asked to conduct your own research, this chapter provides helpful information to aid you in understanding the primary research created by academics in the social sciences.

Specifically, this section provides you with information pertaining to research questions, research methods, research instruments, and research article methodology sections in the hopes that it will help you read academic research and eventually conduct and/or propose your own study.

A key fact to keep in mind: methodological choices must align with the research question(s), which informs the type of instruments used.

Research Questions

Research questions guide an academic study. These questions should not be easily answered. For example, the question "How many people live in the US" is not an appropriate research question because it is easily answered (i.e., you can Google to find the answer) and it does not add new knowledge to a field or discipline.

While you might sometimes be asked to write a research question in college writing, these are often questions that will lead you to arguments and evidence that already exist. In the "real world" of academia, a research question represents a researcher's attempt to create new knowledge in the field.

Research Methods

The word "research methods" broadly refers to how you plan to conduct your study. There are three types of research methods: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed. Your choice of research methods depends on your research question and the type of data you need to collect to answer that question.

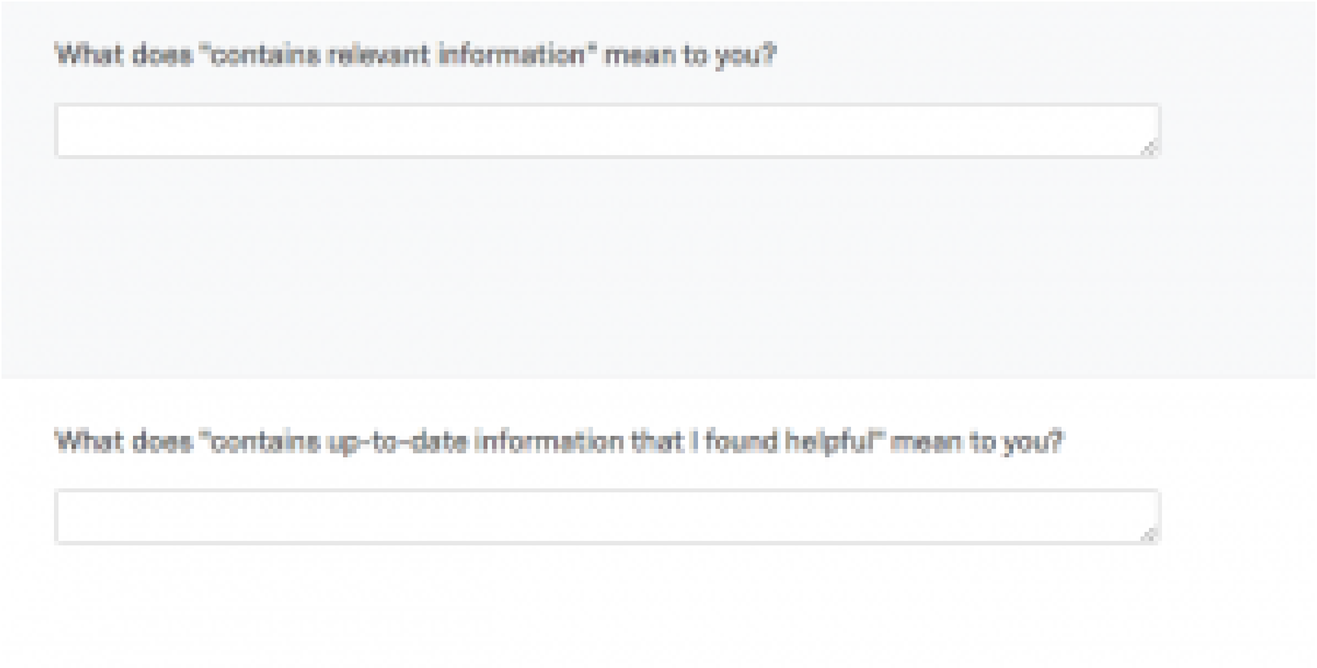
Qualitative Methods

Some research questions focus on opinions, individual experiences, motivations, etc. and generate non-numerical data. These types of questions require *qualitative* methods to answer them.

Qualitative methods are often used if:

- You want to study a phenomenon/occurrence in detail
    - *Example research question:* How does a freshman ENG 102 student describe their writing process?
- You want to focus on individual interpretations/experiences
    - *Example research question:* What are the experiences of 18- to 25-year-old women using Fitbits for dieting?

To gather qualitative data, researchers often use research interviews, open-ended survey questions, or focus groups.



What does "contains relevant information" mean to you?

What does "contains up-to-date information that I found helpful" mean to you?

Figure 10.5.1: Example of open-ended survey questions.

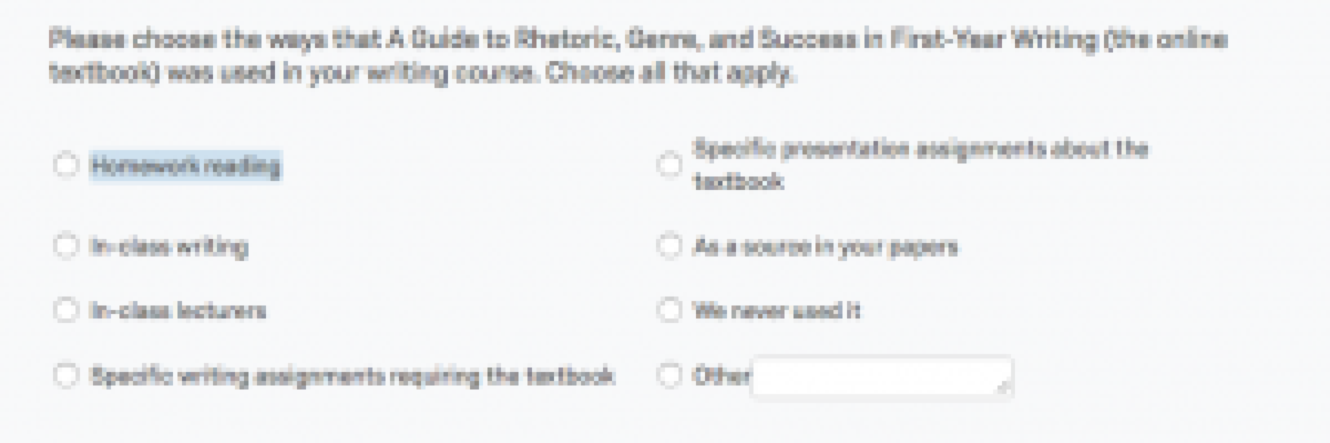
Quantitative Methods

Other research questions focus on quantifying a problem and generate numerical data. These types of research questions require *quantitative* methods to answer them.

Quantitative methods are often used if:

- You want to understand the relationship among variables.
    - *Example research question:* What is the relationship between gender and 4.0 GPAs among freshman students?
- You want to understand differences among variables.
    - *Example research question:* What is the difference between attitudes in male and female students in a freshman-level writing course?

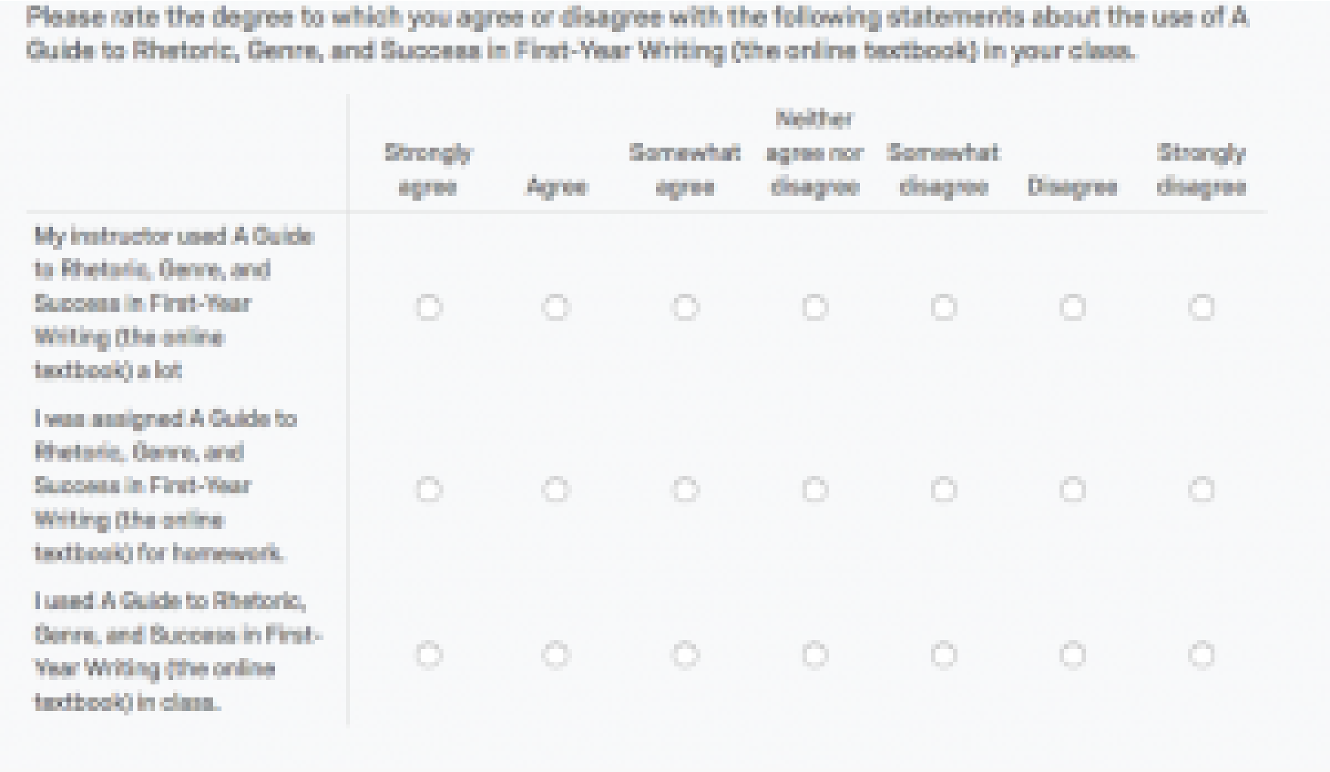
To gather quantitative data, researchers often use surveys that include closed-ended questions and Likert-Scale items.



Please choose the ways that A Guide to Rhetoric, Genre, and Success in First-Year Writing (the online textbook) was used in your writing course. Choose all that apply.

○ Homework reading
○ In-class writing
○ In-class lecturers
○ Specific writing assignments requiring the textbook
○ Specific presentation assignments about the textbook
○ As a source in your papers
○ We never used it
○ Other

Figure 10.5.2: Example of closed-ended survey questions.



Please rate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about the use of A Guide to Rhetoric, Genre, and Success in First-Year Writing (the online textbook) in your class.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My instructor used A Guide to Rhetoric, Genre, and Success in First-Year Writing (the online textbook) a lot	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I was assigned A Guide to Rhetoric, Genre, and Success in First-Year Writing (the online textbook) for homework.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I used A Guide to Rhetoric, Genre, and Success in First-Year Writing (the online textbook) in class.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Figure 10.5.3: Example of Likert-Scale survey items.

Mixed Methods

Sometimes you need to use both quantitative and qualitative methods to answer a research question. This is known as mixed methods and produces numerical and non-numerical data, which can be collected using a variety of research instruments (including those described above).

The Methodology Section in an Academic Research Article

In an empirical research article, there will be a section outlining the methodology for the study that was conducted. Empirical research refers to knowledge that is gained “by means of direct and indirect observation or experience” (Wikipedia). Including a methodology section in an academic research paper provides the audience with important information such as the participants and the setting of the study as well as descriptions of data collection and analysis.

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CHAPTER 11: ETHICAL SOURCE INTEGRATION: CITATION, QUOTING, AND PARAPHRASING

11.1 USING SOURCES ETHICALLY

Yvonne Bruce

Students are often concerned with the details of correct citation—when to include an author's name in parentheses, how to format an MLA bibliography, how to indicate a quotation within a quotation—and while these are all important and helpful to know, what is more important is understanding the larger ethical principles that guide choosing and using sources. Here are a few of these larger ideas to keep in mind as you select and synthesize your sources:

- You must represent the topic or discipline you are writing about fairly. If nine out of ten sources agree that evidence shows the middle class in the United States is shrinking, it is unethical to use the tenth source that argues it is growing without acknowledging the minority status of the source.
- You must represent the individual source fairly. If a source acknowledges that a small segment of the middle class in the United States is growing but most of the middle class is shrinking, it is unethical to suggest that the former is the writer's main point.
- You must acknowledge bias in your sources. It is unethical to represent sources that, while they may be credible, offer extreme political views as if these views are mainstream.
- Just because your source is an informal one, or from Wikipedia or the dictionary, doesn't mean that you don't have to acknowledge it. Quoting a dictionary definition is still quoting: you need quotation marks. Wikipedia is not "common knowledge": cite it.
- You must summarize and paraphrase in your own words. Changing a few words around in the original and calling it your summary or paraphrase is unethical. How would you feel if you recognized what you worked so hard to write in someone else's paper? "I changed some words," they'd say. But you would still recognize your *style*. Don't steal someone else's.

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11.2 QUOTING

Melanie Gagich

What Are Direct Quotes?

Direct quotes are portions of a text taken word for word and placed inside of a work. Readers know when an author is using a direct quote because it is denoted by the use of quotation marks and an in-text citation.

Example:

In his seminal work, David Bartholomae argues that "Every time a student sits down to write for us, he has to invent the university for the occasion-invent the university…" (4).

Direct quotes might also be formatted as a "block quote," which occurs if the borrowed language is longer than four (4) lines of text. In MLA, A block quote requires the author to indent the borrowed language by 1/2 an inch, place the citation at the end of the block, and remove quotation marks.

Example:

In his seminal work, David Bartholomae argues that

> Every time a student sits down to write for us, he has to invent the university for the occasion-invent the university, that is, or a branch of it, like History or Anthropology or Economics or English. He has to learn to speak our language, to speak as we do, to try on the peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding, and arguing that define the discourse of our community. (4)

Be sure to be careful when directly quoting because failing to write the text exactly as it appears in the original text is not an ethical use of direct quotes. Also, failing to bracket the quote with quotation marks and/or citing it inside the text is also unethical and both mistakes are a form of plagiarism.

When Should I Use Direct Quotes?

Generally, direct quotes should be used sparingly because you want to rely on your own understanding of material and avoid over-relying on another's words. Over-quoting does not reinforce your credibility as an author; however, you should use direct quotes when "the author you are quoting has coined a term unique to her or his research and relevant within your own paper" (See the Online Writing Center or "OWL" at Purdue University).

The Basics of Directly Quoting

1. All quoted material should be enclosed in quotation marks to set it off from the rest of the text. The exception to this is block quotes, which require different formatting.
2. Quoted material should be an accurate word-for-word reproduction from the author's original text. You cannot alter any wording or any spelling. If you must do so, you must use a bracket or an ellipsis (see number 2 in the section below).
3. A clear signal phrase / attribution tag should precede each quotation.
4. A parenthetical citation should follow each quotation.

The Hard Part of Directly Quoting: Integrating Quotes into Your Writing

1. You, as the author of your essay, should explain the significance of each quotation to your reader. This goes far beyond simply including a signal phrase. Explaining the significance means indicating how the quoted material supports the point you are making in that paragraph. Remember: just because you add a quote does not mean that you have made your point. Quotes never speak for themselves. How and why does that quoted material make the point you think it does? Here are some helpful phrases for explaining quoted materials. "X" is the author's last name.
    1. (quoted material). What X's point demonstrates is that . . .
    2. (quoted material). Here, X is not simply stating _______, she is also demonstrating __________.
    3. (quoted material). This is an example of _____ because _______.
    4. (quoted material). This statement clearly shows ______ because _______.
2. Sometimes, in order to smoothly integrate quoted material into your paper, you may need to remove a word or add a word to make the quote make sense. If you make any change to quoted material, it must be formatted correctly using an ellipsis or brackets:
    1. Use brackets [these are brackets] to change a word. This article from *Writing Commons* explains what brackets are and how to use them
    2. Use an ellipsis (this is an ellipsis…) to indicate omissions. This article from *Writing Commons* explains what brackets are and how to use them
3. When in doubt, strive to allow your voice—not a quote from a source—to begin each paragraph, precede each quote, follow each quote, and end each paragraph. Quotes that are integrated well into a paper allow you to control the paper. That is what a reader wants to see: your ideas and the way that you engage sources to shape and discuss your ideas.

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11.3 PARAPHRASING AND SUMMARIZING

Robin Jeffrey

While quoting may be the first thing that many people think of when they think about integrating sources, paraphrasing, summarizing, and citing data are also ways to incorporate information from outside materials into your essays or projects.

This page builds off of section 11.2's discussion of quoting and outlines the specific considerations for paraphrasing and summarizing as two other ways to integrate material into your work.

Paraphrasing

1. Paraphrases allow you to describe specific information from a source (ideas from a paragraph or several consecutive paragraphs) *in your own words*.
2. Paraphrases are like translations of an author's original idea. You retain the detail of the original thought, but you express it in your own way.
3. Paraphrases of the text should be expressed in your own words, with your own sentence structure, in your own way. You should not simply "word swap"—that is, replace a few words from the original with synonyms.
4. If you must use a few of the author's words within your paraphrase, they must have quotation marks around them.
5. Paraphrases often include attributive tags or signal phrases to let your readers know where the paraphrased material begins.
6. Paraphrases should be followed by parenthetical citations.
7. As with a quote, you need to explain to your reader why the paraphrased material is significant to the point you are making in your paper.

Summarizing

1. Summaries allow you to describe general ideas from a source. You do not express detailed information as you would with a paraphrase.
2. Summaries are shorter than the original text.
3. Any summaries of the text should not include direct wording from the original source. All text should be in your words, though the ideas are those of the original author.

4. A signal phrase should let your readers know where the summarized material begins.
5. If you are offering a general summary of an entire article, there is no need to cite a specific page number.

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11.4 SIGNAL PHRASES

John Lanning and Amanda Lloyd

A signal phrase, also known as an attributive tag, is a device used to smoothly integrate quotations and paraphrases into your essay. It is important to use signal phrases to clearly attribute supporting evidence to an author and to avoid interrupting the flow of an essay. Signal phrases can also be used as meaningful transitions, moving your readers between your ideas and those of your sources.

A basic signal phrase consists of an author's name and an active verb indicating how the author is presenting the material. A signal phrase may also include information explaining an author's credentials and/or affiliations as well as the title and/or publisher of the source text.

Referring to the Author within a Signal Phrase

In many instances, a **signal phrase** should contain only the last name of the author or authors of the source text (as opposed to the author's first *and* last name). For instance, APA style guidelines require no reference to an author's first name at any point in an essay and few if any gender-specific pronouns. But in MLA papers, if you are referring to an author for the first time in your essay, you should include that author's first name (you might also want to include the author's credentials and the title of the source—see "Types of Signal Phrases" below). Any future signal phrase should refer to the author by last name only or with a pronoun when it's perfectly clear to whom that pronoun refers. For example:

- Michael Pollan observes that "Americans today are having a national conversation about food and agriculture that would have been impossible to imagine even a few short years ago" (29).
- Pollan continues, "But the national conversation unfolding around the subject of food and farming really began in the 1970s" (29).
- He then specifies, "I would argue that the conversation got under way in earnest in 1971, when [Wendell] Berry published an article in The Last Whole Earth Catalogue" (29).

Notice how each signal phrase verb is followed by a comma (or the word "that"), which is then followed by one space before the opening quotation mark.

In essays written according to MLA and APA guidelines, it is acceptable to refer to the author as "the author" as long as it is perfectly clear to whom you are referring. In APA, it is common to see general references to "researchers."

Signal Phrase Verb Tense

In the examples above, notice how the signal phrase verbs are written in present tense. When you are asked to write a paper that follows MLA guidelines, signal phrases should always be written in present (not past) tense. When writing a paper using APA style, signal phrase verbs should be written in past tense. For example:

- Pollan (2009) observed that "Americans today are having a national conversation about food and agriculture that would have been impossible to imagine even a few short years ago" (p. 29).

Notice how APA in-text citations also differ from MLA style in that APA citations include the year of publication and the page number is preceded by a "p."

See section 12.6 for more information on APA in-text citations and section 12.2 for MLA citations.

Varying Your Verbs

You should also vary your signal phrase verbs (rather than simply using "states" throughout your entire essay) in order to maintain your readers' interest and to indicate the author's intended use of the excerpted material. See below for examples of strong signal phrase verbs.

Types of Signal Phrases

In most instances, the first time the author is mentioned in an MLA-style essay, as well as including the author's first *and* last name in a signal phrase, it is also a good idea to include the author's credentials and the title of the source.

While providing the author's credentials and the title of the source are the most common types of signal phrases, there are others we should be aware of. In the examples below, the information relevant to the type of signal phrase is underlined.

Type: Author's credentials are indicated.

Example: Grace Chapmen, Curator of Human Health & Evolutionary Medicine at the Springfield Natural History Museum, explains…

Purpose: Presenting an author's credentials should help build credibility for the passage you are about to present. Including the author's credentials gives your readers a reason to consider your sources.

Type: Author's *lack of* credentials is indicated.

Example: Matthew Spencer, whose background is in marriage counseling, not foreign policy, claims…

Purpose: Identifying an author's lack of credentials in a given area can help illustrate a lack of authority on the subject matter and persuade the audience not to adopt the author's ideas. Pointing to an author's lack of credentials can be beneficial when developing your response to counter-arguments.

Type: Author's social or political stance, if necessary to the content, is explained.

Example: Employing nonviolent civil disobedience, Roland Hayes, prominent civil rights activist, preaches…

Ralph Spencer, who has ties to the White Nationalist movement, denies…

Purpose: Explaining the author's social or political stance can help a reader to understand why that author expresses a particular view. This understanding can positively or negatively influence an audience. Be careful to avoid engaging in logical fallacies such as loaded language.

Type: Publisher of the source is identified.

Example: According to a recent *CNN* poll…

Purpose: Identifying the publisher of the passage can help reinforce the credibility of the information presented, and you can capitalize on the reputation/credibility of the publisher of the source material.

Type: Title of the source is included.

Example: In "Understanding Human Behavior," Riley argues…

Purpose: Informs the reader where the cited passage is being pulled from.

Type: Information that establishes context is presented.

Example: In a speech presented during a Free Speech rally, Elaine Wallace encourages …

Purpose: Presenting the context in which the original information was presented can help the audience understand the author's purpose more clearly.

MLA Signal Phrase Verbs

Acknowledges
Admits
Agrees
Argues
Asserts
Believes
Claims
Compares
Confirms
Comments
Contends
Counters
Declares
Denies
Disputes
Emphasizes
Finds
Illustrates
Implies
Insists
Maintains
Mentions
Notes
Observes
Points out
Reasons
Refutes
Rejects
Reports
Responds
Suggests
Thinks
Writes

APA Signal Phrase Verbs

Acknowledged
Admitted
Agreed
Argued
Asserted
Believed
Claimed
Compared
Confirmed
Commented
Contended
Countered
Declared
Denied
Disputed
Emphasized
Found
Illustrated
Implied
Insisted
Maintained
Mentioned
Noted
Observed
Pointed out
Reasoned
Refuted
Rejected
Reported
Responded
Suggested
Thought
Wrote

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11.5 PLAGIARISM: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Melanie Gagich & Emilie Zickel

Plagiarism is something that many people understand to be a bad thing, but few people truly understand. Plagiarism can be intentional (such as copying and pasting large chunks of a website into your paper), or it can be unintentional (such as a weak paraphrase or a lack of reference to authors or sources). But plagiarism is plagiarism, whether it is intentional or not, and it is a serious offense in academic writing.

It can be helpful to understand what plagiarism is if you seek to avoid plagiarizing in your own papers. This video offers a thorough explanation of how one might plagiarize if he or she is not carefully integrating sources into an essay.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://louis.pressbooks.pub/englishcomp2/?p=186#oembed-1

"10 Types of Plagiarism" by WriteCheckVideos

Following the guidelines for the ethical use of source materials in your papers can help you to avoid plagiarism in your work. Plagiarism is a serious offense and colleges take instances of plagiarism very seriously.

If you are struggling to figure out how to cite a source or how to integrate it into your work while giving your author(s) proper credit, you can

- ask your instructor
- visit your school's Writing Center
- set up a meeting with your school's librarian for English for difficult questions

Every school has a plagiarism policy that both defines what plagiarism is and outlines the consequences that will arise in the event that a student is caught plagiarizing.

Attribution: "Plagiarism" from A Guide to Rhetoric, Genre, and Success in First-Year

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CHAPTER 12: DOCUMENTATION STYLES: MLA AND APA

12.1 FORMATTING YOUR PAPER IN MLA

Melanie Gagich

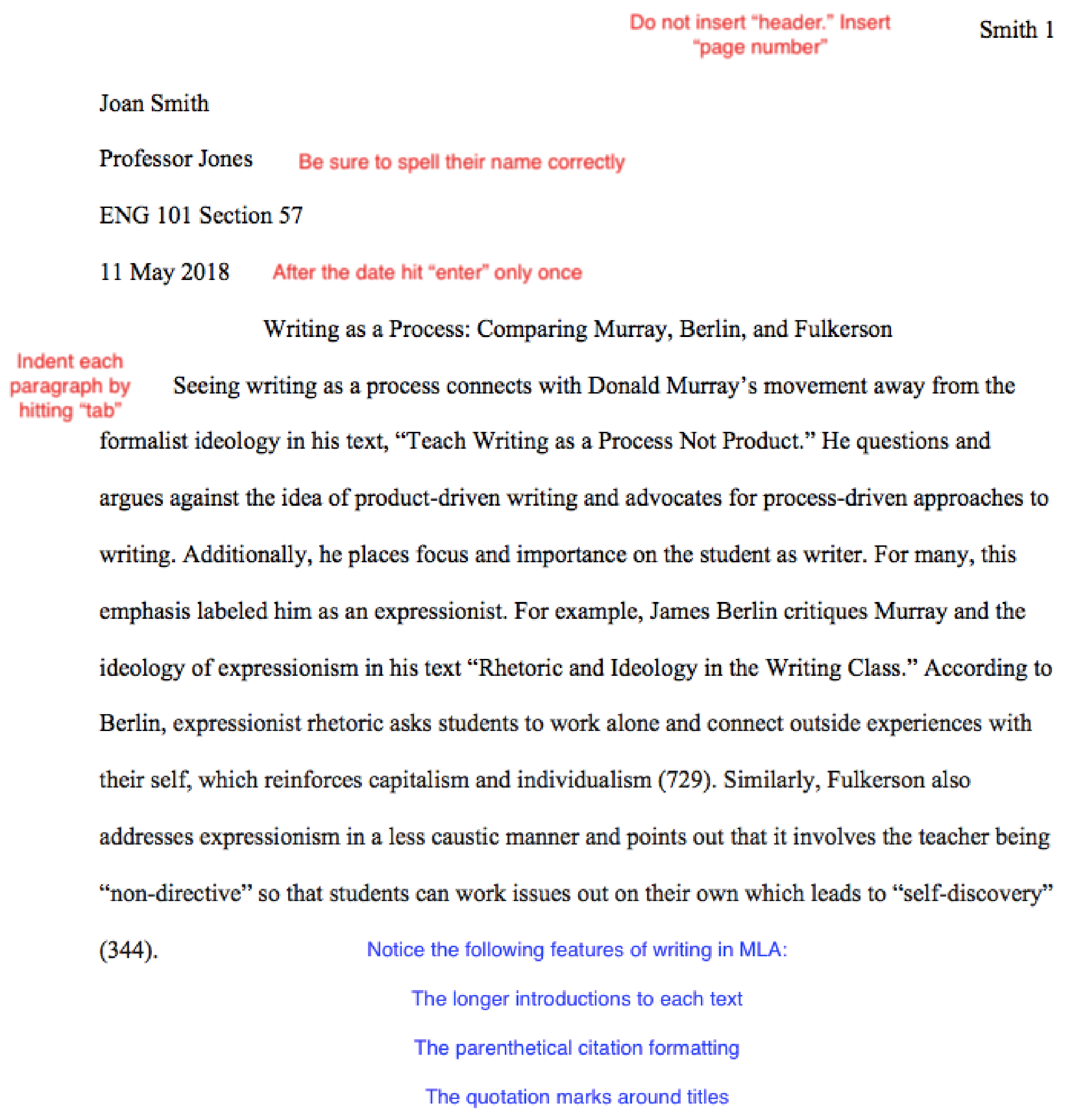
MLA and APA Documentation

There are many types of documentation styles; however, the two you will use most consistently in college writing classes are MLA and APA. You might think that it doesn't matter which one you choose…but it does. A documentation style dictates how a manuscript is formatted, the way you cite outside sources inside the text (signal phrases and parenthetical citations), the way you cite bibliographic information (Works Cited or References), and the style of writing that you use. Sections 12.1–12.4 focus on helping you format your paper, citations, and bibliographic information using MLA, while Sections 12.5–12.7 focus on APA.

Modern Language Association (MLA)

The Modern Language Association began in 1883 as a "discussion and advocacy group for the study of literature and modern languages" (Wikipedia). The style was created by this group in 1951 in order to provide scholars in this field with a set of shared writing and citation guidelines. MLA is mostly used in the humanities such as English and modern languages. For more help with MLA, please visit the OWL of Purdue's MLA Guide.

You should always use Times New Roman 12-point font (unless otherwise directed by your instructor) and one-inch margins. The entire manuscript should also be double-spaced. Below is an annotated example of other important features you should consider and include in your MLA manuscripts:



Do not insert "header." Insert "page number"

Smith 1

Joan Smith

Professor Jones

Be sure to spell their name correctly

ENG 101 Section 57

11 May 2018

After the date hit "enter" only once

Writing as a Process: Comparing Murray, Berlin, and Fulkerson

Indent each paragraph by hitting "tab"

Seeing writing as a process connects with Donald Murray's movement away from the formalist ideology in his text, "Teach Writing as a Process Not Product." He questions and argues against the idea of product-driven writing and advocates for process-driven approaches to writing. Additionally, he places focus and importance on the student as writer. For many, this emphasis labeled him as an expressionist. For example, James Berlin critiques Murray and the ideology of expressionism in his text "Rhetoric and Ideology in the Writing Class." According to Berlin, expressionist rhetoric asks students to work alone and connect outside experiences with their self, which reinforces capitalism and individualism (729). Similarly, Fulkerson also addresses expressionism in a less caustic manner and points out that it involves the teacher being "non-directive" so that students can work issues out on their own which leads to "self-discovery" (344).

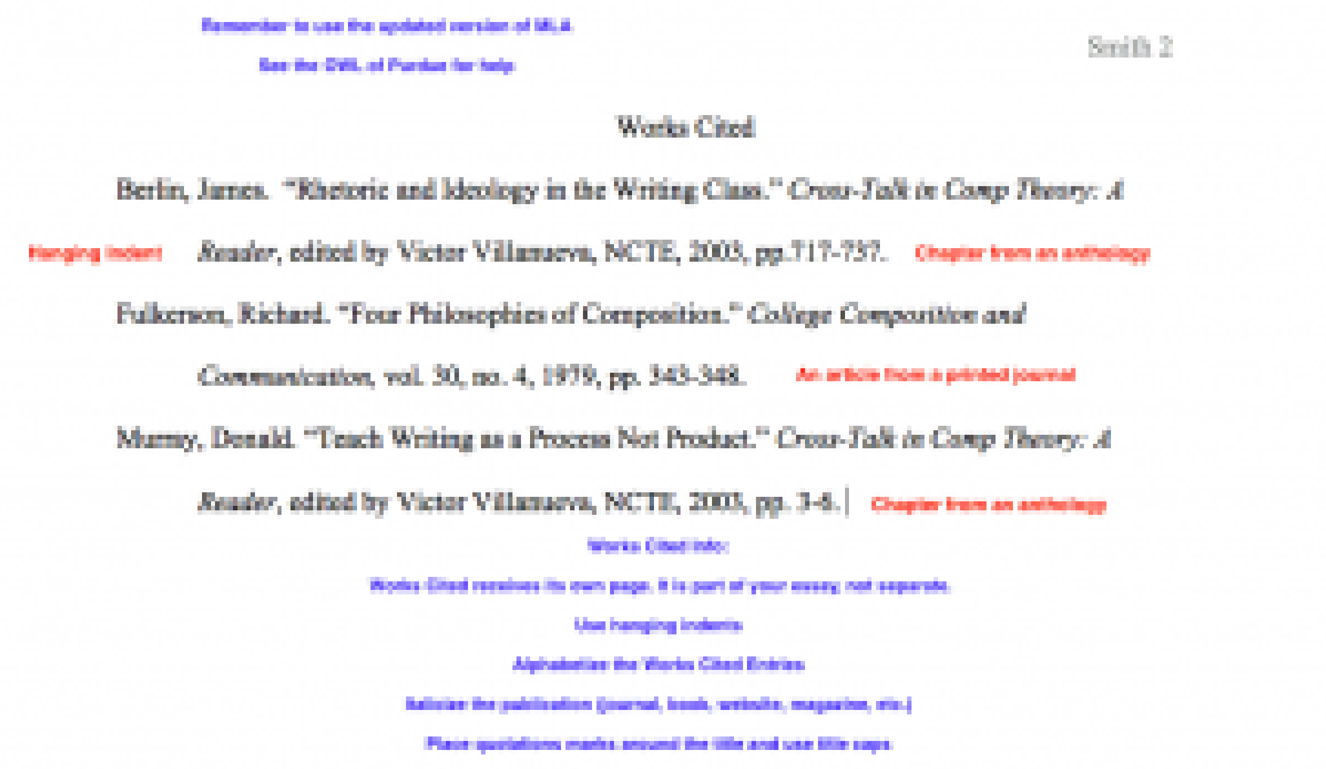
Notice the following features of writing in MLA:

The longer introductions to each text

The parenthetical citation formatting

The quotation marks around titles

Figure 12.1.1



Remember to use the updated version of MLA

See the OWL of Purdue for help

Smith 2

Works Cited

Berlin, James. "Rhetoric and Ideology in the Writing Class." *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory: A Reader*, edited by Victor Villanueva, NCTE, 2003, pp.717-737.

Hanging indent

Chapter from an anthology

Fulkerson, Richard. "Four Philosophies of Composition." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 30, no. 4, 1979, pp. 343-348.

An article from a printed journal

Murray, Donald. "Teach Writing as a Process Not Product." *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory: A Reader*, edited by Victor Villanueva, NCTE, 2003, pp. 3-6.

Chapter from an anthology

Works Cited info:

Works Cited receives its own page. It is part of your essay not separate.

Use hanging indents

Alphabetize the Works Cited Entries

Italicize the publication (journal, book, website, magazine, etc.)

Place quotations marks around the title and use title caps

Figure 12.1.2

Attribution: Formatting Your Paper in MLA by Melanie Gagich. From A Guide to Rhetoric, Genre, and Success in First-Year Writing by Melanie Gagich and licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License, except where otherwise noted.

12.2 MLA CITATION: IN-TEXT CITATIONS

Charlotte Morgan; Emilie Zickel; and John Brentar

In-Text Citations

We use in-text citations, also called parenthetical citations, to give our readers brief yet specific information about where in the original source material we found the idea or words that we are quoting or paraphrasing. In order to determine what the in-text citation should look like, we have to know what kind of source we are using.

- Is our source print or digital?
    - **Print sources** are any sources that are on paper or were originally printed on paper, even if you found a copy of it from an online research database like Academic Search Complete. These sources have page numbers. These page numbers need to appear in your in-text citations.
    - **Web/digital sources**, in many instances, do not have page numbers. Do not make them up! Page 1 of your computer screen is *not* the same as an actual page one in a print source.
- Do we have a named author or not?
- Is the source paginated (i.e., does it have page numbers in its original or current format)? Or is it a digital source without page numbers?

The Basics of in-Text Citation

A complete in-text citation in MLA format includes three components:

1. a signal phrase
2. the original source material (quoted or paraphrased), and
3. a parenthetical citation (also called in-text citation)

For sources with page numbers—books and articles that were originally published in print publications, even if you access them using a research database like Academic Search Complete, place the page number in the citation. In MLA, we do not use the word “page” or the abbreviations “p.” or “pg.” before the page numbers.

Example of Basic Citation

Miller claims that “this, that, and the other thing are true” (34).

- Miller claims that = signal phrase
- “this, that, and the other thing” = the quoted material
- (34) = the parenthetical citation

Citations for Sources with Authors and Pages

The **first time that you mention a source in a paper**, you need to introduce the source. For this introduction, you can include the author’s full name and a bit of description about the text that this author or these authors produced.

How to Cite a Source the First Time You Mention It

In discussing the act of reading, **Donald Hall, an American writer and scholar, states,** “It seems to me possible to name four kinds of reading, each with a characteristic manner and purpose” (15).

- The words in bold show the author’s full name and a bit of description of who the author is

After that first time (which, more formally, would be called **successive mentions** of the source), you can give only the last name. If you name the authors in the signal phrase, you do not need to add the authors’ names in the parenthetical citation too.

Example of Citing with a Successive Mention

Huynh and Maroko indicate that neighborhoods are not static but dynamic entities that can experience change across a number of dimensions **(212).**

- Only author last names are used in the signal phrase because this is not the first time these authors have been cited in the essay
- Because author last names are in the signal phrase, they are not also needed in the parenthetical citation

If you do not name your author(s) in a signal phrase, then you must place the last name(s) only in the citation. In doing so, do not place a comma between the author name(s) and the page number. For more information on signal phrases, visit section 11.4.

Example of Citing When No Signal Phrase Is Used

In one study of the effects of gentrification upon health, the researchers conclude that "the health implications of gentrification have not been explored comprehensively, despite the likelihood of its effect on neighborhood socioeconomic status" **(Huynh and Maroko 212).**

- Author last names are included in the in-text citation because they were not used in a signal phrase at the beginning of the sentence

Citations for Sources with No Authors, but Page Numbers

If your source does not list an author, then you must refer to the work by its title. If you name the title of the source in your signal phrase, give the entire title exactly as it appears in the source.

Citing Print Sources with No Author

Option 1:

The article, "Poverty in the United States: Census Population Report," reveals that the official poverty rate rose from 13.2% in 2008 to 14.3% in 2009 (298).

- The article title forms the signal phrase (in bold)
- Note that the article title is written in Title Case—the first letter of each keyword is capitalized—and is inside of quotation marks, as MLA requires

Option 2:

If you do not mention the article title in the signal phrase, then you must place a shortened version of the title in your parenthetical citation:

Census Bureau data indicate that nearly 44 million Americans lived below the poverty line in 2009 (**"Poverty"** 298).

- Note that the name of the article title—"Poverty in the United States: Census Population Report"—is shortened to "Poverty" inside of the citation.
- To shorten an article title for this type of citation, use the first word or first few words of the article title

Citations for Sources with No Page Numbers (i.e., Web-Based Sources outside of Research Databases)

Some sources have no page numbers. The prime examples are web-based sources, such as news, magazine, or website articles published directly to the web.

When you cite an online source, name the author(s) in your signal phrase. If there are no named authors, use the article title in your signal phrase.

However, with online sources, since there are no page numbers, you do not need to make up a page number for your citation. Whereas previous editions of MLA allowed writers to refer to paragraph numbers for works without page numbers, it now instructs writers not to refer to paragraph numbers unless the work explicitly numbers its paragraphs. In some instances, you may not need a parenthetical citation for an online source at all.

Citing Online Articles with Authors

Option 1:

In discussing the pedagogic approach that St. Louis area schools took in the aftermath of the 2014 Ferguson violence, **Jonathan Zimmerman and Emily Roberston, in their article "The Case for Contentious Curricula,"** note that "the major focus of concern remained the psychological well-being of the students, not their intellectual or political growth."

- Note that there *is* a signal phrase that names the authors and the article they wrote (in bold)
- Note, also, that after the quoted material, there is no parenthetical citation. Just the signal phrase and the quotation of material taken from their article suffices.

Option 2:

Whereas the approaches may have varied from progressive action to silence, "the major focus of concern remained the psychological well-being of the students, not their intellectual or political growth" **(Zimmerman and Roberston)**

- Since there is no signal phrase before the quoted material, the authors' names—but no page numbers—are in the parenthetical citation

Examples of Citing Online Articles with No Named Author

Option 1:

Focusing on the economic woes of long-haul truckers, **the article "The Trouble with Trucking" points out that** "over the past several decades, inflation-adjusted driver pay has fallen sharply."

- Notice the signal phrase (in bold) that is based on the article title
- Note, also, that after the quoted material, there is no parenthetical citation. Just the signal phrase and the quotation of material taken from their article suffices.

Option 2:

The economic woes of long-haul truckers can be summed up this way: “Over the past several decades, inflation-adjusted driver pay has fallen sharply” **(“The Trouble”).**

- Note that, because there is no signal phrase to introduce the quoted material, the first couple of words in the article title are placed inside of the citation.

Citations for Sources with Multiple Authors

If your source has one or two authors, list all the authors in either your signal phrase or in-text citation.

Examples of Citations for Multiple Authors

If your source has one or two authors, the authors’ names must appear in either your signal phrase or in-text citation

- **Signh and Remenyi opine that** “the extent of cheating at universities is hard to gauge” (36).
- While speculation abounds about how widespread the problem is, “the extent of cheating at universities is hard to gauge” **(Singh and Remenyi 36).**

If your source has more than two authors, list only the first author followed by the abbreviation “et al.” (short for the Latin phrase *et alii*, literally, “and others”).

- **Brenda Bustillos et al. note that** “when a campus roadway configuration is changed, introducing new parking facilities or other transportation services also changes campus circulation patterns” (5).

- One major problem is that "when a campus roadway configuration is changed, introducing new parking facilities or other transportation services also changes campus circulation patterns" **(Bustillos et al. 5).**

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12.3 MLA CITATION: WORKS CITED ENTRIES

Emilie Zickel and John Brentar

The Modern Language Association (MLA) system of documentation governs how writers format academic papers and cite the sources that they use. This system of formatting and citation is used most by academic disciplines in the arts and humanities.

Citations

Citations according to MLA consist of two elements:

1. in-text citations (also called parenthetical citations); and
2. a bibliography called a Work Cited (or Works Cited, if multiple sources are cited) list.

Writers use in-text citations to acknowledge that they have used ideas from external sources to help develop their essays. Those in-text citations refer to the full bibliographic references. Whenever you use sources, whether in direct quotation or in paraphrase, you must use in-text citations. Writers very often combine in-text citations with attributive signal phrases to make clear to the reader exactly what material has come from what source. Every in-text citation you make will be keyed to an entry in your Works Cited list, at which you supply your reader with the full bibliographic information for your sources.

Works Cited Entries

- Every source that you quote, paraphrase, or summarize in an essay must be included in your Works Cited list
- Your Works Cited list should always be on its own new page, after the end of the text of the essay
- At the start of your list, at the top margin of the page, include a heading containing the words Work (or Works) Cited, centered, without bolding, italics, quotation marks, or all-caps
- Works Cited entries are in the same font and double spacing as the rest of the paper
- Unlike the text of the essay, works cited entries do not begin with an indentation. Rather, they use hanging (also known as reverse) indentation, in which the first line of an entry is not indented, but all successive lines are indented, by .5″.
- Sources need to be listed in alphabetical order by the first letter in each entry.

    - If you have a source with no author, then that source will be alphabetized according to the first letter of its title
    - The entries will not be numbered or presented as a series of bulleted points.

General Order of Content in a Works Cited Entry

MLA specifies that certain elements appear in a certain order in a works cited entry. Each element will be followed by a specific piece of punctuation. When you cite sources, never take the information from the cover of the source; rather, always refer to title pages. Here are each of the elements and additional information about them:

Author Name(s)

- Author names must be given exactly as they appear in the source, including middle initials and generational suffixes such as Jr. or III.
- If there is one author, give the full name, inverted so that the last name precedes the first. Place a comma after the last name.
    - *Example*: Jones, Robert.
- If there are two authors, give both names; place the word "and" before the second author's name, which will not be inverted.
    - *Example*: Smith, Susanna, and John R. Johnson.
    - The order of the authors matters: cite them in the order in which the source names them.
- If there are three or more authors, list only the first, followed by the abbreviation "et al." which is short for the Latin *et alii* (meaning "and others").
    - *Example*: Williamson, Robin, et al.
- If there is no author, begin the entry with the title of the source.

Title of Source

- MLA has specific rules for capitalizing titles. The first and last works of a title or subtitle are always capitalized. Capitalize all words falling in the middle of the title, except for these:
    - The articles (a, an, the)
    - Prepositions (to, at, in, for, below, beyond, beneath, etc.)
    - Coordinating conjunctions (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so)
- If the source is a book, italicize its title: *Great Expectations*.
- If the source is an article, place its title within quotation marks: "Four Kinds of Thinking." (Note that the period goes inside the end quotation mark.)

Container

- Containers are larger works within which smaller works are published. Here are examples of different containers:
    - Books
        - Books contain chapters. If different chapters have been written by different authors, the chapter is your source, and its container is the book.
        - A specialized kind of book is an anthology, which is a collection of articles (usually previously published elsewhere), written by different authors. In this case, the article in an anthology is your source, and the book is the container.
    - Periodical publications (newspapers, magazines, and scholarly journals)
        - An article in a periodical is the source; the periodical itself is the container.
        - If the name of a newspaper or magazine begins with the word "the," omit it. Thus, write *New York Times*, rather than *The New York Times*.
    - Websites
        - An individual page at a website is a source; the website itself is a container.
    - Similarly, television shows contain episodes, and albums contain songs.
- Containers are always italicized, and there will be a comma following the name of the container, **except** when you are citing a book whose entire contents have been written by the same author(s). In this case, the source **is** the book.

Other Contributors

- These can be translators or, in the case of an anthology, editors/compilers. For a translator, place the translator names(s) after the words "translated by; for editors/compilers, place the name(s) after the words "edited by" or compiled by." Do not invert any of these names.
- Place a comma after other contributors.

Version

- A book may appear in different editions. If a book is published in a numbered edition subsequent to the first, write it as an ordinal number, followed by the abbreviation "ed.": 2nd ed.
- Other kinds of editions may be "abridged," "expanded," etc. Place that word before the abbreviation "ed."
- Place a comma after the version (yes, in this case there will be a comma following a period).

Number

- Books may be published in multiple volumes. To cite a multivolume work, place its number after the abbreviation "vol."
- Scholarly journals are usually published according to volume and issue number. To cite these, place the volume number after the abbreviation "vol." and the issue number after the abbreviation "no."
- Do not cite volume and issue numbers for newspapers and magazines, even if your source gives them.

Publisher

- For books, give the name of the publisher, which will be listed on the title page.
    - Do not include descriptive words such as "company," "corporation," or "limited" or abbreviations of them.
    - If a book has been published by a university press, shorten those words to the abbreviation UP, such as Ohio State UP. Abbreviate them even if they are separate: U Chicago P stands for the University of Chicago Press.
- For periodicals, do **not** list a publisher, even when it is given.
- For websites, list the entity responsible for the site. To find a website's publisher, scroll to the bottom of the page and note the copyright holder.
    - Note, if the website is an online periodical, omit the publisher name.

Date of Publication

- For a book, give the year as listed on its copyright page (the reverse side of the title page). If you are citing a whole book (that is, not an anthology), place a period after the date, unless you are citing optional information, in which case you will place a comma after the date.
- For an article in a periodical, give as much of the date as you are given, in date-month-year format
    - Abbreviate the names of all months, **except** for May, June, and July. All abbreviations of month names are three letters (e.g., Dec.), with the exception of September, which is Sept.
    - For a bimonthly publication, place a hyphen, **not** a slash, between the months. *Example*: July-Aug.
    - Place a comma after the date.
- For an online document, again give as much of the date as you are given. Often, that will be an exact date of posting or of last update. If there is no specific date of publication given, scroll to the bottom of the page for the copyright date and use that.
    - Place a comma after the date.

Location

- Page numbers
    - If you are citing part of a book (for instance, an article in an anthology), give the inclusive page numbers (that is, the page the source starts on and the page it ends on), preceded by the abbreviation "pp."
    - If you are citing an article in a periodical, again cite the inclusive page numbers, preceded by the abbreviation "pp." If the source appears on only one page, precede the number with "p."
    - When the end page number is in the same hundreds as the beginning page number, omit the hundreds digit in the end page number. Do not write pp. 243-247. Instead, write pp. 243-47. The same goes for thousands: pp. 1147-83. Do not omit the hundreds digit when the page numbers are in separate hundreds or are both below one hundred. Thus, do not write pp. 84-07 for a work beginning on page 84 and ending on page 107.
    - Often, newspapers have lettered sections and numbered pages within those sections. Place the section letter first, followed by the page number. *Example*: B1.
    - Often, magazine and newspaper articles are published on non-consecutive pages. For instance, an article may start on page 47, run to page 49, and then jump to page 104. In such cases, print only the beginning page number, followed by a plus sign: pp. 47+.

URLs

- When citing an online source, give the entire Uniform Resource Locator (URL, also known as the web address) exactly as it appears in the navigation bar of your browser, except omit the http:// or https:// that precedes the URL.
- If your word processing software changes the URL to a hyperlink, right click on it and remove the hyperlink.
- Place a period after the URL.

MLA also allows you to cite further optional information. If you have accessed a periodical article from a research database, such as Academic Search Complete, the Electronic Journal Center, or Lexis Nexis, you can also cite the following information.

- The name of the database, italicized and followed by a comma.
    - Note: EBSCOhost is **not** a database itself; rather, it is the compiler of several different databases. Do **not** cite EBSCOhost; look for the name of the specific database, which will be in the banner of the page.
- The Digital Object Identifier (DOI), which is a unique, permanent identifier.
    - *Example*: doi:10.1016/j.aap.2008.08.011

  - Place a comma after the DOI.
- The date you accessed the source, again in date-month-year format, and followed by a period.

Practice with Ordering the Elements of an MLA-Formatted Works Cited Page

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://louis.pressbooks.pub/englishcomp2/?p=196#h5p-6

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://louis.pressbooks.pub/englishcomp2/?p=196#h5p-7

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12.4 MLA CITATION: WORKS CITED EXAMPLES

Emilie Zickel and John Brentar

Here is a model Works Cited, with correct spacing and formatting. You can click on the "+" to get more information about the formatting and structure of the Works Cited.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://louis.pressbooks.pub/englishcomp2/?p=198#h5p-8

For step-by-step guidance in looking at what several common types of Works Cited entries need to include, click below.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://louis.pressbooks.pub/englishcomp2/?p=198#h5p-9

A Final Note about Works Cited Entries

Sometimes you may have difficulty deciding whether a source has been published in a magazine or a scholarly journal; after all, the word "journal" appears in the names of some magazines (for example, *Library Journal*). Here are some tips that can help you:

- Kind of paper (especially useful if you have a hard copy). Magazines are printed on glossy paper, scholarly journals on matte paper.
- Graphics: magazines print color graphics; if a journal article has graphics, they will be black and white and usually in the form of tables or graphs.
- Citations: only rarely will magazines have in-text citations and bibliographies; journals will almost always

have them.

- Advertisements: magazines usually have color advertisements; if journals have ads, they will be for other works published by the same publisher as the journal.

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12.5 FORMATTING YOUR PAPER IN APA

Melanie Gagich

American Psychological Association (APA)

The American Psychological Association, established in 1892, is "the largest scientific and professional organization of psychologists in the United States" with approximately 117,000 members (Wikipedia). The American Psychological Association created their style guide in 1929 and is most often used in the social sciences such as psychology, education, and linguistics. Scholars in English rarely use APA; however, scholars in the field of Composition and Rhetoric do. For more help with APA please visit the OWL of Purdue's APA Guide.

The newest edition of APA has included changes related to writing and style. While some of these changes are extensive, it is important to note that the APA "has endorsed the 'singular they'" (The OWL of Purdue) explicitly in the seventh edition.

Also, the APA includes guidelines for "Bias-free language." See below for some examples:

- Use "they" as a gender-neutral pronoun instead of "he or she"
- "Use specific labels rather than general ones when possible. For example, 'cisgender men' is more specific than 'men.' Similarly, 'Korean Americans' is more specific than 'Asian Americans' or 'Asians'" (The OWL of Purdue).
- "Instead of broad categories, you should use exact age ranges that are more relevant and specific" (Streefkerk).

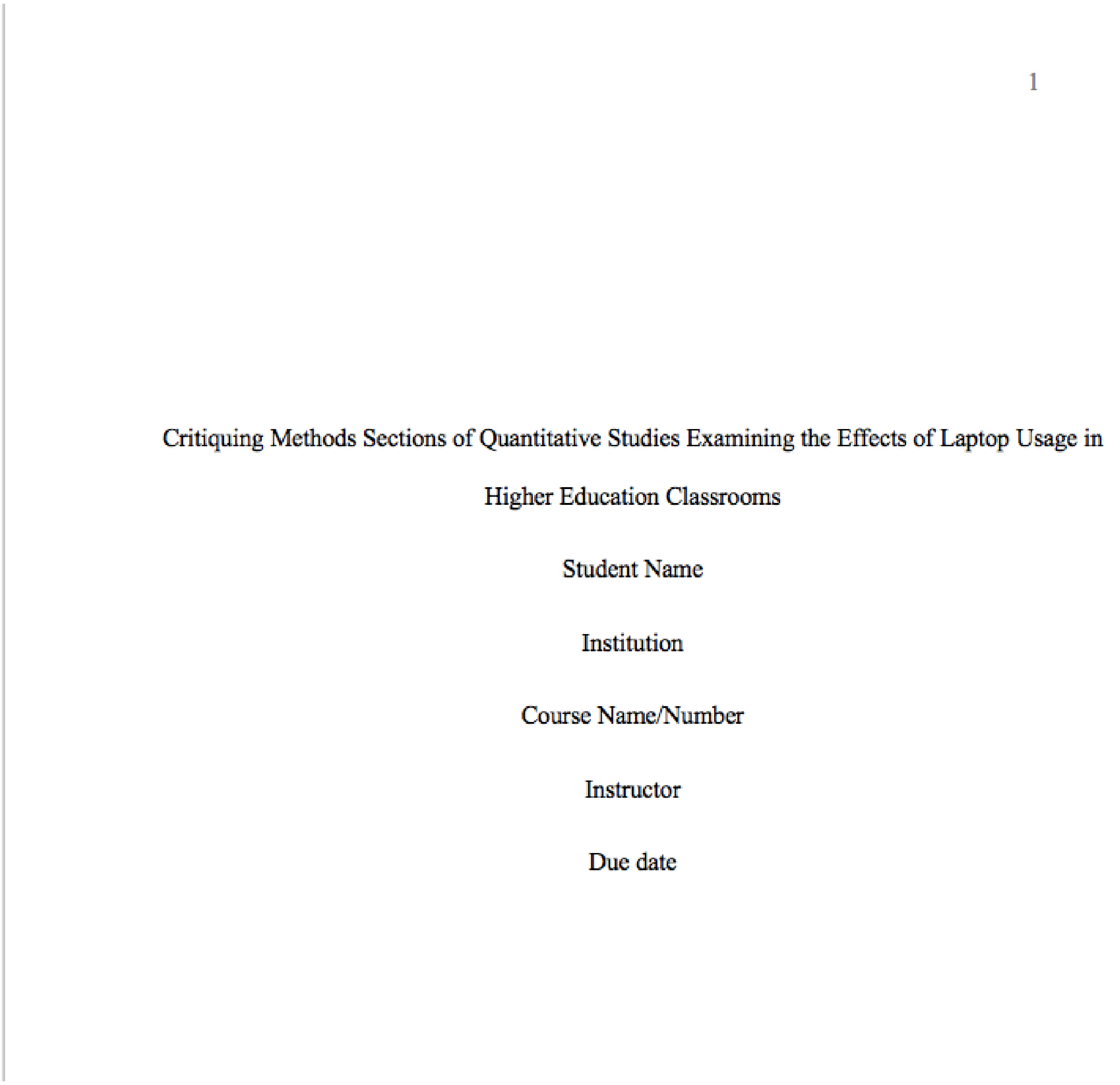
Your paper should always use Times New Roman, 12-point font, and one-inch margins. The entire manuscript should also be double spaced.

Formatting the Title Page (page 1)

- Create a Title Page for your work

- Scroll down to the center of the page and center the following:
  - Your Name
  - Title of Your Paper
    - Use title caps

    - No quotation marks, italics, underline, etc.
  - University Affiliation
  - Course Name/Number
  - Instructor
  - Due Date



1

Critiquing Methods Sections of Quantitative Studies Examining the Effects of Laptop Usage in Higher Education Classrooms

Student Name

Institution

Course Name/Number

Instructor

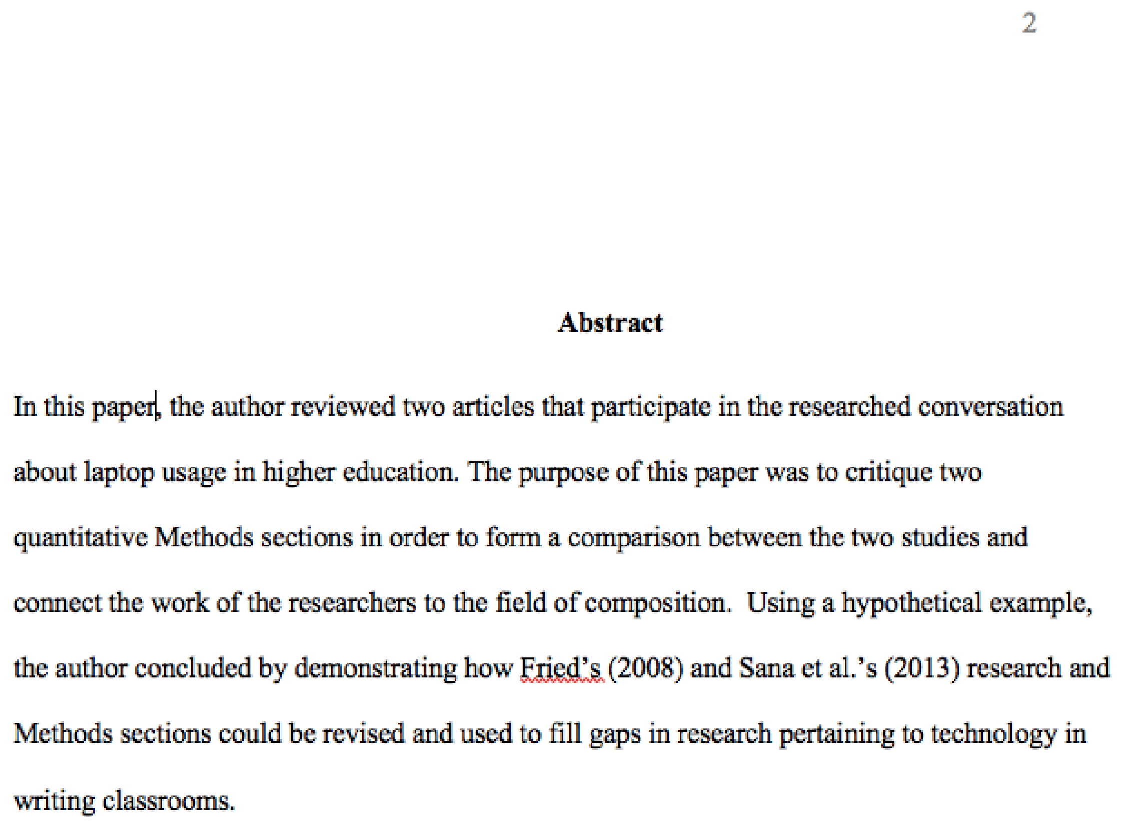
Due date

Figure 12.5.1

Formatting the Abstract Page (page 2)

- Create a new page. This page should include the header (i.e., the abbreviated title of your work) without the words “Running head.”

- Center the word "Abstract" with no bold, underline, or quotation marks.
- Hit enter and do not indent. Write a short (150-250 words) summary of your paper.



2

Abstract

In this paper, the author reviewed two articles that participate in the researched conversation about laptop usage in higher education. The purpose of this paper was to critique two quantitative Methods sections in order to form a comparison between the two studies and connect the work of the researchers to the field of composition. Using a hypothetical example, the author concluded by demonstrating how Fried's (2008) and Sana et al.'s (2013) research and Methods sections could be revised and used to fill gaps in research pertaining to technology in writing classrooms.

Figure 12.5.2

Formatting the Beginning of Your Written Content (page 3)

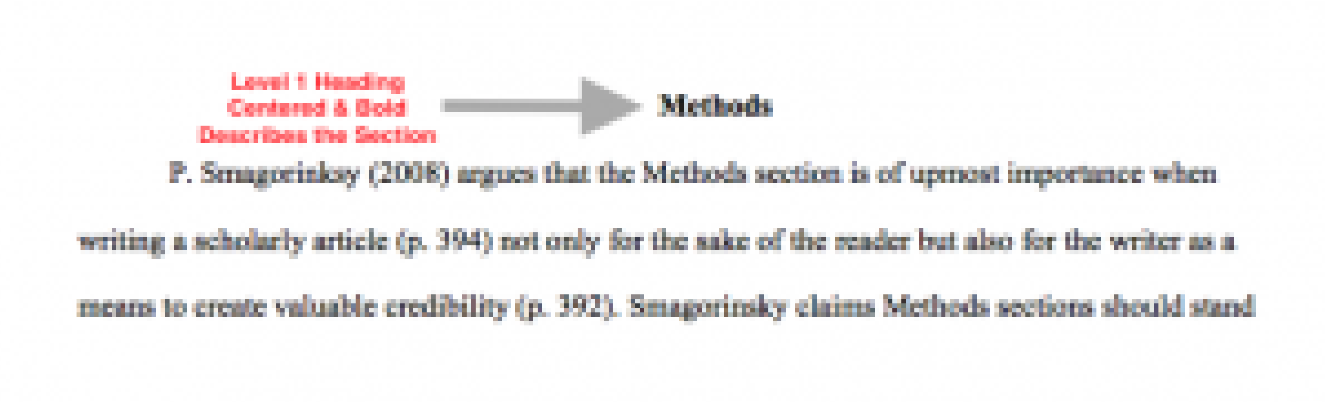
- Create a new page. This page (and all those that follow) should also include the header without the words "Running head."
- At the top of the new page, center and write the full title of your work. Do not use bold, underline, or quotation marks. After the title, hit enter once, indent your paragraph ½ inch, and begin writing.

Level 1–3 Headings

APA uses various levels of headings to distinguish sections in an essay. According to the OWL of Purdue, "[t]he levels are organized by levels of subordination, and each section of the paper should start with the highest level of heading." The highest level of heading is 1 and the lowest is 5. However, in this section, only levels 1 through 3 are discussed.

Level 1 Heading

- Level 1 Heading (Centered, Bolded, Title Caps)
- Shows the *section* title (e.g., Literature Review, Methods, Results, Implications)


Level 1 Heading
Centered & Bold
Describes the Section

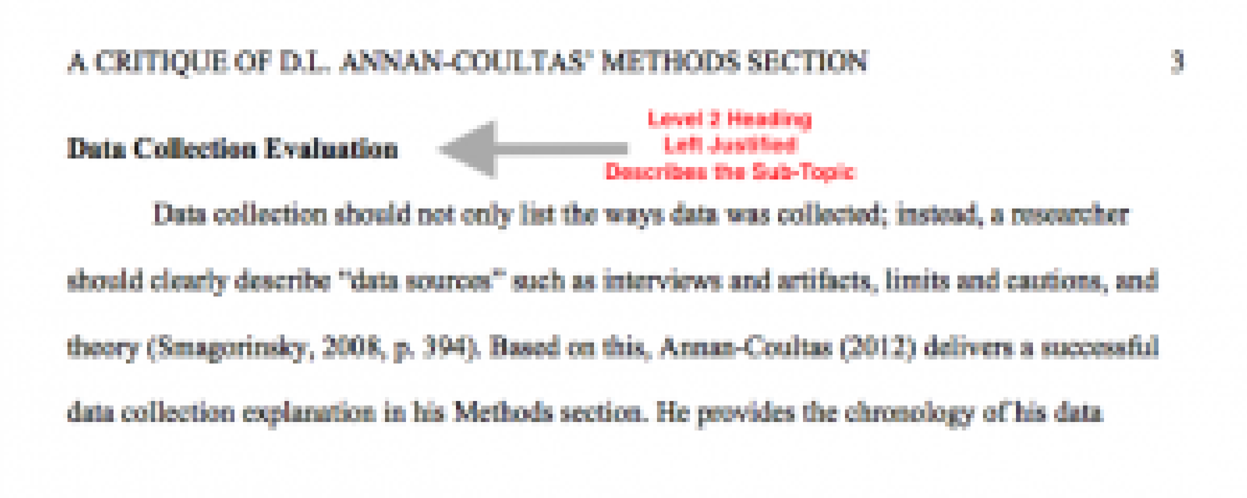
Methods

P. Smagorinsky (2008) argues that the Methods section is of upmost importance when writing a scholarly article (p. 394) not only for the sake of the reader but also for the writer as a means to create valuable credibility (p. 392). Smagorinsky claims Methods sections should stand

Figure 12.5.3

Level 2 Heading

- Level 2 Heading (Left-Justified, Bolded, Title Caps)
- Shows subsection titles (e.g., main ideas/topics)


Level 2 Heading
Left Justified
Describes the Sub-Topic

A CRITIQUE OF D.L. ANNAN-COULTAS' METHODS SECTION 3

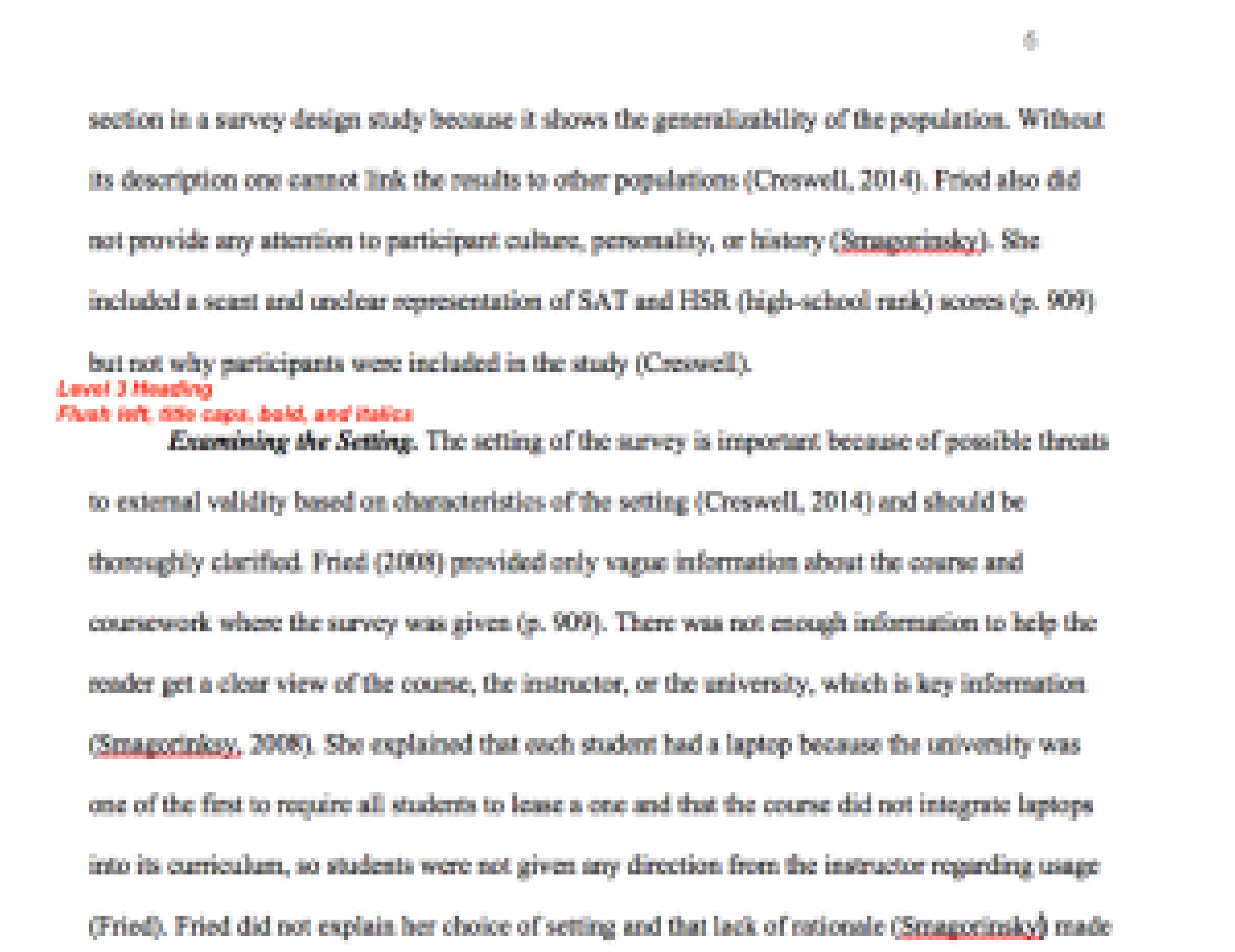
Data Collection Evaluation

Data collection should not only list the ways data was collected; instead, a researcher should clearly describe "data sources" such as interviews and artifacts, limits and cautions, and theory (Smagorinsky, 2008, p. 394). Based on this, Annan-Coultas (2012) delivers a successful data collection explanation in his Methods section. He provides the chronology of his data

Figure 12.5.4

Level 3 Heading

- Level 3 Heading (flush left, title caps, bold, and italics)
- Shows subsections of subsections (e.g., sub-topics of topics)



6

section in a survey design study because it shows the generalizability of the population. Without its description one cannot link the results to other populations (Creswell, 2014). Fried also did not provide any attention to participant culture, personality, or history (Smagorinsky). She included a scant and unclear representation of SAT and HSR (high-school rank) scores (p. 909) but not why participants were included in the study (Creswell).

Level 3 Heading
Flush left, title caps, bold, and italics

Examining the Setting. The setting of the survey is important because of possible threats to external validity based on characteristics of the setting (Creswell, 2014) and should be thoroughly clarified. Fried (2008) provided only vague information about the course and coursework where the survey was given (p. 909). There was not enough information to help the reader get a clear view of the course, the instructor, or the university, which is key information (Smagorinksy, 2008). She explained that each student had a laptop because the university was one of the first to require all students to lease a one and that the course did not integrate laptops into its curriculum, so students were not given any direction from the instructor regarding usage (Fried). Fried did not explain her choice of setting and that lack of rationale (Smagorinsky) made

Figure 12.5.5

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12.6 APA CITATIONS: IN-TEXT CITATIONS

Melanie Gagich

The purpose of this section is to provide you with information and examples pertaining to APA-style in-text citations. It begins with parenthetical citations (those that use parentheses to denote citations in the text), moves into signal phrase citations (those that cite information within sentences), and concludes with a visual annotated example of in-text citations.

Parenthetical Citations

When including parenthetical citations, be sure to place a comma between information and place a period after the parenthesis.

If there is an author, then place the author's last name and year of publication inside:

- *Example of a parenthetical citation with an author:* (Smith, 2010).

If there is no author, then place the source title (with quotation marks and title caps) and the year inside:

- *Example of a parenthetical citation with no author:* ("Cats are Great," 2011).

When citing two or more authors in a parenthetical citation, use an ampersand (&) in place of the word "and."

- *Example of the use of an ampersand:* (Kirchoff & Cook, 2016).

When citing two authors, include both of their names in each citation.

- *Example of citing two authors:* (DePalma & Alexander, 2015).

When citing three or more authors, use the first author's last name and "et al."

- *Example of citations with three or more authors:* (Anderson et al., 2006).

If you're directly quoting, then include page numbers

- *Example direct quote cited with a parenthetical citation with an author:* Multimodal composing offers students opportunities to make meaning and communicate using affordances that "could expand that notion of control beyond words on a page" (Takayoshi & Selfe, 2007, p. 2).

Paraphrased information does not require the use of page numbers

- *Example paraphrased information:* Some universities have developed laptop programs requiring students to either own or lease laptops (Fried, 2008).

Use semi-colons to demonstrate the use of multiple authors. This is especially useful when many authors have similar arguments or have found similar results.

- *Example of paraphrased information from multiple authors:* Education embraced emotion research from psychology and argued that emotion affects learning (Efklides & Volet, 2005; Pekrun, 2006; Pekrun, Frenzel, & Peery, 2007)

Signal Phrase Citations

Using signal phrases to cite information means that you add the citation to your sentence(s). This also means that you do not need an additional parenthetical citation.

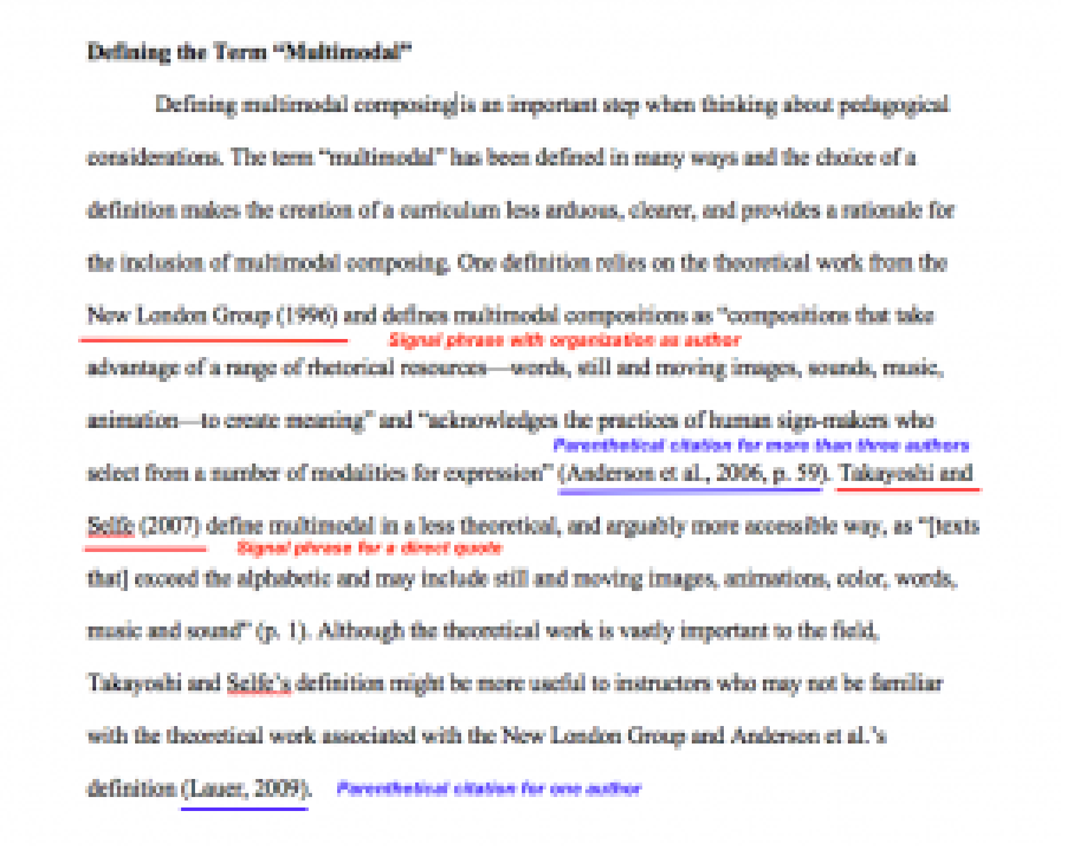
Insert the author's name and year into your sentence to act as a signal phrase.

- *Example of paraphrased information using a signal phrase*: Sheppard (2009) argues that there is a need for students to adapt to this changing digital landscape.
- *Example of a direct quote using a signal phrase:* Moran (2003) argues that some teachers think "technology is good and that it will bring good" (p. 344).

Do not use an ampersand (&) in signal phrases; instead, use the word "and."

- *Example using a signal phrase for two authors:* Kirchoff and Cook (2016) argue that some overlook the importance of teaching basic computer literacy skills when teaching multimodal composition.

Example of APA Style In-Text Citations



Defining the Term "Multimodal"

Defining multimodal composing is an important step when thinking about pedagogical considerations. The term "multimodal" has been defined in many ways and the choice of a definition makes the creation of a curriculum less arduous, clearer, and provides a rationale for the inclusion of multimodal composing. One definition relies on the theoretical work from the New London Group (1996) and defines multimodal compositions as "compositions that take advantage of a range of rhetorical resources—words, still and moving images, sounds, music, animation—to create meaning" and "acknowledges the practices of human sign-makers who select from a number of modalities for expression" (Anderson et al., 2006, p. 59). Takayoshi and Selfe (2007) define multimodal in a less theoretical, and arguably more accessible way, as "[texts that] exceed the alphabetic and may include still and moving images, animations, color, words, music and sound" (p. 1). Although the theoretical work is vastly important to the field, Takayoshi and Selfe's definition might be more useful to instructors who may not be familiar with the theoretical work associated with the New London Group and Anderson et al.'s definition (Lauer, 2009).

Signal phrase with organization as author

Parenthetical citation for more than three authors

Signal phrase for a direct quote

Parenthetical citation for one author

Figure 12.6.1

For more information about APA style in-text citations, please visit the OWL of Purdue:

- Purdue's OWL has a very useful introduction about the general layout and formatting in an APA paper.
- Click here for information about in-text citations, which look quite different than what we see in MLA.
- This page will help you understand how to introduce authors/sources in APA, which, again, looks different from MLA
- See these basic rules for information about creating APA formatted Reference Lists, particularly electronic sources (which are what we often use in research projects).

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12.7 APA CITATIONS: REFERENCES

Melanie Gagich

APA is a common documentation style used in the social sciences (e.g., psychology, sociology, education, criminology), business, nursing, linguistics, and composition. While the style, organization, and formatting of APA differ from MLA, similarities between the two styles remain. For example, to avoid plagiarism, provide readers with important source-related information, and give credit where credit is due, you must include bibliographic information at the end of the document (the Reference page) and in-text citations in the form of signal phrases and/or parenthetical citations. You should also double-space the entire document, use Times New Roman, 12-point font, and use 1-inch margins on all sides.

The remainder of this section provides basic information pertaining to creating the Reference page. Information about formatting your paper and/or incorporating APA headings can be found at the OWL of Purdue.

Reference Page Entries

- Every source that you quote, paraphrase, or summarize in an essay must be included in your Reference page
- The Reference page should appear on its own page. It should include the header (i.e., abbreviated title with the page number in the right-hand corner).
- At the start of your list, at the top margin of the page, center the word "References." Do not bold, italicize, or use quotation marks. Do not change the font, font size, or color
- Reference page entries are in the same font and double spacing as the rest of the paper.
- Like MLA Work Cited pages, Reference page entries use hanging (also known as reverse) indentation, in which the first line of an entry is not indented, but all successive lines are indented, by .5″.
- Sources need to be listed in alphabetical order by the first letter in each entry.
    - If you have a source with no author, then that source will be alphabetized according to the first letter of its title
    - The entries will not be numbered or presented as a series of bulleted points.

Examples of Reference Page Entries

Formatting an Article from an Academic Journal with DOI

Author's last name, first initial. middle initial. (Year, Month Date Published). Title of the article. *Title of the Academic Journal, Volume #* (Issue #), page numbers, DOI.

Example of an Article from an Academic Journal with DOI

Werner, C. L. (2015). Speaking of composing (frameworks): New media discussions, 2000–2010. *Computers and Composition, 37*, 55-72. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2015/06.005

Formatting an Article from an Academic Journal with No DOI

Author's last name, first initial. middle initial. (Year, Month Date Published). Title of the article. *Title of the Academic Journal, Volume #* (Issue #), page numbers, URL.

Example of an Article from an Academic Journal with No DOI

Yancey, K. B. (2004). Made not only in words: Composition in a new key. *College Composition and Communication, 56*(2), 297-328. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4140651

Formatting an Article from an Online Magazine

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Date of publication). Title of article. *Title of Online Periodical, volume number*(issue number if available).
https://www.someaddress.com/full/url/

Example of an Article from an Online Magazine

Wong, A. (2015, April). Digital natives, yet strangers to the web. *The Atlantic*. https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/04/digital-natives-yet-strangers-to-the-web/390990/

Formatting an Article from a Website with an Author

Last, F. M. (Year, Month Date Published). Article title. URL.

Example of an Article from a Website with an Author

Braziller, A. & Kleinfeld, E. (2015). Myths of multimodal composing. http://www.digitalrhetoriccollaborative.org/2015/09/03/myths-of-multimodal-composing/

Example with an Organization as Author

National Council of Teachers of English. (2005, November). *Position statement on multimodal literacies.* http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/multimodalliteracies

Formatting an Article from a Website with No Author

Title. (Year, Month Date Published). URL.

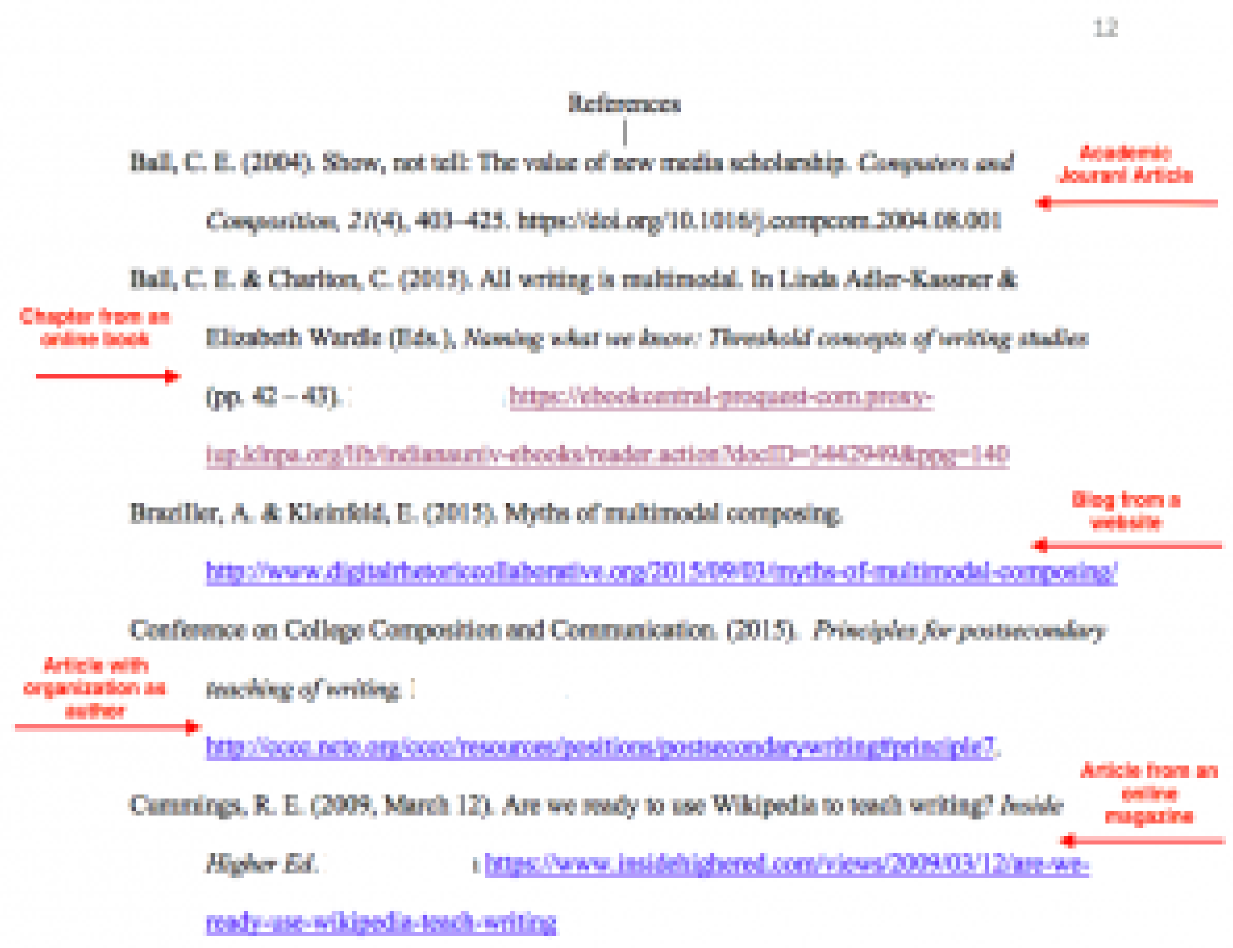
Example of an Article from a Website with No Author

Mobile campus laptop loan program (2019). https://www.csuohio.edu/services-for-students/mobile-campus

What Is the DOI?

DOI stands for "digital object identifier," and it helps categorize scholarly articles. However, not all scholarly articles will have a DOI. If that is the case, then you should provide the URL where you retrieved the article.

Sample Reference Page



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Academic Journal Article

Ball, C. E. & Charlton, C. (2015). All writing is multimodal. In Linda Adler-Kassner & Elizabeth Wardle (Eds.), *Naming what we know: Threshold concepts of writing studies* (pp. 42 – 43). https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy-iup.klnpa.org/lib/indianauniv-ebooks/reader.action?docID=3442949&ppg=140

Chapter from an online book

Braziller, A. & Kleinfeld, E. (2015). Myths of multimodal composing. http://www.digitalrhetoriccollaborative.org/2015/09/03/myths-of-multimodal-composing/

Blog from a website

Conference on College Composition and Communication. (2015). *Principles for postsecondary teaching of writing.* http://cccc.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/postsecondarywriting#principle7.

Article with organization as author

Cummings, R. E. (2009, March 12). Are we ready to use Wikipedia to teach writing? *Inside Higher Ed.* https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2009/03/12/are-we-ready-use-wikipedia-teach-writing

Article from an online magazine

Figure 12.7.1

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APPENDIX A: CHECKLIST FOR ACCESSIBILITY

This title has been reviewed to meet these accessibility practices:

Organizing Content

- Content is organized under headings and subheadings.
- Headings and subheadings are used sequentially (e.g., Heading 1, Heading 2).

Images

- Images that convey information include alternative text (alt text) descriptions of the image's content or function.
- Graphs, charts, and maps also include contextual or supporting details in the text surrounding the image.
- Images do not rely on color to convey information.
- Images that are purely decorative do not have alt text descriptions. (Descriptive text is unnecessary if the image doesn't convey contextual content information).

Links

- The link text describes the destination of the link and does not use generic text such as "click here" or "read more."
- If a link will open or download a file (like a PDF or Excel file), a textual reference is included in the link information (e.g., [PDF]).
- Links do not open in new windows or tabs.
- If a link must open in a new window or tab, a textual reference is included in the link information (e.g., [NewTab]).
- For citations and references, the title of the resource is hyperlinked, and the full URL is not hyperlinked.

Tables

- Tables are used to structure information and not for layout.
- Tables include row and column headers.
- Row and column headers have the correct scope assigned.
- Tables include a caption.
- Tables avoid merged or split cells.
- Tables have adequate cell padding.

Multimedia

- All audio content includes a transcript. The transcript includes all speech content and relevant descriptions of non-speech audio and speaker names/headings where necessary.
- Videos have captions of all speech content and relevant non-speech content that has been edited by a human for accuracy.
- All videos with contextual visuals (graphs, charts, etc.) are described audibly in the video.

Formulas

- Equations written in plain text use proper symbols (i.e., −, ×, ÷).[1]
- For complex equations, one of the following is true:
    - They were written using LaTeX and are rendered with MathJax (Pressbooks).
    - They were written using Microsoft Word's equation editor.
    - They are presented as images with alternative text descriptions.
- Written equations are properly interpreted by text-to-speech tools.[2]

Font Size

- Font size is 12 point or higher for body text in Word and PDF documents.
- Font size is 9 point for footnotes or endnotes in Word and PDF documents.

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1. For example, a hyphen (-) may look like a minus sign (−), but it will not be read out correctly by text-to-speech tools.

2. Written equations should prioritize semantic markup over visual markup so text-to-speech tools will read out an equation in a way that makes sense to auditory learners. This applies to both equations written in LaTeX and equations written in Microsoft Word's equation editor.

- Font size can be enlarged by 200 percent in webbook or ebook formats without needing to scroll side to side.

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GLOSSARY

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academia

Another term to refer to college, specifically in the sense of a space for serious scholarship, study, and knowledge production.

academic discipline

A field of study (we often call them "majors" or "minors"). Academic study, academic journals, and college departments are often organized around a single discipline, such as neuroscience, political science, biology, mechanical engineering, nursing, or English literature. There are often sub-specialties within these disciplines.

academic discourse

Discourse (noun): spoken or written communication, conversation, debate. *Academic* discourse is the exchange of ideas and debates among professors in a specific field, or among students in a classroom. The goal is always to think deeply, critically, and with the aim of pushing knowledge forward.

Annotate

An **annotation** is a special kind of note-taking directly on a piece of writing or text, usually in the margins of the page. The purpose of **annotating** is to aid your understanding of the text, engage in a conversation with the author of the text, and provide you with a reminder of your reading experience when you return to the text. When you **annotate**, you jot down quick summaries, questions, or observations in the margins, and underline, highlight, or comment on the text itself. **Annotations** can also be made using sticky notes (paper or digital) and the insert-comment feature of word-processing software.

The **annotations** in an **annotated** bibliography are somewhat different from **annotations** as defined above. An **annotated** bibliography is a list of your research sources (called a Works Cited in MLA format) with a paragraph or more of **annotation**—usually a paragraph-length summary and explanation—beneath each source.

bias

Bias is the inclination toward or against something. Bias can be explicit, meaning it is overt and obvious, or implicit, meaning it may not be obvious at first.

Claim

A claim is a type of argumentative thesis—we usually call it a claim when it is being used in a persuasive essay. Claims need to be defended by you with logical, persuasive reasoning. Claims can also be challenged.

The most common types of claims are

claims of policy (we must do something!),
claims of value (this is good! or this is bad!),
claims of definition (this is what it is)
claims of cause/effect (X has caused Y or X will cause Y)

Clauses

The groupings of words that make up sentences

concede

To concede is to accept or to admit that something is true or valid (rather than opposing it or fighting it). In an argument, we sometimes concede points to the counterargument, which indicates that we do accept some of what they have presented in an argument. To concede, or to make a concession, does not mean that you have "lost" an argument. After a concession, you can move on to disagreement with a counterarguer or counterargument perspective. You can also concede certain points but not others.

context

Context refers to background information that is necessary to understand historical and/or situational circumstances of the person, event, and/or idea. Context is imperative when researching a topic; one must understand the situation, history, and setting surrounding the topic for basic understanding.

database

A database is a searchable collection of online materials or articles.

In college, academic research databases are collections of sources that tend to be more credible and therefore useful for academic research. In an academic research database, you may find articles from newspapers, magazines, or websites, but many academic databases contain just scholarly research journal articles. Some research databases focus on only one academic discipline. Others are multidisciplinary. Chapter 8.4 offers more information on research databases.

Diction

The choice of words in writing and/or speaking

Expository

Expository texts are often non-fiction works meant to explain, inform, analyze, and/or give details about a topic

Expository Writing

Also called explanatory writing. Expository writing is one of the most common types of writing, and you will be asked to create expository pieces of writing during your college career. When an author writes in an **expository** style, he or she is trying to **explain** a concept to an audience. Expository writing does not include the author's opinions but focuses on reporting, explaining, summarizing, or otherwise objectively rendering a topic for a reader.

FYW

FYW is an acronym for "First-Year Writing." It is also synonymous with the terms "college writing" and "introductory composition courses."

ideologies

A system of ideas and ideals, especially one that forms the basis of economic or political theory and policy. For example: conservatism, capitalism, are ideologies. Socialism, fascism, and liberalism are all considered ideologies. Do not confuse ideology with truth, it is a theory or policy ("Ideology | Definition of Ideology In English By Oxford Dictionaries").

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Kairos

Greek for the "right time," or "opportunity," refers to the timeliness of an argument. In modern rhetoric, it refers to making the right statement or argument at exactly the right time.

metacognitive

the thinking that you do about how you think or how you learn. For our purposes here (when thinking about metacognitive writing strategies), we could break this word down as follows:
"meta" = awareness of oneself
"cognition" = learning

new media

A text created for and distributed on the internet.

objective

Without opinion or bias; neutral or explanatory.

objectivity

The quality of being neutral, impartial, or without bias. To be objective is to try to avoid being opinionated.

parenthetical citation

Parenthetical = in parentheses; Citation = a reference to the original source material

A parenthetical citation is the information that comes after a quote or paraphrase that connects to your Works Cited page. Parenthetical citations are also called in-text citations.

For information on parenthetical or in-text citations, see Chapter 9.5

Peer Review

In-class peer review means you, and other students in your class, providing feedback to your fellow students on their drafts of various papers.

Peer review as it relates to scholarly sources is something different. Scholarly peer review is part of the process of scholarly publication. When a scholar who has conducted his or her own research wants to convey that research in a published paper, he or she must first submit a draft of the paper to several other experts (people with PhDs) in that same field. Those peer reviewers are looking to see that the research question, the literature review, the study's methodology, and the author's conclusions are sound and reasonable. If so, the peer reviewers will approve the paper for publication.

Persuasive Writing

Persuasive writing is the main style of writing you will use in academic papers. When an author writes in a persuasive style, he or she is trying to convince the audience of a position or belief. Persuasive writing contains the author's opinions and biases, as well as justifications and reasons given by the author as evidence of the correctness of their position. Any "argumentative" essay you write in school will be in the persuasive style of writing.

Examples of expository writing include:
Critiques or Reviews of articles/events
Advertisements
Letters to the editor
Cover letters
Argument essays
Position papers

Popular Source

Popular in this sense does not mean likable. Instead, when we say "popular **source**" the popular means "for the people". Popular sources are magazine, newspaper, or website articles that are written for an audience of everyday people. Sources that are scholarly are written for highly educated experts who are specialists within their field.

print source*

A "print source" means a source that originally or still exists as a printed document. Sometimes articles, especially scholarly journal articles, are originally published as print sources. When these articles become digitized (meaning that a digital copy of the article is created), we are looking at a scanned image of the original print copy. Print sources generally have page numbers that you need to use when citing.

research gap

When we discuss a "research gap," we are building off of ideas expressed by John Swales and his study of the rhetorical moves that are common in the introductory section of academic articles. Swales found that writers often attempt to "create a research space" (CARS) at the beginning of their papers, meaning that they identify needs for further research, or different research, or different analyses for a particular topic. In other words, they identify some sort of gap in the scholarship on a given topic. Identifying that gap justifies the need for the new research or analysis that the author wants to fill with his or her own work.

revision

Revision is the process whereby ongoing adjustments and changes are made to create a well-balanced and well-structured final product of the essay. During the revision stages of an essay, one is expected to take heed of suggestions that the instructor, peer, and writing tutors have made to help develop and solidify ideas while also paying attention to writing style and structure.

Scholarly Sources

Scholarly is often used to signify academic, serious work. So a "Scholarly" source is an article, book, or journal that is written by someone with a PhD or other terminal degree to other experts in that field. These scholarly sources are not written to make money or to entertain, as popular sources often are. Scholarly sources are meant to convey research findings and knowledge that the author has come to through his or her studies.

Signal phrase

A signal phrase signals to the reader of your paper that you will be including ideas from another person. Signal phrases are used to clearly differentiate between your thoughts and those of the authors who you quote, paraphrase, or summarize.

Example signal phrases:
Jones states that...
Miller argues that...
According to the Pew Research Center, ...

sources

Sources are texts that may express the ideas, views, arguments, research, etc. of others. While sources can be utilized in a variety of ways, they should be carefully selected and integrated into a text using the appropriate documentation style guidelines. A source should always be cited.

Synthesis

The act of taking pieces or parts of several original sources and using them to form a new whole. In writing, this means drawing from several sources to create your own essay, one that either explains a concept (using perspectives and information from several different sources) or defends your own argument (using perspectives and information from several different sources).

text

Text can refer to the written word: “Proofread your text before submitting the paper.”

A text refers to any form of communication, primarily written or oral, that forms a coherent unit, often as an object of study. A book can be a text, and a speech can be a text, but television commercials, magazine ads, websites, and emails can also be texts: “Dieting advertisements formed one of the texts we studied in my Sociology class.”

thesis

A thesis is the writer’s central point (clear, concise, and limited) that provides the foundation for the rest of the essay. Most often located at the end of the introduction, the thesis establishes the core idea that the rest of the essay will develop. It should never be expressed as a question. A thesis can be explanatory or argumentative; if a thesis is argument-based, it is sometimes referred to as a claim.

Tone

A quality in writing that communicates or hints at a particular voice, inflection, character, or mood. Academic writing uses tone shifts to indicate pathos or audience.

Topic

Topics are sometimes referred to as "subject" or "main idea" or "claim" or "support."

Often paragraphs focus on sub-topics, or more specific examples of the topic. For instance, the **focus** of an essay might be higher education, one **topic** discussed within it is marketing higher education, and a supportive **sub-topic** might be the use of social media to attract students.

Topic Sentence

The topic sentence is often the first sentence in a body paragraph. It introduces the topic of the paragraph, naming the key idea or concept that you will develop in that paragraph. Topic sentences often also contain a transitional phrase to let the reader know if in that paragraph you will be discussing an idea that builds off of the previous paragraph or diverges from it.

URL

URL stands for Uniform Resource Locator. A URL is more commonly known as a web address, although, as Wikipedia explains, the URL is only one part of the web address: “most web browsers display the URL of a web page above the page in an address bar. A typical URL could have the form http://www.example.com/index.html, which indicates a protocol (http), a hostname (www.example.com), and a file name (index.html)" ("URL").