

Waymaker English Composition

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Lumen Learning



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SUCCESS SKILLS

WHY IT MATTERS: SUCCESS SKILLS

Why should we define and evaluate our college success skills?

When we think about going to college, we think about learning a subject deeply, getting prepared for a profession. We tend to associate colleges and universities with **knowledge**, and we're not wrong in that regard.

But going to college, and doing well once we're there, also relies heavily on our **behaviors** while we're there.

Professors and college administrators will expect you to behave in certain ways, without any explicit instructions on their part. For instance, professors will expect you to spend several hours a week working on class concepts (homework, writing, preparing for exams) on your own time. They will not tell you **WHEN** to spend those hours, but leave it up to you to recognize the need to put in the effort and schedule the time accordingly.

The good news about behaviors that help us succeed in college:

- **These skills can be learned**, and improved upon. Just because we're not great at something like time management now, doesn't mean we can't get better at it. The more we practice, the better we get (and the more it becomes second nature).
- **These skills are transferrable**. Patterns of behavior that help us pass difficult classes, also help us succeed in the workplace, and improve our relationships with people who matter to us.

Consider this short video from Richard St. John, who spent years interviewing people who reached the top of their fields, across a wide range of careers. He traces the core behaviors that were common to all of these successful people, and distills them down into 8 key traits.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/Y6bbMQXQ180>

To recap, those 8 traits are

Passion	Work	Good	Focus
Push	Serve	Ideas	Persist

All 8 traits are things that you can put into practice immediately. With them, you'll see improvement in your school successes, as well as what lies beyond.

Learning Outcomes

- Identify and practice habits for success
- Identify and apply critical thinking skills
- Analyze time management practices
- Define successful approaches towards college-level writing tasks
- Apply word processing skills to college writing tasks

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT: SUCCESS SKILLS JOURNAL

Success Skills Journal – Introduction

To get, and keep, a job you typically need a repertoire of technical skills. Dentists need to know how to fill cavities. Secretaries need to type 100+ words per minute. Accountants need to be certified.

Beyond the technical skills, though, which dentist do you go to? The one who is pleasant and takes time to answer your questions; or the one who treats you like a number in a long line of numbered mouths?

Which secretary do you retain when times are lean? The one whose attitude is positive and upbeat, and who is always willing to help; or the one who is inflexible and has a hard time admitting mistakes?

Likewise, think about accountants. The one who has a great work ethic and encourages his colleagues is the one who will, most likely, excel in his position and organization.

In these situations, and all the others like them, it's the soft skills that matter.

While your technical skills may get your foot in the door, your people skills are what open most of the doors to come. Your work ethic, your attitude, your communication skills, your emotional intelligence and a whole host of other personal attributes are the soft skills that are crucial for career success. — [“Why Soft Skills Matter: Making Sure Your Hard Skills Shine”](#)

This module addresses “soft skills” that are necessary for success in both college and professional life. While these skills aren't usually taught in school, you will be expected to have them in order to do well in classes and to succeed in the workplace.

The Success Skills Journal will ask you to reflect on the individual components addressed in this module of the course. You will assess how strong your own “soft skills” are at the moment, and what you might do in order to improve them.

Assignment Details

Look for the Try It pages along the way to help you complete the Success Skills Journal project. Examples of successful journal entries will be provided as a model.

Rubric

In order to successfully complete this assessment, a submitted journal must reach “Meets or Exceeds Expectations” in all categories.

Ratings

Criteria			
Habits for Success Journal Entry	Meets or Exceeds Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200-400 words long • fully addresses question(s) of prompt • demonstrates thoughtful consideration and planning relevant to the topic • demonstrates application of writing process, to include careful editing and proofreading 	Approaching Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 125-200 words long • partially addresses question(s) of prompt • demonstrates some consideration and planning relevant to the topic • may not demonstrate application of writing process, to include editing and proofreading 	Does Not Meet Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • less than 125 words long, or not included in journal • does not address question(s) of prompt • does not demonstrate consideration or planning relevant to the topic • does not demonstrate application of writing process
Critical Thinking Journal Entry	Meets or Exceeds Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200-400 words long • fully addresses question(s) of prompt • demonstrates thoughtful consideration and planning relevant to the topic • demonstrates application of writing process, to include careful editing and proofreading 	Approaching Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 125-200 words long • partially addresses question(s) of prompt • demonstrates some consideration and planning relevant to the topic • may not demonstrate application of writing process, to include editing and proofreading 	Does Not Meet Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • less than 125 words long, or not included in journal • does not address question(s) of prompt • does not demonstrate consideration or planning relevant to the topic • does not demonstrate application of writing process
Time Management Journal Entry	Meets or Exceeds Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200-400 words long • fully addresses 	Approaching Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 125-200 words long • partially addresses 	Does Not Meet Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • less than 125 words long, or not included in journal • does not address question(s) of prompt

	<p>question(s) of prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrates thoughtful consideration and planning relevant to the topic • demonstrates application of writing process, to include careful editing and proofreading 	<p>question(s) of prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrates some consideration and planning relevant to the topic • may not demonstrate application of writing process, to include editing and proofreading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not demonstrate consideration or planning relevant to the topic • does not demonstrate application of writing process
Writing in College Journal Entry	<p>Meets or Exceeds Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200-400 words long • fully addresses question(s) of prompt • demonstrates thoughtful consideration and planning relevant to the topic • demonstrates application of writing process, to include careful editing and proofreading 	<p>Approaching Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 125-200 words long • partially addresses question(s) of prompt • demonstrates some consideration and planning relevant to the topic • may not demonstrate application of writing process, to include editing and proofreading 	<p>Does Not Meet Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • less than 125 words long, or not included in journal • does not address question(s) of prompt • does not demonstrate consideration or planning relevant to the topic • does not demonstrate application of writing process
Computer-Based Writing Journal Entry	<p>Meets or Exceeds Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200-400 words long • fully addresses question(s) of prompt • demonstrates thoughtful consideration and planning relevant to the topic • demonstrates application of 	<p>Approaching Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 125-200 words long • partially addresses question(s) of prompt • demonstrates some consideration and planning relevant to the topic • may not demonstrate 	<p>Does Not Meet Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • less than 125 words long, or not included in journal • does not address question(s) of prompt • does not demonstrate consideration or planning relevant to the topic • does not demonstrate application of writing process

	writing process, to include careful editing and proofreading	application of writing process, to include editing and proofreading	
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OUTCOME: HABITS FOR SUCCESS

Identify and Practice Habits for Success

A college education is aligned with greater success in many areas of life. While enrolled in college, most students are closely focused on making it through the next class or passing the next test. It can be easy to lose sight of the overall role that education plays in life. But sometimes it helps to recall what a truly great step forward you are taking!



It's also important to recognize, though, that some students do not succeed; they drop out within the first year. Sometimes this is due to financial problems or a personal or family crisis. But too frequently, students drop out because they're having trouble passing their courses.

In this section, we examine the elements of college success. Are there patterns of success you strive for but aren't yet reaching? Where might you shore up your support? What strategies can you use to achieve success in your college endeavors?

What You Will Learn to Do

- develop a personal definition of success
- identify specific strategies to achieve success
- identify support network options

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Text: A Personal Definition of Success
- Text: Strategies to Achieve Success
- Text: Campus Support Networks
- Self Check: Habits for Success
- Try It: Habits for Success

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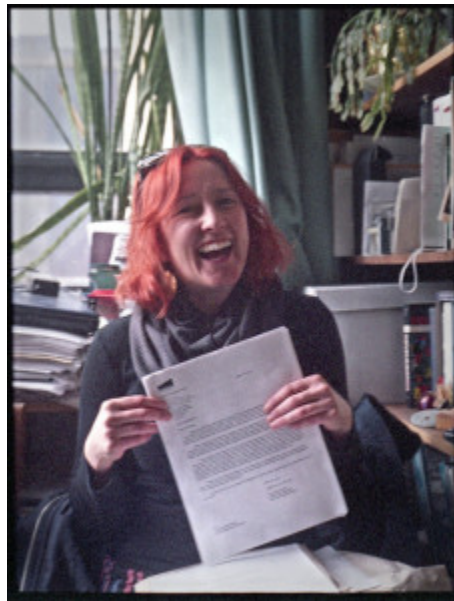
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TEXT: A PERSONAL DEFINITION OF SUCCESS

How do you define college success? The definition really depends on you. You might think that “success” is earning an associate’s degree or attending classes in a four-year college. Maybe success is a bachelor’s or master’s degree or a PhD. Maybe success means receiving a certificate of completion or finishing skill-based training.



You might be thinking of other measures of college success, too—like grades. For instance, you might be unhappy with anything less than an A in a course, although maybe this depends on the difficulty of the subject. As long as you pass with a C, you might be perfectly content. But no matter how you define success personally, you probably wouldn’t think it means earning a D or lower grade in a class.

To help you start to define what success means to you, take this quick self-assessment about your college goals and beyond. How many of these items are important to you?

I Want to Be Able to . . .	YES	NO
Change my major during my college years		
Have good relationships with my professors		
Be eligible for financial aid		
Be eligible for scholarships		
Get awards		
Get reductions on my car insurance		
Prove to my employer that I can work hard		
Keep my parents happy		
Make connections to get a job after graduation		

Finally, consider that we can't be successful all the time at everything. We have to balance our energy and our focus, to get what we really want. The following video stresses the external factors that shape what we consider "success" as a society, and encourages us to think beyond these factors to determine what it really is that motivates us, personally—what we hope will define us, and our value, to others.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/MtSE4rglxbY>

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TEXT: STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS

If most students believe that passing a class is the minimum requirement for “success,” and if most students want to be successful in their courses, why aren’t more college students consistently successful in the classroom?

Perhaps some common misconceptions are at play. For example, we often hear students say, “I just can’t do it!” or “I’m not good at math,” or “I guess college isn’t for me...,” or “I’m not smart enough.” But these explanations for success or failure aren’t necessarily accurate. Considerable research into college success reveals that **intellect usually has nothing to do with having difficulty in or failing college courses**. More often, success depends on how fully you embrace and master the following seven strategies:

1. Learn how to take effective notes in class.
2. Review the text and your reading notes prior to class.
3. Participate in class discussion and maybe even join a study group.
4. Go to office hours and ask your instructor questions.
5. Give yourself enough time to research, write, and edit your essays in manageable stages.
6. Take advantage of online or on-campus academic support resources.
7. Spend sufficient time studying.



So if you feel you are not smart enough for college, ask yourself if you can implement some of these skills. Can you make more time for learning? One approach is to create a regular study schedule and make sure you allow yourself ample time. Most college success experts agree that students should study two hours outside of class for every hour in class. Only break away from your committed schedule if an extreme situation prevents you from sticking to it.

Another strategy to consider implementing is group study. For example, rather than relying just on your own knowledge, notes, and skills, try studying with other students in your difficult classes. Studying in a group gives every group member a chance to ask questions and talk about concepts.

You can also add a tutor to your study group. You will really be able to notice a positive difference. Tutoring is generally free in college, and the strategies and knowledge you gain will be invaluable. Usually tutors have taken the class you are currently enrolled in, and they are trained to get the best out of you.



Overall, students struggle in college not because of natural intellect or smarts, but because of poor time management, disorganization, and lack of quality study time. The good news is that there are ways to combat this, specifically by doing things like creating a regular study schedule, studying in groups, and taking advantage of your school's academic resources, like a tutoring center, instructor office hours, and any available online help.

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TEXT: CAMPUS SUPPORT NETWORKS

Whether your campus is small, tall, *grande*, or *venti*, you are probably amazed by the array of institutionally supported student activities available for your enrichment and enjoyment. Perhaps your biggest challenge is deciding how much extra time you have after studying and which added activities yield the greatest reward.

Benefits of Participating in Student Life

How is it that becoming fully involved in student life can have such a positive impact on student satisfaction and academic success?



The [National Survey of Student Engagement](#)—a survey measuring student involvement in academic and cocurricular activities—shows that student success is directly linked to student involvement in the institution. In fact, survey results show that the higher the level of student involvement is, the higher student grades are and the more likely students are to reenroll the next term. All of this seems to translate to satisfaction. The following lists some of the many benefits and rewards that result from active participation in campus and student life.

- **Personal interests are tapped:** Cocurricular programs and activities encourage students to explore personal interests and passions. As students pursue these interests, they learn more about their strengths and possible career paths. These discoveries can be lasting and life-changing.
- **A portfolio of experience develops:** Experience with just about any aspect of college life maybe relevant to a prospective employer. Is freshman year too soon to be thinking about résumés? Definitely not! If you gain leadership experience in a club, for example, be sure to document what you did so you can refer back to it (you might want to keep track of your activities and experiences in a journal, for instance).
- **Fun leads to good feelings:** Students typically pursue cocurricular activities because the activities are enjoyable and personally rewarding. Having fun is also a good way to balance the stress of meeting academic deadlines and studying intensely.
- **Social connections grow:** When students are involved in cocurricular activities, they usually interact with others, which means meeting new people, developing social skills, and being a part of a community. It's always good to have friends who share your interests and to develop these relationships over time.
- **Awareness of diversity expands:** The multicultural nature of American society is increasingly reflected and celebrated on college campuses today. You will see this not only in the classroom but also in the cocurricular activities, clubs, organizations, and events. For example, your college might have a Black Student Union, an Asian Pacific Student Union, a Japanese Student Association, a Chinese Student Association, and many others. Having access to these resources gives students the opportunity to explore different cultures and prepare to live, work, and thrive in a vibrantly diverse world.
- **Self-esteem grows:** When students pursue their special interests through cocurricular activities, it can be a real boost to self-esteem. Academic achievement can certainly be a source of affirmation and satisfaction, but it's nice to have additional activities that validate your special contributions in other ways.

All in all, being involved in the campus community is vital to every student, and it's vital to the college, too. It's a symbiotic relationship that serves everyone well.

The key to getting the most out of college is to take advantage of as many facets of student life as possible while still keeping up with your academic commitments. That's pretty obvious, right? What may be less obvious is that focusing exclusively on your academic work and not getting involved in any of the rich and diverse cocurricular activities on campus can come at a real price and even hamper your success.

Major College Resources and How To Use Them

Professors do care about how you are doing in their class; they genuinely want you to succeed, but they will give you the grade you earn. There are people and resources on campus for you to utilize so you can earn the grade you want. Your professors are one of those resources, and are perhaps the most important. Go see them during office hours, ask them questions about the material and get extra help if you need it. ... Another resource to utilize can be found in the campus learning center. ... The first time I took a paper there, I recall standing outside the door for about ten minutes thinking of an excuse not to go in. Thankfully I saw a classmate walk in and I followed suit. ... Thanks to that first visit, I received an A- on the paper! —Kristen Mruk, “The Student Experience”

College resources to help you reach your educational and career goals are plentiful on most campuses. Here are several campus resources to know about and find early in your college career. You may not need them right away; some you may not need at all. But you will at least find several to be vital. Be familiar with your options. Know where to find the services. Have contact information. Be prepared to visit for help.



Advising

Most colleges and universities assign an academic adviser to each student. The adviser may be associated with your major. There may also be an office or department that provides advising. Call upon your adviser or the advising office if you have an issue with your adviser or you need other help.

Tutoring and Writing Centers

Tutoring and writing centers are established for all students, and seeking help from them is expected and to your advantage. Such services are covered by your tuition dollars, and they can richly enhance performance in any area of your studies. Know where to find these centers and how to schedule appointments.

Other Academic Support Facilities

Your college may also offer academic support in various other forms: for example, computer labs with trained assistants, tutors, mentors, peer advisers, and more. You can research what kinds of special support are available and be ready to take advantage of them.

Library Reference Desk

College libraries are staffed with professionals whose main function is to assist you and the college community in finding needed resources. Don't hesitate to find the reference desk and get to know the reference librarians. Invariably you will learn about valuable resources—many of them online—that you didn't know existed. Reference librarians are also educators, and they're there to help you.

Campus Health Center

In the event that you need any health services whatsoever, the campus health center can be your first destination. Stop into the center and learn about the services offered, the hours of operation, emergency provisions, and routine health services available.

Campus Counseling

Counseling is an essential service that colleges and universities invariably provide. Services can range from life-saving care to assistance with minor concerns. Life stressors, such as deaths and divorces in the family, issues with friends, substance abuse, and suicide are just a few of the many issues that college students may experience or witness others struggling with. Don't take matters into your own hands. Get help! The counseling center can help you and support you in gaining solid footing during difficult times. Don't hesitate to take full advantage of the services and help they offer.

Career Services

One of the most important purposes of college is to prepare students for a career. All colleges and universities have a career office that can assist you with many critical aspects of finding a suitable career. It may also help you find a campus job or review options for your major, help you get an internship, draft your résumé, and practice interview skills. Visiting the career office is a must for every student, and it's worth doing early and often (rather than waiting until you're about to graduate).

Spiritual Life

Most college campus have interfaith facilities to meet the spiritual-life needs of the entire college community. You may find these facilities to be a refuge in special moments of need or resources for your ongoing involvement. A healthy spiritual life can bring greater balance to your student life.

Additional support centers that students may wish to visit include offices for financial aid, students with disabilities, housing, diversity, student organizations, athletics, continuing education, international students, child care, and many others. Refer to your college Web site or other college directory for information about the many, many services that can be part of your college experience.

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SELF CHECK: HABITS FOR SUCCESS

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TRY IT: HABITS FOR SUCCESS

Habits for Success Journal Entry

To Do

For this activity, create your own definition of success. Dictionary.com defines success as “the favorable outcome of something attempted.” For many students in college, success means passing a class, earning an

A, or learning something new. Beyond college, some people define success in terms of financial wealth; others measure it by the quality of their relationships with family and friends. Here is an example of a brief, philosophical definition of success:

To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded. —Ralph Waldo Emerson

Ultimately, before we can know if we are successful, we must first define what success means for ourselves. Develop a 200-400 word journal entry defining what success means to you in college and beyond. To help you write this entry, consider some of the following:

- Find a quote (or make one up) that best summarizes your definition of success. Note the author of the quote, and use quotation marks as appropriate.
- Why does this quote best represent your personal definition success?
- What people do you consider to be successful and why?
- What is your definition of success?
- What will you do to achieve success?
- What is the biggest change you need to make in order to be successful in college?
- How will you know you've achieved success?

Worked Example

Journal entry assignments tend to be more flexible than other types of writing assignments in college, and as a result they can be tailored to your own experiences as long as they answer the primary questions asked in the assignment.

One model of a successful entry about this topic can be found below. Feel free to include your own experiences and examples from real life as they pertain to the issue at hand.

Habits for Success Journal Entry

by Sandy Brown

I found this quote online, and I thought it was both funny and true: "Success is often the result of taking a misstep in the right direction" by Al Bernstein. I'm not sure exactly who Mr. Bernstein is, but he hit the nail right on the head. It seems like the best things in my life have come from some initial screw-up or unintended action on my part.

I enrolled in college the first time right after I graduated high school, but it just didn't work out for me. My dad offered me a job instead, when he saw how miserable I was, since his office manager had just quit. I'd been helping out at his place all my life, but I didn't know anything about managing the books. I made some silly mistakes, and some sort of serious ones, but I figured things out pretty quickly.

Now that my dad is looking towards retirement, I've come back to school to get formal recognition of the work I've been doing for the past fifteen years. I originally thought I just wanted to get a Payroll Accounting certificate, but my adviser here talked me into pursuing a full AA degree. I'm glad I made that decision, but it's been hard. I came home everyday the first week too exhausted to speak to my family. Withdrawing from a couple of classes was the right thing for me to do, even if it means I'll only be a part-time student for now. For me, success will be getting my first accounting job after I graduate with my degree and pass the certification exam. I want my future employer to recognize not only the years of experience I have but also the formal education I get with my AA. Success is also being a good role model for my daughters. I don't want them to just settle for "good enough" like I did when I became an adult, and want them to work hard in order to get to a place where they're comfortable.

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OUTCOME: CRITICAL THINKING

Identify and Apply Critical Thinking Skills



Consider these thoughts about the critical thinking process, and how it applies not just to our school lives but also our personal and professional lives.

“Thinking Critically and Creatively”

Critical thinking skills are perhaps the most fundamental skills involved in making judgments and solving problems. You use them every day, and you can continue improving them.

The ability to think critically about a matter—to analyze a question, situation, or problem down to its most basic parts—is what helps us evaluate the accuracy and truthfulness of statements, claims, and information we read and hear. It is the sharp knife that, when honed, separates fact from fiction, honesty from lies, and the accurate from the misleading. We all use this skill to one degree or another almost every day. For example, we use critical thinking every day as we consider the latest consumer products and why one particular product is the best among its peers. Is it a quality product because a celebrity endorses it? Because a lot of other people may have used it? Because it is made by one company versus another? Or perhaps because it is made in one country or another? These are questions representative of critical thinking.

The academic setting demands more of us in terms of critical thinking than everyday life. It demands that we evaluate information and analyze myriad issues. It is the environment where our critical thinking skills can be the difference between success and failure. In this environment we must consider information in an analytical,

critical manner. We must ask questions—What is the source of this information? Is this source an expert one and what makes it so? Are there multiple perspectives to consider on an issue? Do multiple sources agree or disagree on an issue? Does quality research substantiate information or opinion? Do I have any personal biases that may affect my consideration of this information?

It is only through purposeful, frequent, intentional questioning such as this that we can sharpen our critical thinking skills and improve as students, learners and researchers.

—Dr. Andrew Robert Baker, *Foundations of Academic Success: Words of Wisdom*

What You Will Learn to Do

- define critical thinking
- identify the role that logic plays in critical thinking
- apply critical thinking skills to problem-solving scenarios
- apply critical thinking skills to evaluation of information

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Text: Defining Critical Thinking
- Text: Critical Thinking and Logic
- Text: Problem-Solving with Critical Thinking
- Text: Evaluating Information With Critical Thinking
- Self Check: Critical Thinking
- Try It: Critical Thinking

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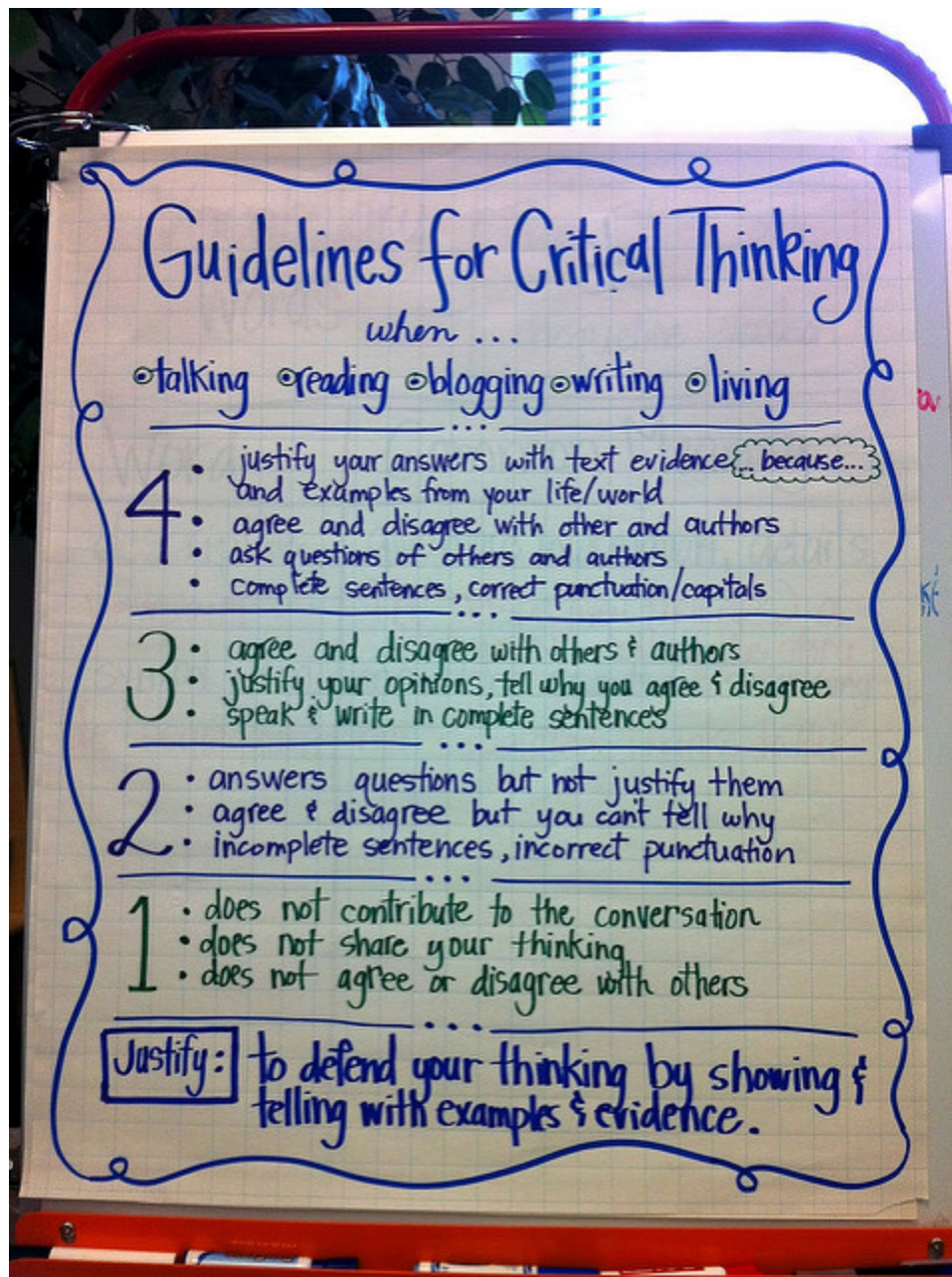
TEXT: DEFINING CRITICAL THINKING

Various Ways to Think

Thinking comes naturally. You don't have to make it happen—it just does. But you can make it happen in different ways. For example, you can think positively or negatively. You can think with “heart” and you can think with rational judgment. You can also think strategically and analytically, and mathematically and scientifically. These are a few of multiple ways in which the mind can process thought.

What are some forms of thinking you use? When do you use them, and why?

As a college student, you are tasked with engaging and expanding your thinking skills. One of the most important of these skills is critical thinking. Critical thinking is important because it relates to nearly all tasks, situations, topics, careers, environments, challenges, and opportunities. It's not restricted to a particular subject area.



Defining Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is clear, reasonable, reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do. It means asking probing questions like, "How do we know?" or "Is this true in every case or just in this instance?" It involves being skeptical and challenging assumptions, rather than simply memorizing facts or blindly accepting what you hear or read.

Imagine, for example, that you're reading a history textbook. You wonder who wrote it and why, because you detect certain assumptions in the writing. You find that the author has a limited scope of research focused only on a particular group within a population. In this case, your critical thinking reveals that there are "other sides to the story."

Who are critical thinkers, and what characteristics do they have in common? Critical thinkers are usually curious and reflective people. They like to explore and probe new areas and seek knowledge, clarification, and new solutions. They ask pertinent questions, evaluate statements and arguments, and they distinguish between facts

and opinion. They are also willing to examine their own beliefs, possessing a manner of humility that allows them to admit lack of knowledge or understanding when needed. They are open to changing their mind. Perhaps most of all, they actively enjoy learning, and seeking new knowledge is a lifelong pursuit.

This may well be you!

No matter where you are on the road to being a critical thinker, you can always more fully develop your skills. Doing so will help you develop more balanced arguments, express yourself clearly, read critically, and absorb important information efficiently. Critical thinking skills will help you in any profession or any circumstance of life, from science to art to business to teaching.

Critical Thinking IS	Critical Thinking is NOT
Skepticism	Memorizing
Examining assumptions	Group thinking
Challenging reasoning	Blind acceptance of authority
Uncovering biases	

Critical Thinking in Action

The following video, from Lawrence Bland, presents the major concepts and benefits of critical thinking.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/WiSkIGUblo>

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TEXT: CRITICAL THINKING AND LOGIC

Critical thinking is fundamentally a process of questioning information and data. You may question the information you read in a textbook, or you may question what a politician or a professor or a classmate says. You can also question a commonly-held belief or a new idea. With critical thinking, anything and everything is subject to question and examination.

Logic's Relationship to Critical Thinking

The word **logic** comes from the Ancient Greek *logike*, referring to the science or art of reasoning. Using logic, a person evaluates arguments and strives to distinguish between good and bad reasoning, or between truth and falsehood. Using logic, you can evaluate ideas or claims people make, make good decisions, and form sound beliefs about the world. ((Note: "[logic](#)." *Wordnik*. n.d. [Web](#). 16 Feb 2016.))

Questions of Logic in Critical Thinking

Let's use a simple example of applying logic to a critical-thinking situation. In this hypothetical scenario, a man has a PhD in political science, and he works as a professor at a local college. His wife works at the college, too. They have three young children in the local school system, and their family is well known in the community.

The man is now running for political office. Are his credentials and experience sufficient for entering public office? Will he be effective in the political office? Some voters might believe that his personal life and current job, on the surface, suggest he will do well in the position, and they will vote for him.

In truth, the characteristics described don't guarantee that the man will do a good job. The information is somewhat irrelevant. What else might you want to know? How about whether the man had already held a political office and done a good job? In this case, we want to ask, How much information is adequate in order to make a decision based on logic instead of assumptions?

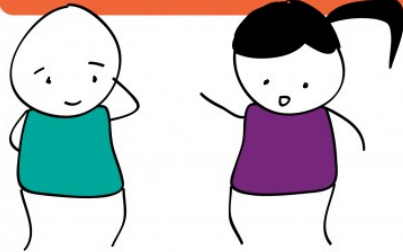
The following questions, presented in Figure 1, below, are ones you may apply to formulating a logical, reasoned perspective in the above scenario or any other situation:

1. **What's happening?** Gather the basic information and begin to think of questions.
2. **Why is it important?** Ask yourself why it's significant and whether or not you agree.
3. **What don't I see?** Is there anything important missing?
4. **How do I know?** Ask yourself where the information came from and how it was constructed.
5. **Who is saying it?** What's the position of the speaker and what is influencing them?
6. **What else? What if?** What other ideas exist and are there other possibilities?

Questions a Critical Thinker Asks

What's Happening?

Gather the basic information and begin to think of questions

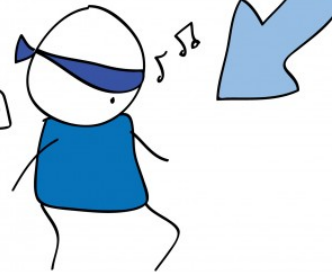


Why Is It Important?

Ask yourself why it's significant and whether or not you agree

What Don't I See?

Is there anything important missing?

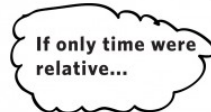
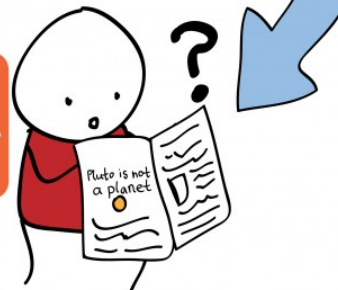


How Do I Know?

Ask yourself where the information came from and how it was constructed

Who Is Saying It?

What's the position of the speaker and what is influencing them?



What Else? What If?

What other ideas exist and are there other possibilities?



a place of mind

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Figure 1

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TEXT: PROBLEM-SOLVING WITH CRITICAL THINKING

For most people, a typical day is filled with critical thinking and problem-solving challenges. In fact, critical thinking and problem-solving go hand-in-hand. They both refer to using knowledge, facts, and data to solve problems effectively. But with problem-solving, you are specifically identifying, selecting, and defending your solution. Below are some examples of using critical thinking to problem-solve:

- Your roommate was upset and said some unkind words to you, which put a crimp in your relationship. You try to see through the angry behaviors to determine how you might best support your roommate and help bring your relationship back to a comfortable spot.
- Your campus club has been languishing on account of lack of participation and funds. The new club president, though, is a marketing major and has identified some strategies to interest students in joining and supporting the club. Implementation is forthcoming.
- Your final art class project challenges you to conceptualize form in new ways. On the last day of class when students present their projects, you describe the techniques you used to fulfill the assignment. You explain why and how you selected that approach.
- Your math teacher sees that the class is not quite grasping a concept. She uses clever questioning to dispel anxiety and guide you to new understanding of the concept.
- You have a job interview for a position that you feel you are only partially qualified for, although you really want the job and you are excited about the prospects. You analyze how you will explain your skills and experiences in a way to show that you are a good match for the prospective employer.
- You are doing well in college, and most of your college and living expenses are covered. But there are some gaps between what you want and what you feel you can afford. You analyze your income, savings, and budget to better calculate what you will need to stay in college and maintain your desired level of spending.



Problem-Solving Action Checklist

Problem-solving can be an efficient and rewarding process, especially if you are organized and mindful of critical steps and strategies. Remember, too, to assume the attributes of a good critical thinker. If you are curious, reflective, knowledge-seeking, open to change, probing, organized, and ethical, your challenge or problem will be less of a hurdle, and you'll be in a good position to find intelligent solutions.

	STRATEGIES	ACTION CHECKLIST ((Note: "Student Success-Thinking Critically In Class and Online." <i>Critical Thinking Gateway</i> . St Petersburg College, n.d. Web. 16 Feb 2016.))
1	Define the problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the problem • Provide as many supporting details as possible • Provide examples • Organize the information logically
2	Identify available solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use logic to identify your most important goals • Identify implications and consequences • Identify facts • Compare and contrast possible solutions
3	Select your solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use gathered facts and relevant evidence • Support and defend solutions considered valid • Defend your solution

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TEXT: EVALUATING INFORMATION WITH CRITICAL THINKING

Evaluating information can be one of the most complex tasks you will be faced with in college. But if you utilize the following four strategies, you will be well on your way to success:

1. Read for understanding by using text coding
2. Examine arguments
3. Clarify thinking
4. Cultivate “habits of mind”



1. Read for Understanding Using Text Coding

When you read and take notes, use the [text coding strategy](#). Text coding is a way of tracking your thinking while reading. It entails marking the text and recording what you are thinking either in the margins or perhaps on Post-it notes. As you make connections and ask questions in response to what you read, you monitor your comprehension and enhance your long-term understanding of the material.

With text coding, mark important arguments and key facts. Indicate where you agree and disagree or have further questions. You don't necessarily need to read every word, but make sure you understand the concepts or the intentions behind what is written. Feel free to develop your own shorthand style when reading or taking notes. The following are a few options to consider using while coding text.

Shorthand	Meaning
!	Important
L	Learned something new
!	Big idea surfaced
*	Interesting or important fact
?	Dig deeper
√	Agree
≠	Disagree

See more text coding from [PBWorks](#) and [Collaborative for Teaching and Learning](#).

2. Examine Arguments

When you examine arguments or claims that an author, speaker, or other source is making, your goal is to identify and examine the hard facts. You can use the [spectrum of authority strategy](#) for this purpose. The spectrum of authority strategy assists you in identifying the “hot” end of an argument—feelings, beliefs, cultural influences, and societal influences—and the “cold” end of an argument—scientific influences. The following video explains this strategy.

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/9G5xooMN2_c

3. Clarify Thinking

When you use critical thinking to evaluate information, you need to clarify your thinking to yourself and likely to others. Doing this well is mainly a process of asking and answering probing questions, such as the logic questions discussed earlier. Design your questions to fit your needs, but be sure to cover adequate ground. What is the purpose? What question are we trying to answer? What point of view is being expressed? What assumptions are we or others making? What are the facts and data we know, and how do we know them? What are the concepts we’re working with? What are the conclusions, and do they make sense? What are the implications?

4. Cultivate “Habits of Mind”

“Habits of mind” are the personal commitments, values, and standards you have about the principle of good thinking. Consider your intellectual commitments, values, and standards. Do you approach problems with an open mind, a respect for truth, and an inquiring attitude? Some good habits to have when thinking critically are being receptive to having your opinions changed, having respect for others, being independent and not accepting something is true until you’ve had the time to examine the available evidence, being fair-minded, having respect for a reason, having an inquiring mind, not making assumptions, and always, especially, questioning your own conclusions—in other words, developing an intellectual work ethic. Try to work these qualities into your daily life.

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SELF CHECK: CRITICAL THINKING

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TRY IT: CRITICAL THINKING

Critical Thinking Journal Entry

To Do

1. Visit the [Quia Critical Thinking Quiz](#) page and click on Start Now (you don't need to enter your name). Select the best answer for each question, and then click on Submit Answers. A score of 70 percent or better on this quiz is considering passing.
2. Write a 200-400 word reflection on this activity. Based on the content of the questions, do you feel you use good critical thinking strategies in college? In what ways might you improve as a critical thinker?

Worked Example

Journal entry assignments tend to be more flexible than other types of writing assignments in college, and as a result they can be tailored to your own experiences as long as they answer the primary questions asked in the assignment.

One model of a successful entry about this topic can be found below. Feel free to include your own experiences and examples from real life as they pertain to the issue at hand.

Critical Thinking Journal Entry

by Sandy Brown

The thing I like about critical thinking is that it applies to everything. If you get better at using critical thinking in school, that means other things in life get easier, as well (at least that's what I hope is true).

I didn't do so great on the critical thinking quiz. I got a 50% the first time, but I think I would have done better if I had understood the questions more clearly. Question #9, the one about having autonomy, I got wrong because I thought it was saying it was important, rather than it wasn't. Now that I think about it, I guess that's an example of where I could be a better critical thinker—I could take the time to read these questions more closely, and be sure that my answer makes sense to what the question actually asks, rather than what I think it asks.

I was happy with parts of this, though. There were a couple of questions about fair-mindedness, and I got both those right, even though I didn't remember seeing the words "fair-mindedness" in the textbook. That phrase makes a lot more sense to me than "first order" and "second order" thinking.

For me, I think that I'm a better thinker when I'm not in a rush. I tend to panic when I take tests, and then I answer questions too quickly. For things that don't have a timer, like homework or out-of-class assignments, I tend to do a lot better because I can take as long as I need to figure out what exactly I'm supposed to do. So I guess one way to improve my critical thinking skills would be to practice going slower for timed tests, and giving myself time to check my answers before turning something in. I don't want to make mistakes like the one I did on this quiz, when it counts against my actual grade.

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OUTCOME: TIME MANAGEMENT

Analyze Time Management Practices

The two areas most students struggle with when acclimating to college life are studying and time management. These issues arise from trying to manage newfound freedoms in college and from misunderstanding expectations of college classes. Time management is a means to build a solid foundation for college success.



The following excerpts, from *Foundations of Academic Success: Words of Wisdom*, share a true-to-life short story from a former student at State University of New York (SUNY). The advice he imparts includes a variety of techniques to help you cope with time-management demands at college. The lessons learned are meant to enlarge your awareness of your academic and personal goals and assist you in succeeding in college.

TIME IS ON YOUR SIDE

There I was, having just eaten dinner and realizing that I had less than twenty-four hours to go before my capstone paper was due for my History of Africa class. This paper was the only grade for the class and all I had done was some research. I still had thirty pages that needed to be written! How was I going to get this paper done?

I came to the realization that I was going to have to skip some classes and work through the night. I kept my roommate up with the click clack of the keyboard and worked through the night with breaks only to replenish the caffeine in my system. Morning came and I still had work to do.

I snuck in a twenty minute nap and kept working. I finally finished about thirty minutes before the deadline. Exhausted and not terribly proud of myself, I trudged my way to class to drop off the paper and committed to never working like this again. After all, there was a small likelihood that I would get a decent grade; I was hoping for just a C to keep my GPA respectable. I went back to my room and slept for a long time. Imagine my

amazement when I received my grade for the paper (and ultimately the class) and there was an A- staring me back in the face! How could this be possible?

My experience illustrates a very important lesson. Best practices do not always yield the best results. Logic would tell us that to manage a thirty-page paper would require the student to spread out all the tasks over the semester and do a little bit of work over a long period of time as opposed to a lot of work over a short period of time. The problem is that time management is a personal thing. Everyone works differently and excels under different circumstances.

The important thing to remember about time management is that there is not one method. Everyone must find what works best for her or him. There are some strategies that have been used for years and others that are new. While there are multiple perspectives on how best to set personal and professional goals, there are three general themes that influence the development of personal time management plans: identifying priorities, managing time, and managing energy.

The concept of time management is actually personal management. Where you are going or what you are trying to accomplish is more important than how fast you get there. Personal management demands organizing and executing around priorities. One thing to watch out for on your college journey is something called time famine. Time famine is the feeling of having too much to do and not enough time to do it. This happens often to college students and without warning. This was certainly the case with my paper. I certainly felt overwhelmed with thirty pages to write and not a lot of time available to write it in. However, there's one really helpful aspect of time—you always know how much you have in a day. You know that in any given day, you have twenty-four hours to accomplish everything you need to do for that day. With that knowledge in hand it becomes an easy task to make smart choices when planning both the schedule for the day, as well as the energy needed to complete the tasks.

The objective of successful time management is to increase and optimize controllable time. Once you have a schedule made, don't change it unless something of some serious urgency comes up. However, while managing time is challenging enough, there's another concept out there about the management of your energy. Think of energy as money and time as what you'd like to buy. If you're too tired (or energy broke) to be productive, it's hard to accomplish (buy) everything on your schedule. Luckily, at the age of twenty-two, I had lots of energy and stamina to pull an all-nighter and finish the paper. If I tried to do that today at thirty-five, I would be asleep on my keyboard after a few hours. In order to always have enough of time currency, it's important that you are physically energized, emotionally connected, and mentally focused on your purpose. You need time to play, have fun, and socialize, but it should not come at the expense of higher priority tasks. Practical and tangible strategies for time and energy management can be the key to success for any undertaking. While each concept related to time and energy management is unique and provides a starting point for you to begin to develop strong personal management skills, these methods and ideas are not one-size-fits-all, and you need to explore the strategies and discover which components of each best fit your lifestyle and circumstances. Through this exercise, you can develop a personal management plan that is best suited to your needs and goals.

—Christopher L. Hockey, *Foundations of Academic Success: Words of Wisdom*

What You Will Learn to Do

- define your current uses of time in daily life
- explore time management strategies to add time for college success activities
- identify procrastination behaviors and strategies to avoid them

The Learning Activities for this Outcome Include

- Text: How You Use Your Time
- Text: Create a Schedule
- Text: Get Better at Prioritizing
- Self Check: Time Management
- Try It: Time Management

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TEXT: HOW YOU USE YOUR TIME

As most students discover, time in college is not the same as it was in high school. There are many more “unscripted” hours of the day. Fewer hours are devoted to sitting in a classroom, but more hours are expected to be devoted to classwork, on your own. While this can be liberating, you may find that social opportunities conflict with academic expectations. For example, a free day before an exam, if not wisely spent, can spell trouble for doing well on the exam. It is easy to fall behind when there are so many choices and opportunities.

In the following Alleyoop Advice video, Alleyoop (Angel Aquino) discusses what many students discover about college: there is a lot of free time—and many challenges to effectively balance free time with study time.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/xP541bNEvG0>

In the next few sections, we’ll take three steps towards learning to effectively manage our time. First, we have to see where we are, currently, with our use of time.

Step 1: Identify Your Time Management Style



The following self-assessment survey can help you determine your time-management personality type. Read each question in the Questions column. Then read the possible responses. Select one response for each

question. Each response should reflect what you probably would do in a given situation, not what you think is the “right” answer. Put a checkmark in the My Time Management Type column next to your likely response.

	QUESTIONS	RESPONSES: Which response most closely matches what you would do? In the right column, check one response (a, b, c or d) for each question.	MY TIME MANAGEMENT TYPE
1	Your instructor just gave your class the prompts for your first essay, which is due in two weeks. How do you proceed from here?	a. Choose a prompt and begin working on a thesis immediately. Better to get it out of the way!	<input type="radio"/> Early bird
		b. Read over the prompts and let them sink in for a week or so. You'll still have one more week to finish the assignment, right?	<input type="radio"/> Balancing act
		c. Read the prompts and maybe start playing around with ideas, but wait to really start writing until the day before. You swear it's all in your head somewhere!	<input type="radio"/> Pressure cooker
		d. Definitely last. You'll wait until everyone else has done their work, so you can make sure you are not duplicating efforts. Whatever, this is why you hate group work.	<input type="radio"/> Improviser
2	You are working on a group assignment that requires you to split up responsibilities with three other classmates. When would you typically finish your part?	a. First. Then you're done and don't have to worry about it. Plus it could give you time in case you want to tweak anything later.	<input type="radio"/> Early bird
		b. After one or two of the others have submitted their materials to the group, but definitely not last. You wanted to see how they approached it first.	<input type="radio"/> Balancing act
		c. Maybe last, but definitely before the assignment due date and hopefully before any of the other group members ask about it.	<input type="radio"/> Pressure cooker
		d. Definitely last. You'll wait until everyone else has done their work, so you can make sure you are not duplicating efforts. Whatever, this is why you hate group work.	<input type="radio"/> Improviser
3	Your instructor just shared the instructions for your next assignment and you read them but don't quite understand what he's asking for in a certain part. What would you probably do?	a. Send the instructor an email that afternoon. When he doesn't respond that night, email him again. This is your worst nightmare—you just want to know what he wants!!	<input type="radio"/> Early bird

	QUESTIONS	RESPONSES: Which response most closely matches what you would do? In the right column, check one response (a, b, c or d) for each question.	MY TIME MANAGEMENT TYPE
		b. Send him an email asking for clarification, giving yourself enough time to wait for his response and then complete the assignment. Better to be safe than sorry.	<input type="radio"/> Balancing act
		c. Try to figure it out for yourself. You're pretty sure what he's trying to say, and you'll give it your best shot.	<input type="radio"/> Pressure cooker
		d. Don't say anything until after the assignment is due. Other people in the class felt the same way too, probably!	<input type="radio"/> Improviser
4	The course you are taking requires you to post in a weekly discussion forum by Sunday night each week so the class can talk about everyone's posts on Monday. When do you submit your posts?	a. Tuesday night, after the first day of class that week. Then it's out of the way.	<input type="radio"/> Early bird
		b. Thursday or Friday night. You want to let the week's discussion sink in a little so you can collect your thoughts.	<input type="radio"/> Balancing act
		c. Sunday night. You always forget during the weekend!	<input type="radio"/> Pressure cooker
		d. Monday at 3 AM. That still counts as Sunday night, right?	<input type="radio"/> Improviser
5	You have an important assignment due Monday morning, and you have a social/work/family obligation that will keep you busy for most of the weekend. It is now the Wednesday before the assignment is due. How would you approach this dilemma?	a. You already finished it yesterday, the day it was assigned. Done!	<input type="radio"/> Early bird
		b. You tell yourself that you'll finish it by Friday night, and you manage this by chipping away at it over those 3 days. ...Little. By. Little.	<input type="radio"/> Balancing act
		c. You tell yourself that you'll finish it by Friday night, so you can have your weekend free, but you still have a little left to do on Sunday—no big deal.	<input type="radio"/> Pressure cooker
		d. You tell yourself that you'll take the weekend off, then stay up late on Sunday or wake up early on Monday to finish it. It's not a final or anything, and you have a life.	<input type="radio"/> Improviser
6	You have to read 150 pages before your next class meeting.	a. 150 pages divided by 4 days means... a little less than 40 pages a day. You like to chunk it this way	<input type="radio"/> Early bird

	QUESTIONS	RESPONSES: Which response most closely matches what you would do? In the right column, check one response (a, b, c or d) for each question.	MY TIME MANAGEMENT TYPE
	You have 4 days to do so. What would you most likely do?	because then you'll also have time to go over your notes and highlights, and come up with questions for the instructor.	
		b. 150 pages divided by...well ... 2 days (because it's been a long week), means 75 pages a day. Totally doable.	<input type="radio"/> Balancing act
		c. 150 pages, the day before it is due. You did this to yourself, it's fine.	<input type="radio"/> Pressure cooker
		d. How much time does it take to skim the text for keywords and/or find a summary online?	<input type="radio"/> Improviser

Assessing Your Responses

Which of the four basic time-management personality types did you select the most? Which did you select the least? Do you feel like these selections match the student you have been in the past? Has your previous way of doing things worked for you, or do you think it's time for a change? Remember, we can all always improve!

Learn more below about your tendencies. Review traits, strengths, challenges, and tips for success for each of the four time-management personality types.

The Early Bird

- **Traits:** You like to make checklists and feel great satisfaction when you can cross something off of your to-do list. When it comes to assignments, you want to get started as soon as possible (and maybe start brainstorming before that), because it lets you stay in control.
- **Strengths:** You know what you want and are driven to figure out how to achieve it. Motivation is never really a problem for you.
- **Challenges:** Sometimes you can get more caught up in getting things done as quickly as possible and don't give yourself enough time to really mull over issues in all of their complexity.
- **Tips for Success:** You're extremely organized and on top of your schoolwork, so make sure you take time to really enjoy learning in your classes. Remember, school isn't all deadlines and checkboxes—you also have the opportunity to think about big-picture intellectual problems that don't necessarily have clear answers.

The Balancing Act

- **Traits:** You really know what you're capable of and are ready to do what it takes to get the most out of your classes. Maybe you're naturally gifted in this way or maybe it's a skill that you have developed over time; in any case, you should have the basic organizational skills to succeed in any class, as long as you keep your balance.
- **Strengths:** Your strength really lies in your ability to be well rounded. You may not always complete assignments perfectly every time, but you are remarkably consistent and usually manage to do very well in classes.

- **Challenges:** Because you're so consistent, sometimes you can get in a bit of a rut and begin to coast in class, rather than really challenging yourself.
- **Tips for Success:** Instead of simply doing what works, use each class as an opportunity for growth by engaging thoughtfully with the material and constantly pushing the boundaries of your own expectations for yourself.

The Pressure Cooker

- **Traits:** You always get things done and almost always at the last minute. Hey, it takes time to really come up with good ideas!
- **Strengths:** You work well under pressure, and when you do finally sit down to accomplish a task, you can sit and work for hours. In these times, you can be extremely focused and shut out the rest of the world in order to complete what's needed.
- **Challenges:** You sometimes use your ability to work under pressure as an excuse to procrastinate. Sure, you can really focus when the deadline is tomorrow, but is it really the best work you could produce if you had a couple of days of cushion?
- **Tips for Success:** Give yourself small, achievable deadlines, and stick to them. Make sure they're goals that you really could (and would) achieve in a day. Then don't allow yourself to make excuses. You'll find that it's actually a lot more enjoyable to not be stressed out when completing schoolwork. Who would have known?

The Improviser

- **Traits:** You frequently wait until the last minute to do assignments, but it's because you've been able to get away with this habit in many classes. Sometimes you miss an assignment or two, or have to pretend to have done reading that you haven't, but everyone does that sometimes, right?
- **Strengths:** You think quickly on your feet, and while this is a true strength, it also can be a crutch that prevents you from being really successful in a class.
- **Challenges:** As the saying goes, old habits die hard. If you find that you lack a foundation of discipline and personal accountability, it can be difficult to change, especially when the course material becomes challenging or you find yourself struggling to keep up with the pace of the class.
- **Tips for Success:** The good news is you can turn this around! Make a plan to organize your time and materials in a reasonable way, and really stick with it. Also, don't be afraid to ask your instructor for help, but be sure to do it before, rather than after, you fall behind.

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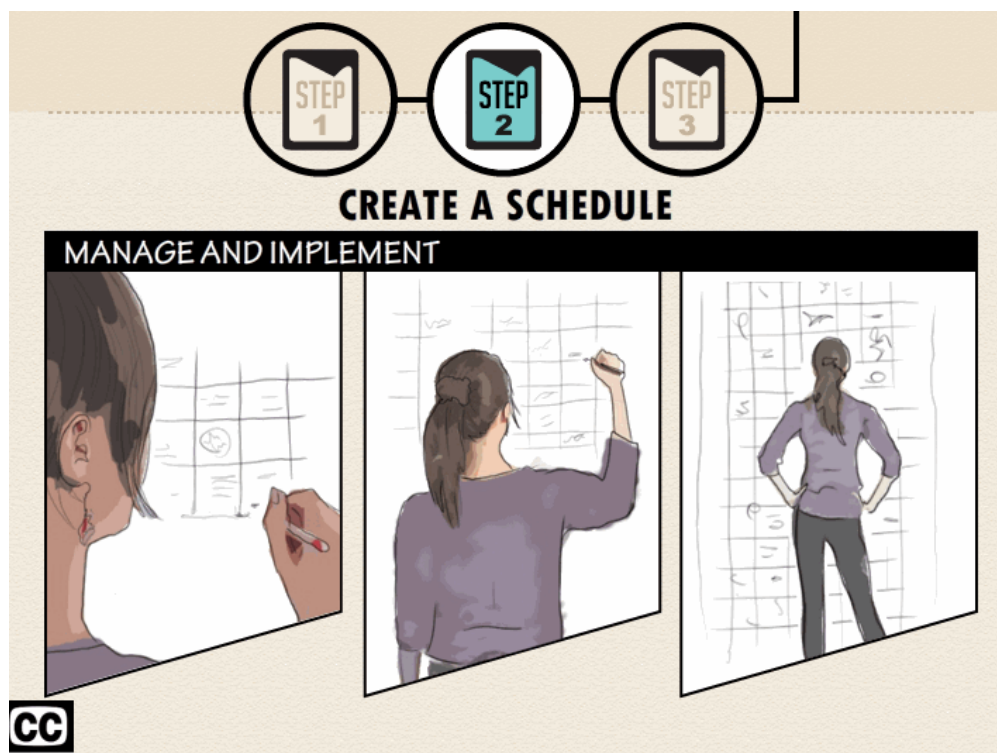
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TEXT: CREATE A SCHEDULE



Once you've evaluated how you have done things in the past, you'll want to think about how you might create a schedule for managing your time well going forward. The best schedules have some flexibility built into them, as unexpected situations will always pop up along the way.

Your schedule will be unique to you, depending on the level of detail you find helpful. There are some things—due dates and exam dates, for example—that should be included in your schedule no matter what. But you also might find it helpful to break down assignments into steps (or milestones) that you can schedule, as well.

Again, this is all about what works best for you. Do you want to keep a record of only the major deadlines you need to keep in mind? Or does it help you to plan out every day so you stay on track? Your answers to these questions will vary depending on the course, the complexity of your schedule, and your own personal preferences.

Your schedule will also vary depending on the course you're taking. So pull out your syllabus and try to determine the rhythm of the class by looking at the following factors:

- Will you have tests or exams in this course? When are those scheduled?
- Are there assignments and papers? When are those due?
- Are there any group or collaborative assignments? You'll want to pay particular attention to the timing of any assignment that requires you to work with others.

You can find many useful resources online that will help you keep track of your schedule. Some are basic, cloud-based calendars (like Google calendar, iCal, Outlook), and some (like iHomework) are specialized for students.

We all have exactly 168 hours per week. How do you spend yours? How much time will you be willing to devote to your studies?

Questions and Answers About Schedules

Student 1: Do I really need to create a study schedule? I can honestly keep track of all of this in my head.

Answer: Yes, you really should create a study schedule. Your instructors may give you reminders about what you need to do when, but if you have multiple classes and other events and activities to fit in, it's easy to lose track. A study schedule helps you carve out sufficient time—and stick to it.

Here is a tool to create a [printable class study schedule](#) to help you plan your time during the week from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.

Here are [ways to plan time \(semester, week, days\)](#) from Ohio University's Academic Advancement Center. Ohio University uses a quarterly system (11 weeks); you may need adapt their schedule to reflect your academic needs.

Student 2: Realistically, how much time should I spend studying for class?

Answer: This is a good question and a tough one to answer. Generally speaking, for each hour of class, you should spend a minimum of two to three hours studying. Thus, a typical three-hour class would require a minimum of six to nine hours of studying per week. If you are registered for 15 credits a semester, then you would need to spend 30 to 45 hours each week studying for your classes, which can be as much time needed for a full-time job. If you think of college as a “job,” you will understand that it takes work to succeed.

One important college success skill is learning how to interact with the course materials. Think about learning a sport or playing a game. How do you learn how to play it? With lots of practice and engagement. The more you play, the better you get. The same applies to learning. You need to engage with the course material and concentrate on learning.

Access [The 168-Hour Exercise—How Do I Use My Time Now?](#) from Ohio University's Academic Advancement Center. It can help you understand how you use your time now and decide if you need to make changes.

Student 3: Aside from class time requirements, should I account for anything else as I draw up my schedule?

Answer: This depends on how detailed you want your schedule to be. Is it a calendar of important dates, or do you need a clear picture of how to organize your entire day? The latter is more successful, so long as you stick with it. This is also where it will be helpful to determine when you are most productive and efficient. When are you the most focused and ready to learn new things? In the morning, afternoon, or evening?

Here is a [time management calculator](#) for first-year students at the University of Texas El Paso.

Student 4: My life and school requirements change on a week-to-week basis. How can I possibly account for this when making a schedule?

Answer: Try creating a variable schedule in case an event comes up or you need to take a day or two off.

Student 5: I'm beginning to think that scheduling and time management are good ideas, but on the other hand they seem unrealistic. What's wrong with cramming? It's what I'll probably end up doing anyway . . .

Answer: Cramming, or studying immediately before an exam without much other preparation, has many disadvantages. Trying to learn any subject or memorize facts in a brief but intense period of time is basically fruitless. You simply forget what you have learned much faster when you cram. Instead, study in smaller increments on a regular basis: your brain will absorb complex course material in a more profound and lasting way because it's how the brain functions.

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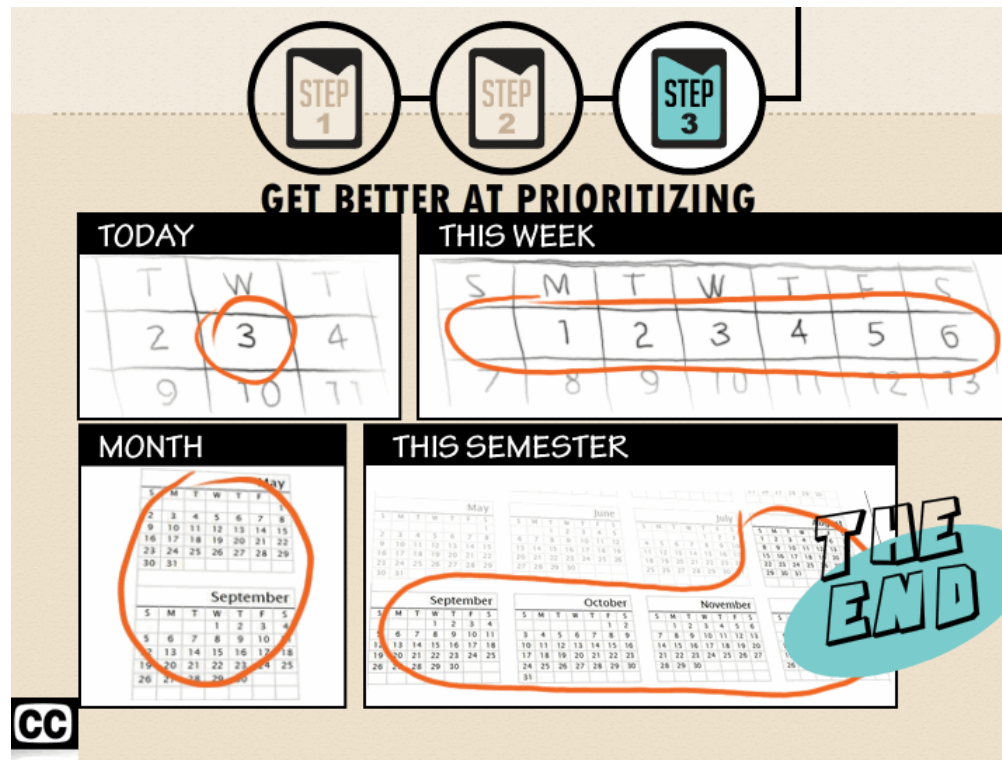
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TEXT: GET BETTER AT PRIORITIZING



Due dates are important. Set your short and long-term goals accordingly. Ask yourself the following:

- What needs to get done today?
- What needs to get done this week?
- What needs to get done by the end the first month of the semester?
- What needs to get done by the end the second month of the semester?
- What needs to get done by the end of the semester?

Your time is valuable. Treat it accordingly by getting the most you can out of it.

Above all, avoid procrastination. Procrastination is the kiss of death, because it's difficult to catch up once you've fallen behind. Do you have a problem with procrastination? Be on your guard so that it doesn't become an issue for you.

Procrastination Checklist

Do any of the following descriptions apply to you?

- My paper is due in two days and I haven't really started writing it yet.
- I've had to pull an all-nighter to get an assignment done on time.
- I've turned in an assignment late or asked for an extension when I really didn't have a good excuse not to get it done on time.
- I've worked right up to the minute an assignment was due.
- I've underestimated how long a reading assignment would take and didn't finish it in time for class.
- I've relied on the Internet for information (like a summary of a concept or a book) because I didn't finish the reading on time.

If these sound like issues you've struggled with in the past, you might want to consider whether you have the tendency to procrastinate and how you want to deal with it in your future classes. You're already spending a lot of time, energy, and money on the classes you're taking—don't let all of that go to waste!

Strategies to Combat Procrastination

Below are some effective strategies for overcoming procrastination:

1. **Keep your studying “bite-sized.”** When confronted with 150 pages of reading or 50 problems to solve, it's natural to feel overwhelmed. Try breaking it down: What if you decide that you will read for 45 minutes or that you will solve 10 problems? That sounds much more manageable.
2. **Turn off your phone, close your chat windows, and block distracting Web sites.** The best advice we've ever heard is to treat your studying as if you're in a movie theater—just turn it off.
3. **Set up a reward system.** If you read for 40 minutes, you can check your phone for 5 minutes. But keep in mind that reward-based systems only work if you stick to an honor system.
4. **Study in a place reserved for studying ONLY.** Your bedroom may have too many distractions (or temptations, such as taking a nap), so it may be best to avoid it when you're working on school assignments.
5. **Use checklists.** Make your incremental accomplishments visible. Some people take great satisfaction and motivation from checking items off a to-do list. Be very specific when creating this list, and clearly describe each task one step at a time.

Video Guidance

In the following video, Joseph Clough shares key strategies for conquering procrastination once and for all.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/JjU0GbUDtrk>

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SELF CHECK: TIME MANAGEMENT

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TRY IT: TIME MANAGEMENT

Time Management Journal Entry

To Do

1. Assess your time management skills by using [Ohio University's self-assessment](#). Make note of your results.
2. Review the University of Georgia's [Time Management: 10 Strategies for Better Time Management](#) and consider the strategies that seem most appealing to you.
3. Reflect in a 200-400 word journal entry on your current time management skills, and discuss how you might apply new strategies to improve time management in your life.

Worked Example

Journal entry assignments tend to be more flexible than other types of writing assignments in college, and as a result they can be tailored to your own experiences as long as they answer the primary questions asked in the assignment.

One model of a successful entry about this topic can be found below. Feel free to include your own experiences and examples from real life as they pertain to the issue at hand.

Time Management Journal Entry

by Sandy Brown

I've always considered myself pretty good at time management. Having a full house of a husband, three daughters, and two dogs will do that for you! But I'm realizing that I'm slipping a bit now that I'm going to school on top of being a full-time mom.

The Ohio University quiz was a bit eye-opening. I only scored a 55, which seems very low to me. I liked its advice at the end, and I went back through and clicked on each question to read more about it. One question that I put Never for was "I review my lecture notes after class each day." I hadn't thought about how that might be important before. I usually have some time to kill after classes are over, before I go home. Usually I do something dumb while waiting for my ride, like check Facebook. But I could use that time to look at my notes, and maybe start a bit of the reading before the next class.

One question that I got full points for was the "I allow time for proper meals and exercise" one. We have a family dinner every night, even if it's just fish sticks or chicken nuggets. And I have a regular running schedule. If don't run, I go crazy.

From the "Ten Strategies" reading, there were some good tips in there. Some were pretty obvious, but others made me think. The one I have a hard time with, but should be better about, is #6, Delegate. My girls make such a mess of things, that a lot of times I just end up cleaning myself instead of asking them to do it. I could put more responsibility on them. And my step-mother is always offering to help. I feel guilty about taking advantage of that very much, but I should get over that and call on her more.

OUTCOME: WRITING IN COLLEGE

Define Successful Approaches Towards College Writing Tasks

Consider this: a recent survey of employers conducted by the Association of American Colleges and Universities 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.” ((Note: [Hart Research Associates. *Raising the Bar: Employers’ Views on College Learning in the Wake of the Economic Downturn*. 20 Jan 2010, p. 9.](#))) 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 percent)
- “The ability to analyze and solve complex problems” (75 percent)
- “The ability to locate, organize, and evaluate information from multiple sources” (68 percent).

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.” ((Note: *Ibid.*, p. 5.))

If you want to be a professional who interacts frequently with others, you have to be someone who can anticipate and solve complex problems and coordinate your work with others, ((Note: [Hart Research Associates. *It Takes More Than a Major: Employer Priorities for College Learning and Student Success*. 10 Apr 2013.](#))) all of which depend on effective communication.

The pay-off from improving your writing comes much sooner than graduation. Suppose you complete about 40 classes for a 120-credit bachelors’ degree, and—averaging across writing-intensive and non-writing-intensive courses—you produce about 2,500 words of formal writing per class. Even with that low estimate, you’ll write 100,000 words during your college career. That’s roughly 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. All of your professors care about good writing.



What You Will Learn to Do

- identify common types of writing tasks given in a college class
- describe the purpose of writing tasks, and what an instructor might expect to see from your work
- recognize strategies for success on particular types of writing tasks
- define writing anxiety

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Text: What to Do with Essay Assignments
- Text: Strategies for Writing Success
- Text: Writing Through Fear
- Self Check: Writing in College
- Try It: Writing in College

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TEXT: WHAT TO DO WITH ESSAY ASSIGNMENTS

Writing assignments can be as varied as the instructors who assign them. Some assignments are explicit about what exactly you'll need to do, in what order, and how it will be graded. Some assignments are very open-ended, leaving you to determine the best path toward answering the project. Most fall somewhere in the middle, containing details about some aspects but leaving other assumptions unstated. It's important to remember that your first resource for getting clarification about an assignment is your instructor—she or he will be very willing to talk out ideas with you, to be sure you're prepared at each step to do well with the writing.

Most writing in college will be a direct response to class materials—an assigned reading, a discussion in class, an experiment in a lab. Generally speaking, these writing tasks can be divided into three broad categories.

Summary Assignments

Being asked to summarize a source is a common task in many types of writing. It can also seem like a straightforward task: simply restate, in shorter form, what the source says. A lot of advanced skills are hidden in this seemingly simple assignment, however.

An effective summary does the following:

- reflects your accurate understanding of a source's thesis or purpose
- differentiates between major and minor ideas in a source
- demonstrates your ability to identify key phrases to quote
- demonstrates your ability to effectively paraphrase most of the source's ideas
- captures the tone, style, and distinguishing features of a source
- does not reflect your personal opinion about the source

That last point is often the most challenging: we are opinionated creatures, by nature, and it can be very difficult to keep our opinions from creeping into a summary, which is meant to be completely neutral.

In college-level writing, assignments that are *only* summary are rare. That said, many types of writing tasks contain at least some element of summary, from a biology report that explains what happened during a chemical process, to an analysis essay that requires you to explain what several prominent positions about gun control are, as a component of comparing them against one another.

Defined-Topic Assignments

Many writing tasks will ask you to address a particular topic or a narrow set of topic options. Even with the topic identified, however, it can sometimes be difficult to determine what aspects of the writing will be most important when it comes to grading.

Often, the handout or other written text explaining the assignment—what professors call the **assignment prompt**—will explain the purpose of the assignment, the required parameters (length, number and type of sources, referencing style, etc.), and the criteria for evaluation. Sometimes, though—especially when you are new to a field—you will encounter the baffling situation in which you comprehend every single sentence in the prompt but still have absolutely no idea how to approach the assignment. No one is doing anything wrong in a situation like that. It just means that further discussion of the assignment is in order. Below are some tips:



1. **Focus on the verbs.** Look for verbs like *compare*, *explain*, *justify*, *reflect*, or the all-purpose *analyze*. You're not just producing a paper as an artifact; you're conveying, in written communication, some intellectual work you have done. So the question is, what kind of thinking are you supposed to do to deepen your learning?
2. **Put the assignment in context.** Many professors think in terms of assignment sequences. For example, a social science professor may ask you to write about a controversial issue three times: first, arguing for one side of the debate; second, arguing for another; and finally, from a more comprehensive and nuanced perspective, incorporating text produced in the first two assignments. A sequence like that is designed to help you think through a complex issue. If the assignment isn't part of a sequence, think about where it falls in the span of the course (early, midterm, or toward the end), and how it relates to readings and other assignments. For example, if you see that a paper comes at the end of a three-week unit on the role of the Internet in organizational behavior, then your professor likely wants you to synthesize that material in your own way.

3. **Try a free-write.** A free-write is when you just write, without stopping, for a set period of time. That doesn't sound very "free"; it actually sounds kind of coerced, right? The "free" part is *what* you write—it can be whatever comes to mind. Professional writers use free-writing to get started on a challenging (or distasteful) writing task or to overcome writer's block or a powerful urge to procrastinate. The idea is that if you just make yourself write, you can't help but produce some kind of useful nugget. Thus, even if the first eight sentences of your free write are all variations on "I don't understand this" or "I'd really rather be doing something else," eventually you'll write something like "I guess the main point of this is..." and—booyah!—you're off and running.
4. **Ask for clarification.** Even the most carefully crafted assignments may need some verbal clarification, especially if you're new to a course or field. Try to convey to your instructor that you want to learn and you're ready to work, and not just looking for advice on how to get an A.

Although the topic may be defined, you can't just grind out four or five pages of discussion, explanation, or analysis. It may seem strange, but even when you're asked to "show how" or "illustrate," you're still being asked to make an argument. You must shape and focus that discussion or analysis so that it supports a claim that you discovered and formulated and that all of your discussion and explanation develops and supports.

Defined-topic writing assignments are used primarily to identify your familiarity with the subject matter.

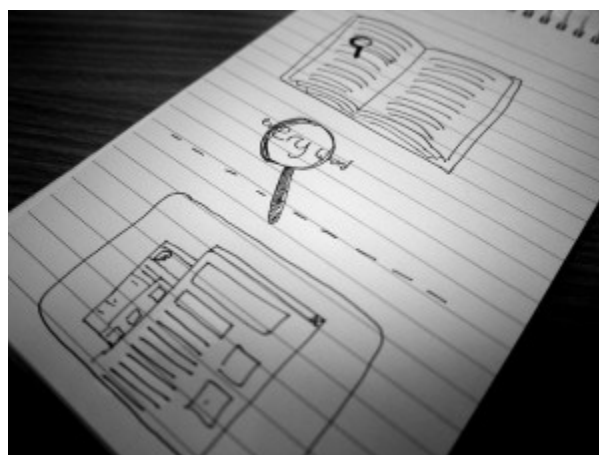
Undefined-Topic Assignments

Another writing assignment you'll potentially encounter is one in which the topic may be only broadly identified ("water conservation" in an ecology course, for instance, or "the Dust Bowl" in a U.S. History course), or even completely open ("compose an argumentative research essay on a subject of your choice").

Where defined-topic essays demonstrate your knowledge of the *content*, undefined-topic assignments are used to demonstrate your *skills*—your ability to perform academic research, to synthesize ideas, and to apply the various stages of the writing process.

The first hurdle with this type of task is to find a focus that interests you. Don't just pick something you feel will be "easy to write about"—that almost always turns out to be a false assumption. Instead, you'll get the most value out of, and find it easier to work on, a topic that intrigues you personally in some way.

The same getting-started ideas described for defined-topic assignments will help with these kinds of projects, too. You can also try talking with your instructor or a writing tutor (at your college's writing center) to help brainstorm ideas and make sure you're on track. You want to feel confident that you've got a clear idea of what it means to be successful in the writing and not waste time working in a direction that won't be fruitful.



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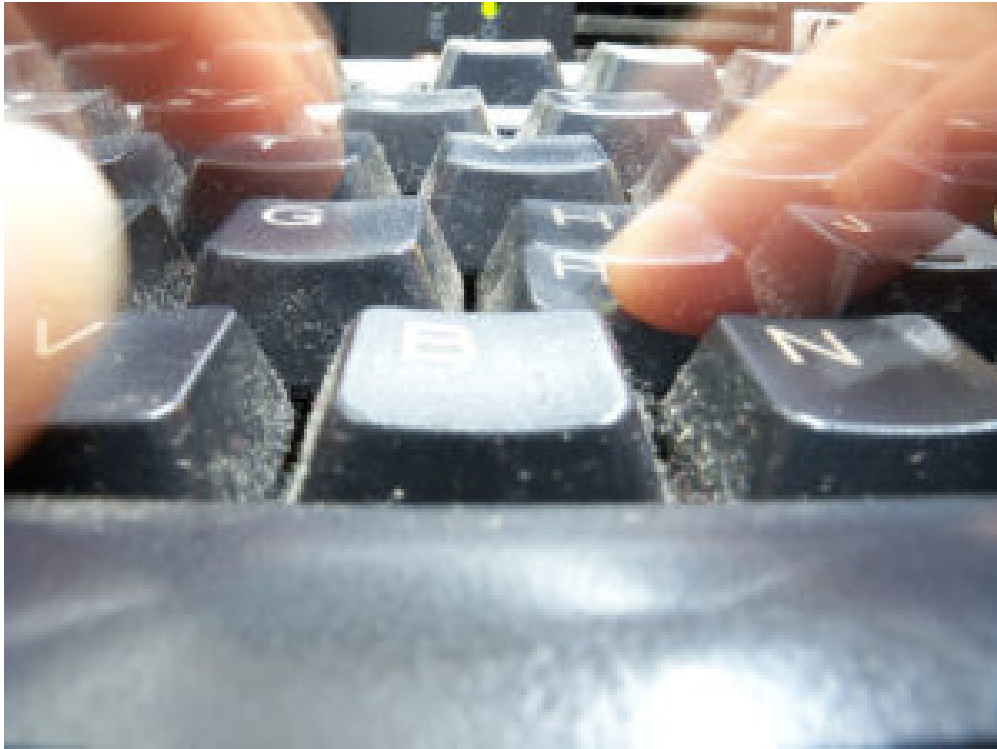
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TEXT: STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SUCCESS

The secret to strong writing, no matter what kind of assignment you've been given, is to apply your personalized version of the **writing process** to the task. We'll discuss the writing process in greater depth elsewhere in this course.

For now, here are some “quick-start” guides for how to approach writing with confidence.



Summaries

Start with a Clear Identification of the Work

This automatically lets your readers know your intentions and that you're covering the work of another author.

- Clearly identify (in the present tense) the background information needed for your summary: the type of work, title, author, and main point. Example: *In the featured article “Five Kinds of Learning,” the author, Holland Oates, justifies his opinion on the hot topic of learning styles — and adds a few himself.*

Summarize the Piece as a Whole

Omit nothing important and strive for overall coherence through appropriate transitions. Write using “summarizing language.” Your reader needs to be reminded that this is not your own work. Use phrases like *the article claims*, *the author suggests*, etc.

- Present the material in a neutral fashion. Your opinions, ideas, and interpretations should be left in your brain — don't put them into your summary. Be conscious of choosing your words. Only include what was in the original work.

- Be concise. This is a summary — it should be much shorter than the original piece. If you're working on an article, give yourself a target length of 1/4 the original article.

Conclude with a Final Statement

This is not a statement of your own point of view, however; it should reflect the significance of the book or article from the author's standpoint.

- Without rewriting the article, summarize what the author wanted to get across. Be careful not to evaluate in the conclusion or insert any of your own assumptions or opinions.



Informative and Persuasive Essay Assignments

Brainstorm

Write down topic ideas. If you have been assigned a particular topic or focus, it still might be possible to narrow it down, or personalize it to your own interests.

If you have been given an open-ended essay assignment, the topic should be something that allows you to enjoy working with the writing process. Select a topic that you'll want to think about, read about, and write about for several weeks, without getting bored.

Research

If you're writing about a subject you're not an expert on and want to make sure you are presenting the topic or information realistically, look up the information or seek out an expert to ask questions.

- Search for information online. Type your topic into a search engine and sift through the top 10 or 20 results.
- **Note:** Be cautious about information you retrieve online, especially if you are writing a research paper or an article that relies on factual information. Internet sources can be unreliable. Published books, or works found in a journal, have to undergo a much more thorough vetting process before they reach publication, and are therefore safer to use as sources.

- Check out a library. Yes, believe it or not, there *is* still information to be found in a library that hasn't made its way to the Web. For an even greater breadth of resources, try a college or university library.

Write a Rough Draft

It doesn't matter how many spelling errors or weak adjectives you have in it. This copy is just jotting down those random uncategorized thoughts. Write down anything you think of that you want included in your writing, and worry about organizing everything where it belongs later.

If You're Having Trouble, Try Freewriting

Set a timer and write continuously until that time is up. You won't have time to worry about errors and mistakes if you're rushing to get the words out.

Edit for Your Second Draft

Review the rough draft and begin to put what you've written in the order you'll want it in. Clean up misspellings, grammatical errors and weak writing such as repetitive words. Flesh out the plot and start thinking of anything you want to cut out.

- Edit ruthlessly. If it doesn't fit in with the overall thesis, if it's unnecessary, or if you don't like what you've written, cut it out.
- Check for coherency. Do all parts of the essay make sense together? If so, continue. If not, consider revising whatever doesn't fit in.
- Check for necessity. Do all parts of the essay contribute? Does each section give necessary background, advance the argument, address counterarguments, or show potential resolutions?
- Check for anything missing. Do the topic sub-points flow smoothly into one another, or are there some logical gaps?

Keep Rewriting until You're Ready for a Second Opinion

This is an important step, as other people will see what you actually wrote, and not just what you *think* you wrote.

- Get feedback from people whose opinion you respect and trust, and who either read a lot or write themselves.
- Ask them to be honest and thorough. Only honest feedback, even if it's a wholesale criticism of your entire story, can make you a better writer.
- If they need some guidance, give them the same questions you've been asking yourself.
- This is particularly critical if any aspect of your essay revolves around a technical area in which you're not an expert. Make sure at least one of your readers is an expert in that area.
- Join a writer's group in your area or online to share your writing, read others' writing, and provide mutual feedback.

Evaluate the Response You Received

You don't have to like or agree with everything that's said to you about your work. On the other hand, if you get the same comment from more than one person, you should probably take it very seriously. Strike a balance between keeping aspects that you want and making changes based on input you trust.

- Re-read the essay with your readers' comments in the back of your head. Note any gaps, places that need to be cut, or areas needing revision.
- Re-write using the insights gained from your readers and from your own subsequent critical reading.

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TEXT: WRITING THROUGH FEAR

Writing is an activity that can cause occasional anxiety for anyone, even professional writers. The following essay about writing anxiety, by Hillary Wentworth, from the Walden Writing Center, offers insight about how to handle issues surrounding writer's block.

I suppose fall is the perfect time to discuss fear. The leaves are falling, the nights are getting longer, and the kids are preparing ghoulish costumes and tricks for Halloween.



So here's my scary story: A few weeks ago, I sat down at my computer to revise an essay draft for an upcoming deadline. This is old hat for me; it's what I do in my personal life as a creative writer, and it's what I do in my professional life as a Walden Writing Center instructor. As I was skimming through it, though, a feeling of dread settled in my stomach, I began to sweat, and my pulse raced. I was having full-on panic. About my writing. This had never happened to me before. Sure, I have been disappointed in my writing, frustrated that I couldn't get an idea perfectly on paper, but not completely fear-stricken. I Xed out of the Word document and watched *Orange Is the New Black* on Netflix because I couldn't look at the essay anymore. My mind was too clouded for anything productive to happen.

The experience got me thinking about the role that fear plays in the writing process. Sometimes fear can be a great motivator. It might make us read many more articles than are truly necessary, just so we feel prepared enough to articulate a concept. It might make us stay up into the wee hours to proofread an assignment. But sometimes fear can lead to paralysis. Perhaps your anxiety doesn't manifest itself as panic at the computer; it could be that you worry about the assignment many days—or even weeks—before it is due. Here are some tips to help:

1. **Interrogate your fear.** Ask yourself why you are afraid. Is it because you fear failure, success, or judgment? Has it been a while since you've written academically, and so this new style of writing is mysterious to you?
2. **Write through it.** We all know the best way to work through a problem is to confront it. So sit at your desk, look at the screen, and write. You might not even write your assignment at first. Type anything—a reflection on your day, why writing gives you anxiety, your favorite foods. Sitting there and typing will help you become more comfortable with the prospect of more.
3. **Give it a rest.** This was my approach. After realizing that I was having an adverse reaction, I called it quits for the day, which ultimately helped reset my brain.

4. **Find comfort in ritual and reward.** Getting comfortable with writing might involve establishing a ritual (a time of day, a place, a song, a warm-up activity, or even food or drink) to get yourself into the writing zone. If you accomplish a goal or write for a set amount of time, reward yourself.
5. **Remember that knowledge is power.** Sometimes the only way to assuage our fear is to know more. Perhaps you want to learn about the writing process to make it less intimidating. Check out the Writing Center's [website](#) for tips and tutorials that will increase your confidence. You can also always ask your instructor questions about the assignment.
6. **Break it down.** If you feel overwhelmed about the amount of pages or the vastness of the assignment, break it up into small chunks. For example, write one little section of the paper at a time.
7. **Buddy up.** Maybe you just need someone with whom to share your fears—and your writing. Ask a classmate to be a study buddy or join an eCampus group.

The writing centers at the [University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill](#) and [University of Richmond](#), as well as the news site [Inside Higher Ed](#), also have helpful articles on writing anxiety.

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SELF CHECK: WRITING IN COLLEGE

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TRY IT: WRITING IN COLLEGE

Writing in College Journal Entry

To Do

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/RH95h36NChI>

The video above discusses beliefs students hold about college and demonstrates how those beliefs relate to test performance. Consider how beliefs might also impact a student's performance on writing assignments. Develop a 200-400 word journal entry that identifies three beliefs, mentioned in the video or discovered through your own observations, that relate to a student's ability to write academic essays. Explain how these beliefs might be adjusted through the practice of metacognition to improve writing results.

Worked Example

Journal entry assignments tend to be more flexible than other types of writing assignments in college, and as a result they can be tailored to your own experiences as long as they answer the primary questions asked in the assignment.

One model of a successful entry about this topic can be found below. Feel free to include your own experiences and examples from real life as they pertain to the issue at hand.

Writing in College Journal Entry

by Sandy Brown

Belief: Learning is fast

Related to writing essays, I could see how I could easily fall into this trap of thinking that fast is good. I have such limited time in the day to work on school assignments, that I think that whatever I can manage to get done must be the best possible work that I'm capable of doing. I should allow myself more time, though that's easier said than done. Even with smaller writing assignments, like this one, if I give myself a day or two to sketch out ideas for what I want to say, and then reflect on it before writing it, I think I'll do a much better job in the long run.

Belief: I'm really good at multi-tasking

This one is very related to the "learning is fast" idea. Watching the girl in the video do a million things while she's studying is just like watching my own kids at night! And I'm pretty guilty of this, as well. If I can set aside a quiet part of my night, and just focus on only one assignment at a time, I think I'll do a lot better with my writing overall. And I'll be happier with the results.

Belief: Being good at a subject is a matter of inborn talent

This is actually not a belief I personally hold. I always loved to read growing up, and I still do read fiction as much as time allows. But working as a business administrator for the past 15 years has shown me that I'm pretty good with numbers and bookkeeping, too, which I wouldn't have guessed before this job. One of my daughters is very drawn towards English and writing, and another struggles with it. They both seem to feel this is a matter of fate. I'm going to share this video with them, because I think there are ways that my daughter who struggles can be empowered to think that she CAN get better at writing, if she just keeps practicing. (This is also something I'm going to do myself...I'm very out of practice with writing for school!)

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OUTCOME: COMPUTER-BASED WRITING

Apply Word Processing Skills to College Writing Tasks

Popular culture holds a romantic image of writers as solitary figures, scribbling with pen and paper in attics by candlelight.

Realistically speaking, though, most writing we do these days is electronic. While there is great joy in putting pencil to paper, keyboarding and word processing are survival skills in college. Your professors will expect much of the work you do for classes to be typed, and either printed or submitted electronically. Additionally, most employers will expect and require you to be comfortable with using Microsoft Word and similar programs.



This section is designed to hold a little something for everyone. The video series walks viewers through features of Microsoft Word. Start at the level that seems the best fit for you. Even if you're a seasoned word processor, you'll encounter some tips that will save you time and effort in formatting documents for college.

What You Will Learn to Do

- demonstrate proficiency with basic word processor features
- demonstrate proficiency with intermediate word processor features
- demonstrate proficiency with advanced word processor features

The Learning Activities for this Outcome Include

- Video: Beginning Word Processing Skills
- Video: Intermediate Word Processing Skills
- Video: Advanced Word Processing Skills
- Self Check: Computer-Based Writing
- Try It: Computer-Based Writing

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VIDEO: BEGINNING WORD PROCESSING SKILLS

Most writing you do for college will need to be typed, and often submitted electronically. Mastering the basics of word processing tools will make this process much more comfortable to do.

The most popular word processing program is Microsoft Word, part of the Microsoft Office Suite. Most college computer labs have this program available, and you can often purchase it for a reduced rate through your college bookstore.

Some classes will explicitly require you to use Microsoft Word for your classwork. Otherwise, you're free to use whatever program you wish. Apple's Pages and Google's Google Docs, are two other widely-used examples.

The videos in this section use Microsoft Word 2013 as a model. If you use a different word processing program (or a different version of Word), the specific tools might appear in different places, but you'll still be able to perform the same activities.

Getting to Know Word

Let's start by reviewing the program as a whole, and what it's capable of.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/ySeeQFCFhQo>

Creating and Opening Documents

Now, let's look at getting started with a new document file.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/H0QJXbklpgQ>

Saving and Sharing

The ever-important "Save" feature is going to be your new best friend in college.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/QZhgurTI6V0>

Text Basics

Cutting, copying, pasting, and deleting are all reviewed here. "Find and replace" is a tool that will be handy for revising documents, especially.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/Y2wRglqFDfw>

Formatting Text

Making your document look attractive is one of the most fun parts of using a word processor. This video demonstrates quick ways to change your text's appearance.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/tEesVX3Ly58>

Page Layout

Your professor may have specific instructions for how she wants you to format the documents you write for her class. If that's the case, review how to change layout and formatting settings here.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/WpsemgS-F5c>

Printing

Finally, we end with the ever-important step of getting a hard copy of your work.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/L7qB3cP6euA>

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VIDEO: INTERMEDIATE WORD PROCESSING SKILLS

Now that you've mastered the basics, it's time to focus on the parts of word processing that make life easier!

The videos in this section use Microsoft Word 2013 as a model. If you use a different word processing program (or a different version of Word), the specific tools might appear in different places, but you'll still be able to perform the same activities.

Line and Paragraph Spacing

Having trouble getting things to line up the way you want them to on the page? This video shows how to simplify the appearance of your text with a couple of clicks.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/IgRz00liWNg>

Spell Check and Grammar Check

Probably everyone's favorite tool since the invention of computers is automatic spell check. Grammar check is also quite useful. Though neither tool is perfect, both will provide you a good leg up in the proofreading process.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/-T4sKrH4l40>

Headers, Footers, and Page Numbers

Your instructor will often ask you to include page numbers on your document, along with some specific formatting procedures. MLA and APA document formats, for instance, both rely upon the use of Headers. See how to insert these easily here.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/BU6tOwzWtY8>

Track Changes

Some built-in tools allow you to add comments on a draft, which is useful for doing peer review, or making notes to yourself as you build a project. Your instructor might also add notes to your essay document when he grades it, so it's useful to know how to turn on Track Changes so you don't miss his input.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/FVG2au1kuCs>

Word Count

Many writing assignments you have in college will ask for a particular word count range (such as a 500-750 word essay assignment). It's useful to know how to easily locate the word count in a document you've created.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/j-G508FXOxo>

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VIDEO: ADVANCED WORD PROCESSING SKILLS

Even people who have been using word processors for years often don't know about some of the advanced tips below.

Most of the videos in this section use Microsoft Word 2013 as a model. If you use a different word processing program (or a different version of Word), the specific tools might appear in different places, but you'll still be able to perform the same activities.

Hanging Indents

MLA and APA bibliography pages use a special type of indent, called a “hanging indent.” Where a normal paragraph indents the first line but not any others, a hanging indent paragraph DOESN'T indent the first line, but DOES indent all the others. Luckily, it's very easy to have your word processor do the hard work of this type of formatting for you, as this video demonstrates.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/n7rtKPYfhk0>

Bibliography Pages

Speaking of bibliographies (or Works Cited pages, or References pages), did you know that many word processors have ways to help you create those quickly?

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/l-IEWabgf0l>

Alphabetizing Bibliographies (and other Lists)

One more bibliography tip...if you create your citation list as you use sources, you'll need to put these in alphabetical order at the end. An easy way to do that is to use the Sort feature in your word processor. This video demonstrates that in Word 2007.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/7oQqC7bSy8k>

Inserting Pictures

Many college projects will require you to include visuals in your essays. The following video addresses how to add an image and then how to get the text around it to behave properly afterwards.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/LmllSsu2--M>

Change Default Settings

If the first thing you do each time you open a new document, is change your font size or style, as well as readjust your margins, then you probably will save time by changing the default settings so it starts just the way you like it.

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/M61X8x8_Fp8

Free Alternatives to Word

Word is the most common word processor, but it's expensive, especially if it didn't come with the computer you bought. Here are some **free** options to explore as an alternative.

- **Office Online.** You'll need to register with an account, but can then access your saved files from any internet-connected device.
- **OpenOffice.** This is software you download on your computer, so you don't have to be online to use it.
- **LibreOffice.** Similar to OpenOffice, you download this software directly to your computer.
- **Google Drive.** Connected to a Gmail / Google personal account, this flexible tool lets you access your saved files from any internet-connected device. You can also download files to work on offline, and they will automatically sync when you go online again.

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SELF CHECK: COMPUTER-BASED WRITING

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TRY IT: COMPUTER-BASED WRITING

Computer-Based Writing Journal Entry

To Do

Develop a 200-400 word journal entry describing your proficiency with using word processors, and what you might still need to practice further. To help you write this entry, consider some of the following questions:

- Would you consider yourself a beginner, intermediate, or advanced user of word processors? Why?
- What do you find yourself frustrated by, when you use a word processor?
- What comes easily to you, when you use a word processor?
- What do you feel you need more practice with?
- What do you feel you could explain how to do to others?

Worked Example

Journal entry assignments tend to be more flexible than other types of writing assignments in college, and as a result they can be tailored to your own experiences as long as they answer the primary questions asked in the assignment.

One model of a successful entry about this topic can be found below. Feel free to include your own experiences and examples from real life as they pertain to the issue at hand.

Computer-Based Writing Journal Entry

by Sandy Brown

I would categorize myself as an intermediate word processor user. I've used Word a lot, both for work and for personal use. I write letters, and have no trouble with the basics like saving or attaching to emails. I have definitely had the experience of losing documents in Word, which is very frustrating. I would like to know more about how I can prevent that from happening again.

One of the classes I withdrew from was going to use Google Drive for submitting essays. I've never used that before, and I'm a bit nervous about other classes that may require the same thing. I set up an account but didn't get very far with it.

I consider myself much better at programs like Excel, because I use those all the time for work. Some of the things I recognized in the Word tutorial videos were things I do regularly in Excel, like changing formatting. Changing the default settings seems like a good idea, because it sounds like many instructors will require the same kinds of document formatting for the written assignments I turn in. I don't know why the default settings are different from what we use in school, but that's okay. It helps knowing that I can change them once and then not have to worry about it anymore.

I've never had to do bibliography pages before, though my oldest daughter has for school projects. I hope that she can help me figure out the harder parts when it comes time for that. And having these videos to refer back to will be very helpful, as well.

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PUTTING IT TOGETHER: SUCCESS SKILLS

Your Success Track

You've completed an important first step in this course, by finishing the College Success module! May the new skills and strategies you've gained serve you well not only in this course, but at also in other classes this term and beyond.

Application of Ideas

Consider this talk by Freeman Hrabowski, president of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). At the young age of twelve, he marched with Martin Luther King, and now, at UMBC, he works to create an environment that helps underrepresented students—specifically African American, Latino, and low-income learners—get degrees in math and science. In the following video, he shares the four pillars of UMBC's approach. It's an inspiring talk for any college student, no matter what your major may be. You can also read the [transcript](#).

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/9EgIK8Mk18o>

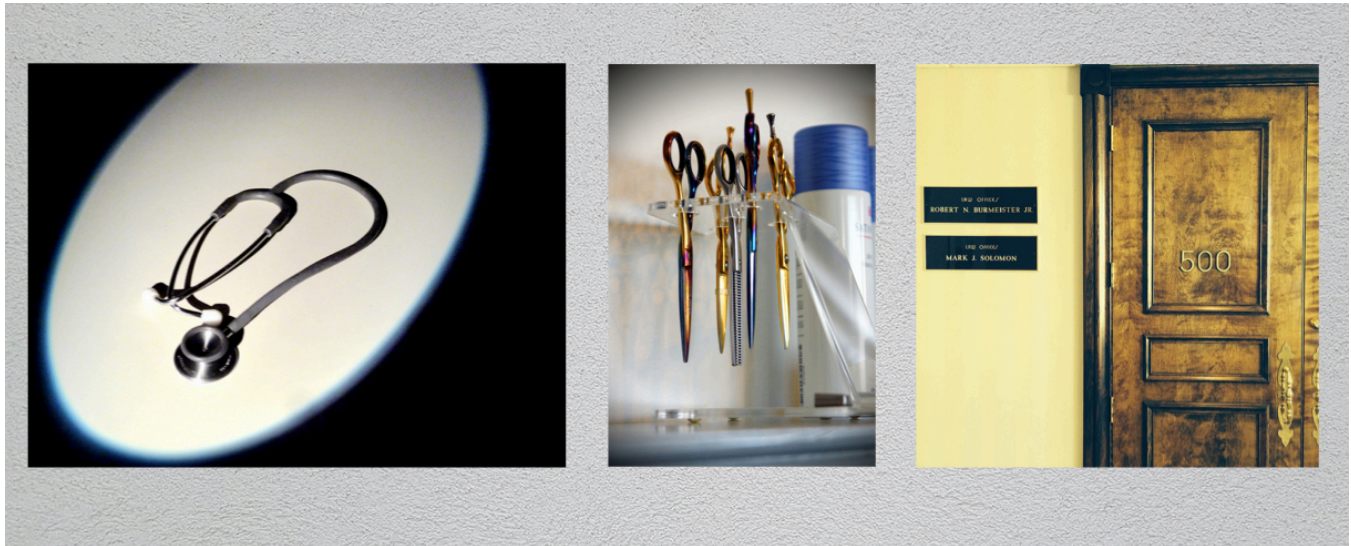
Symbols of Success

As you move more deeply into student life, consider selecting a symbol of your commitment to success. Consider your personal definition of "success" you determined earlier in this section. What would a physical representation of that success look like? Many people consider graduation caps or diplomas as symbols of college success. If those are meaningful to you, consider one of those as an option. Alternatively, yours can become more

personal—an item that speaks to you as a sign of what you’re working towards, and how you’ll know you’ve “made it.”

Some ideas from previous students include:

- a stethoscope, for an aspiring medical student
- a set of professional salon scissors, for an aspiring beautician
- an office door nameplate, for an aspiring law student



Once you find a meaningful symbol—perhaps an object or an image or even an idea—keep it in a place where you can easily access it. In moments when you may need a boost, you can remind yourself that college success begins and ends with your commitment to learning well.

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ASSIGNMENT: HABITS FOR SUCCESS JOURNAL ENTRY

To Do

For this activity, create your own definition of success. Dictionary.com defines success as “the favorable outcome of something attempted.” For many students in college, success means passing a class, earning an A, or learning something new. Beyond college, some people define success in terms of financial wealth; others measure it by the quality of their relationships with family and friends.

Here is an example of a brief, philosophical definition of success:

To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded. –Ralph Waldo Emerson

Ultimately, before we can know if we are successful, we must first define what success means for ourselves.

Develop a 200-400 word journal entry defining what success means to you in college and beyond. To help you write this entry, consider some of the following:

- Find a quote (or make one up) that best summarizes your definition of success. Note the author of the quote, and use quotation marks as appropriate.
- Why does this quote best represent your personal definition success?
- What people do you consider to be successful and why?
- What is your definition of success?
- What will you do to achieve success?
- What is the biggest change you need to make in order to be successful in college?
- How will you know you've achieved success?

Worked Example

Journal entry assignments tend to be more flexible than other types of writing assignments in college, and as a result they can be tailored to your own experiences as long as they answer the primary questions asked in the assignment.

One model of a successful entry about this topic can be found below. Feel free to include your own experiences and examples from real life as they pertain to the issue at hand.

Habits for Success Journal Entry

by Sandy Brown

I found this quote online, and I thought it was both funny and true: “Success is often the result of taking a misstep in the right direction” by Al Bernstein. I’m not sure exactly who Mr. Bernstein is, but he hit the nail right on the head. It seems like the best things in my life have come from some initial screw-up or unintended action on my part.

I enrolled in college the first time right after I graduated high school, but it just didn’t work out for me. My dad offered me a job instead, when he saw how miserable I was, since his office manager had just quit. I’d been helping out at his place all my life, but I didn’t know anything about managing the books. I made some silly mistakes, and some sort of serious ones, but I figured things out pretty quickly.

Now that my dad is looking towards retirement, I’m come back to school to get formal recognition of the work I’ve been doing for the past fifteen years. I originally thought I just wanted to get a Payroll Accounting certificate, but my adviser here talked me into pursuing a full AA degree. I’m glad I made that decision, but it’s been hard. I came home everyday the first week too exhausted to speak to my family. Withdrawing from a couple of classes was the right thing for me to do, even if it means I’ll only be a part-time student for now.

For me, success will be getting my first accounting job after I graduate with my degree and pass the certification exam. I want my future employer to recognize not only the years of experience I have but also the formal education I get with my AA. Success is also being a good role model for my daughters. I don’t want them to just settle for “good enough” like I did when I became an adult, and want them to work hard in order to get to a place where they’re comfortable.

ASSIGNMENT: CRITICAL THINKING JOURNAL ENTRY

To Do

1. Visit the [Quia Critical Thinking Quiz](#) page and click on Start Now (you don't need to enter your name). Select the best answer for each question, and then click on Submit Answers. A score of 70 percent or better on this quiz is considering passing.
2. Write a 200-400 word reflection on this activity. Based on the content of the questions, do you feel you use good critical thinking strategies in college? In what ways might you improve as a critical thinker?

Worked Example

Journal entry assignments tend to be more flexible than other types of writing assignments in college, and as a result they can be tailored to your own experiences as long as they answer the primary questions asked in the assignment.

One model of a successful entry about this topic can be found below. Feel free to include your own experiences and examples from real life as they pertain to the issue at hand.

Critical Thinking Journal Entry

by Sandy Brown

The thing I like about critical thinking is that it applies to everything. If you get better at using critical thinking in school, that means other things in life get easier, as well (at least that's what I hope is true).

I didn't do so great on the critical thinking quiz. I got a 50% the first time, but I think I would have done better if I had understood the questions more clearly. Question #9, the one about having autonomy, I got wrong because I thought it was saying it was important, rather than it wasn't. Now that I think about it, I guess that's an example of where I could be a better critical thinker—I could take the time to read these questions more closely, and be sure that my answer makes sense to what the question actually asks, rather than what I think it asks.

I was happy with parts of this, though. There were a couple of questions about fair-mindedness, and I got both those right, even though I didn't remember seeing the words "fair-mindedness" in the textbook. That phrase makes a lot more sense to me than "first order" and "second order" thinking.

For me, I think that I'm a better thinker when I'm not in a rush. I tend to panic when I take tests, and then I answer questions too quickly. For things that don't have a timer, like homework or out-of-class assignments, I tend to do a lot better because I can take as long as I need to figure out what exactly I'm supposed to do. So I guess one way to improve my critical thinking skills would be to practice going slower for timed tests, and giving myself time to check my answers before turning something in. I don't want to make mistakes like the one I did on this quiz, when it counts against my actual grade.

ASSIGNMENT: TIME MANAGEMENT JOURNAL ENTRY

To Do

1. Assess your time management skills by using [Ohio University's self-assessment](#). Make note of your results.
2. Review the University of Georgia's [Time Management: 10 Strategies for Better Time Management](#) and consider the strategies that seem most appealing to you.
3. Reflect in a 200-400 word journal entry on your current time management skills, and discuss how you might apply new strategies to improve time management in your life.

Worked Example

Journal entry assignments tend to be more flexible than other types of writing assignments in college, and as a result they can be tailored to your own experiences as long as they answer the primary questions asked in the assignment.

One model of a successful entry about this topic can be found below. Feel free to include your own experiences and examples from real life as they pertain to the issue at hand.

Time Management Journal Entry

by Sandy Brown

I've always considered myself pretty good at time management. Having a full house of a husband, three daughters, and two dogs will do that for you! But I'm realizing that I'm slipping a bit now that I'm going to school on top of being a full-time mom.

The Ohio University quiz was a bit eye-opening. I only scored a 55, which seems very low to me. I liked its advice at the end, and I went back through and clicked on each question to read more about it. One question that I put Never for was "I review my lecture notes after class each day." I hadn't thought about how that might be important before. I usually have some time to kill after classes are over, before I go home. Usually I do something dumb while waiting for my ride, like check Facebook. But I could use that time to look at my notes, and maybe start a bit of the reading before the next class.

One question that I got full points for was the "I allow time for proper meals and exercise" one. We have a family dinner every night, even if it's just fish sticks or chicken nuggets. And I have a regular running schedule. If don't run, I go crazy.

From the "Ten Strategies" reading, there were some good tips in there. Some were pretty obvious, but others made me think. The one I have a hard time with, but should be better about, is #6, Delegate. My girls make such a mess of things, that a lot of times I just end up cleaning myself instead of asking them to do it. I could put more responsibility on them. And my step-mother is always offering to help. I feel guilty about taking advantage of that very much, but I should get over that and call on her more.

ASSIGNMENT: WRITING IN COLLEGE JOURNAL ENTRY

To Do

<https://youtu.be/RH95h36NChI>

The video above discusses beliefs students hold about college and demonstrates how those beliefs relate to test performance. Consider how beliefs might also impact a student's performance on writing assignments.

Develop a 200-400 word journal entry that identifies three beliefs, mentioned in the video or discovered through your own observations, that relate to a student's ability to write academic essays. Explain how these beliefs might be adjusted through the practice of metacognition to improve writing results.

Worked Example

Journal entry assignments tend to be more flexible than other types of writing assignments in college, and as a result they can be tailored to your own experiences as long as they answer the primary questions asked in the assignment.

One model of a successful entry about this topic can be found below. Feel free to include your own experiences and examples from real life as they pertain to the issue at hand.

Writing in College Journal Entry

by Sandy Brown

Belief: Learning is fast

Related to writing essays, I could see how I could easily fall into this trap of thinking that fast is good. I have such limited time in the day to work on school assignments, that I think that whatever I can manage to get done must be the best possible work that I'm capable of doing. I should allow myself more time, though that's easier said than done. Even with smaller writing assignments, like this one, if I give myself a day or two to sketch out ideas for what I want to say, and then reflect on it before writing it, I think I'll do a much better job in the long run.

Belief: I'm really good at multi-tasking

This one is very related to the "learning is fast" idea. Watching the girl in the video do a million things while she's studying is just like watching my own kids at night! And I'm pretty guilty of this, as well. If I can set aside a quiet part of my night, and just focus on only one assignment at a time, I think I'll do a lot better with my writing overall. And I'll be happier with the results.

Belief: Being good at a subject is a matter of inborn talent

This is actually not a belief I personally hold. I always loved to read growing up, and I still do read fiction as much as time allows. But working as a business administrator for the past 15 years has shown me that I'm pretty good with numbers and bookkeeping, too, which I wouldn't have guessed before this job.

One of my daughters is very drawn towards English and writing, and another struggles with it. They both seem to feel this is a matter of fate. I'm going to share this video with them, because I think there are ways that my daughter who struggles can be empowered to think that she CAN get better at writing, if she just keeps practicing. (This is also something I'm going to do myself...I'm very out of practice with writing for school!)

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ASSIGNMENT: COMPUTER-BASED WRITING JOURNAL ENTRY

To Do

Develop a 200-400 word journal entry describing your proficiency with using word processors, and what you might still need to practice further. To help you write this entry, consider some of the following questions:

- Would you consider yourself a beginner, intermediate, or advanced user of word processors? Why?
- What do you find yourself frustrated by, when you use a word processor?
- What comes easily to you, when you use a word processor?
- What do you feel you need more practice with?
- What do you feel you could explain how to do to others?

Worked Example

Journal entry assignments tend to be more flexible than other types of writing assignments in college, and as a result they can be tailored to your own experiences as long as they answer the primary questions asked in the assignment.

One model of a successful entry about this topic can be found below. Feel free to include your own experiences and examples from real life as they pertain to the issue at hand.

Computer-Based Writing Journal Entry

by Sandy Brown

I would categorize myself as an intermediate word processor user. I've used Word a lot, both for work and for personal use. I write letters, and have no trouble with the basics like saving or attaching to emails. I have definitely had the experience of losing documents in Word, which is very frustrating. I would like to know more about how I can prevent that from happening again.

	<p>relevant to the topic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates application of writing process, to include careful editing and proofreading 	<p>relevant to the topic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> may not demonstrate application of writing process, to include editing and proofreading 	
Critical Thinking Journal Entry	<p>Meets or Exceeds Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 200-400 words long fully addresses question(s) of prompt demonstrates thoughtful consideration and planning relevant to the topic demonstrates application of writing process, to include careful editing and proofreading 	<p>Approaching Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 125-200 words long partially addresses question(s) of prompt demonstrates some consideration and planning relevant to the topic may not demonstrate application of writing process, to include editing and proofreading 	<p>Does Not Meet Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> less than 125 words long, or not included in journal does not address question(s) of prompt does not demonstrate consideration or planning relevant to the topic does not demonstrate application of writing process
Time Management Journal Entry	<p>Meets or Exceeds Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 200-400 words long fully addresses question(s) of prompt demonstrates thoughtful consideration and planning relevant to the topic demonstrates application of writing process, to include careful editing and proofreading 	<p>Approaching Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 125-200 words long partially addresses question(s) of prompt demonstrates some consideration and planning relevant to the topic may not demonstrate application of writing process, to include editing and proofreading 	<p>Does Not Meet Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> less than 125 words long, or not included in journal does not address question(s) of prompt does not demonstrate consideration or planning relevant to the topic does not demonstrate application of writing process

Writing in College Journal Entry	Meets or Exceeds Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200-400 words long • fully addresses question(s) of prompt • demonstrates thoughtful consideration and planning relevant to the topic • demonstrates application of writing process, to include careful editing and proofreading 	Approaching Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 125-200 words long • partially addresses question(s) of prompt • demonstrates some consideration and planning relevant to the topic • may not demonstrate application of writing process, to include editing and proofreading 	Does Not Meet Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • less than 125 words long, or not included in journal • does not address question(s) of prompt • does not demonstrate consideration or planning relevant to the topic • does not demonstrate application of writing process
Computer-Based Writing Journal Entry	Meets or Exceeds Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200-400 words long • fully addresses question(s) of prompt • demonstrates thoughtful consideration and planning relevant to the topic • demonstrates application of writing process, to include careful editing and proofreading 	Approaching Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 125-200 words long • partially addresses question(s) of prompt • demonstrates some consideration and planning relevant to the topic • may not demonstrate application of writing process, to include editing and proofreading 	Does Not Meet Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • less than 125 words long, or not included in journal • does not address question(s) of prompt • does not demonstrate consideration or planning relevant to the topic • does not demonstrate application of writing process

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READING

WHY IT MATTERS: READING

Why should we evaluate academic reading strategies?

Reading is fundamental to writing and research at University, but often gets overlooked – lecturers assume that students know how to read, and students assume there's only one way to read – but neither of these things is necessarily true! There are ways to read that can improve information processing, can help with building an argument, and importantly for many students, can save lots of time!! — Academic Literacy Workshops, University of Cape Town ((Note: [Hurst, Ellen, Ed. *Academic Literacy Workshops: A Handbook for Students and Instructors*. U of Capetown. 2011.](#).)

The passage above makes an important point: most of us assume we know how to read for school. However, methods that may have been fine in the past (skimming, quick reviews, relying upon class lectures or notes) won't hold up well as we move further into higher education.

This module defines a specific category of reading—academic reading—and discusses a range of skill sets and strategies that are specific to this type of reading.

It's helpful to remember that academic reading is an act of **performance**. Rather than sitting back and passively receiving information we read in college, we will be asked to directly act upon that information in some way. We will be quizzed or tested. We will be asked to debate, analyze, or critique what we read. We will need to read closely, remember the text accurately, and compare it to other texts for style and content.

The following video addresses how academic reading is a key component of inter-related skills that demonstrate mastery of critical thinking.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/9PsLktb7HTA>

As this video points out, as a reader in college you will be asked to embrace a “healthy skepticism” for every idea you come in contact with. This will take energy and work—it's much easier to accept what others tell us on face value than to critically assess each idea that comes our way. However, education in the fullest sense means developing the tools for this critical response, building it into an automatic reflex that makes us thoughtful, engaged citizens of the world around us.

Learning Outcomes

- Evaluate various types of reading material
- Evaluate general reading strategies
- Evaluate reading strategies for specialized texts
- Evaluate vocabulary usage
- Evaluate thesis ideas of texts
- Evaluate supporting claims of texts
- Evaluate use of logic and structure in texts
- Evaluate summary skills for reading comprehension

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PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT: SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS ESSAY

Summary and Analysis Essay Introduction

Select a reading from the reading anthology available in this course, and apply all steps of the critical reading process to it. The culmination of this close reading will be a Summary and Analysis Essay, which accurately captures the purpose, meaning, and tone of the reading selection. Directed to an audience unfamiliar with your reading selection, your summary will demonstrate the text's thesis or controlling idea, its major ideas, and its mode of development.

The **summary section** of the essay will report only what's in the reading selection, and **will not** include personal response or interpretation.

The **analysis section** of the essay will then move into your personal reactions and interpretations of the work. You will report to your readers how well you feel it meets its rhetorical purpose, and how well the components of its style, structure, and evidence serve to support the text's thesis.

Assignment Details

Look for the Try It pages along the way to help you prepare for and complete the Summary and Analysis Essay.

The finished Summary and Analysis Essay will be 250-500 words long. It will

- mimic the structure of the reading selection
- report the thesis or controlling idea of the reading selection
- present major supporting details of the reading selection
- include at least one direct quotation
- include multiple paraphrases
- end with a 2-3 paragraph section that analyzes the rhetorical purpose and features of the text, to conclude with your evaluation of how effectively this text meets its purpose for its intended audience.

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OUTCOME: TYPES OF READING MATERIAL

Evaluate various types of reading materials

Information can come from virtually anywhere — media, blogs, personal experiences, books, journal and magazine articles, expert opinions, encyclopedias, and web pages. Look at the table below examining different sources of information. Notice the similarities between them.

Type	Information	Use	Examples
<p>Magazine</p> 	<p>A magazine is a collection of articles and images about diverse topics of popular interest and current events. Usually these articles are written by journalists or scholars and are geared toward the average adult. Magazines may cover very “serious” material, but to find consistent scholarly information, you should use journals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to find information or opinions about popular culture • to find up-to-date information about current events • to find general articles for people who are not necessarily specialists about the topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>National Geographic</i> • <i>Ebony</i> • <i>Sports Illustrated</i> • <i>People</i>
<p>Academic journal</p> 	<p>A journal is a collection of articles usually written by scholars in an academic or professional field. An editorial board reviews articles to decide whether they should be accepted. Articles in journals can cover very specific topics or narrow fields of research.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when doing scholarly research • to find out what has been studied on your topic • to find bibliographies that point to other relevant research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Journal of Communication</i> • <i>The Historian</i> • <i>Journal of the American Medical Association</i> • <i>Lancet</i>
<p>Database</p>	<p>A database contains citations of articles in magazines, journals, and newspapers. They may also contain citations to podcasts, blogs, videos,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when you want to find articles on your topic in magazines, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Search Complete (a general database) • Compendex (an engineering database)

	<p>and other media types. Some databases contain abstracts or brief summaries of the articles, while other databases contain complete, full-text articles.</p>	<p>journals or newspapers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ABI/Inform (a business database)
<p>Newspapers</p> 	<p>A newspaper is a collection of articles about current events usually published daily. Since there is at least one in every city, it is a great source for local information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to find current information about international, national and local events to find editorials, commentaries, expert or popular opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Roanoke Times</i> <i>New York Times</i> <i>Suddeutsche Zeitung</i>
<p>Books</p> 	<p>Books cover virtually any topic, fact or fiction. For research purposes, you will probably be looking for books that synthesize all the information on one topic to support a particular argument or thesis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> when looking for lots of information on a topic to put your topic in context with other important issues to find historical information to find summaries of research to support an argument 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nash, Gary B. ed. <i>The American People: Creating a Nation and a Society</i>, 1990. Silverstone, Roger, ed. <i>Visions of Suburbia</i>, 1997. Smith, J. T. <i>Roman Villas: A Study in Social Structure</i>, 1997
<p>Encyclopedia</p> 	<p>Encyclopedias are collections of short, factual entries often written by different contributors who are knowledgeable about the topic.</p> <p>There are two types of encyclopedias: general and subject. General encyclopedias provide concise overviews on a wide variety of topics. Subject encyclopedias contain in-depth entries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> when looking for background information on a topic when trying to find key ideas, important dates or concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>African-American Encyclopedia</i>(subject encyclopedia) <i>Encyclopedia Americana</i>(general encyclopedia) <i>World Book</i>(general encyclopedia found online) <i>Gale encyclopedia of genetic disorders</i>(subject encyclopedia found online)

	focusing on one field of study.		
<p>Web site</p> 	<p>The Web allows you to access most types of information on the Internet through a browser. One of the main features of the Web is the ability to quickly link to other related information. The Web contains information beyond plain text, including sounds, images, and video.</p> <p>The important thing to do when using information on the Internet is to know how to evaluate it!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to find current information • to find information about companies • to find information from all levels of government – federal to local • to find both expert and popular opinions • to find information about hobbies and personal interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.loc.gov/ (The Library of Congress) • wikipedia.org (a wiki) • www.vt.edu (Virginia Tech)

What You Will Learn To Do

- evaluate various forms of writing, from various sources
- evaluate distinguishing characteristics of journalism, literature, nonfiction, and academic texts

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Text: Characteristics of Texts, Part 1
- Text: Characteristics of Texts, Part 2
- Text: Characteristics of Texts, Part 3
- Text: Characteristics of Texts, Conclusion
- Self Check: Types of Writing
- Try It: Types of Writing

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TEXT: CHARACTERISTICS OF TEXTS, PART 1

Read the following two passages about music classes, noting what they have in common and where they differ.

Passage #1: “Music Education”

Music education is a field of study associated with the teaching and learning of music. It touches on all learning domains, including the psychomotor domain (the development of skills), the cognitive domain (the acquisition of knowledge), and, in particular and significant ways, the affective domain (the learner’s willingness to receive, internalize, and share what is learned), including music appreciation and sensitivity. Music training from preschool through post-secondary education is common in most nations because involvement with music is considered a fundamental component of human culture and behavior. Music, like language, is an accomplishment that distinguishes humans as a species.

During the 20th century, many distinctive approaches were developed or further refined for the teaching of music, some of which have had widespread impact. The Dalcroze method (eurhythmics) was developed in the early 20th century by Swiss musician and educator Émile Jaques-Dalcroze. The Kodály Method emphasizes the benefits of physical instruction and response to music. The Orff Schulwerk “approach” to music education leads students to develop their music abilities in a way that parallels the development of western music.

At the university level, students in most arts and humanities programs receive academic credit for music courses such as music history, typically of Western art music, or music appreciation, which focuses on listening and learning about different musical styles. In addition, most North American and European universities offer music ensembles – such as choir, concert band, marching band, or orchestra – that are open to students from various fields of study. Most universities also offer degree programs in music education, certifying students as primary and secondary music educators. Advanced degrees such as the D.M.A. or the Ph.D can lead to university employment. These degrees are awarded upon completion of music theory, music history, technique classes, private instruction with a specific instrument, ensemble participation, and in depth observations of experienced educators. Music education departments in North American and European universities also support interdisciplinary research in such areas as music psychology, music education historiography, educational ethnomusicology, sociomusicology, and philosophy of education.

Passage #2: “Why Music Lessons Need to Keep Up with the Times”

Some 150 years ago, if you wanted to listen to music, you would have to perform it yourself or be in the presence of musicians.

With Thomas Edison’s phonograph in 1877 came the ability to record music. At that point, the ways that people could be musical changed forever. Humans could artfully organize their musical worlds around recorded music that they did not necessarily create themselves.

Since then people have engaged in an endless array of musical endeavors that have been recorded. In fact, the ability to record music has **shifted our musical experience** – from both a maker and a consumer perspective.

The question is: has students’ learning kept pace with these changes that started happening more than a century ago? Or, is it way past time for music education **to undergo a metamorphosis of sorts**, as some scholars have suggested?

I teach music and conduct research in the area of music curriculum development. What is currently offered in music classes is almost exclusively large instrumental and vocal ensembles that perform under the direction

of one person. However, there has been a fundamental [shift in how people experience music in the world](#). I believe music classes today should teach students to create, record and share their music that comes from their personal interests.

School doesn't teach the music students love

The average American adolescent listens to music for approximately [4.5 hours per day](#). So, 18 percent of all of the time in their lives is spent bathing themselves in the sounds that inspire them.

Much of the music that adolescents listen to is created digitally and produced through software, keyboards, touch pads, guitars and drums kits. However, music in the schools is based on conservatory models of musical transmission with roots in Western European art music.

Furthermore, classical music accounts for merely [1.4 percent of music sales](#) in the world. Yet, nearly all school music offerings are classical music-based.

So, we have a supply-and-demand crisis in school-supported music teaching and learning. Music classes do not offer what most students want to learn. As a music teacher in the state of Michigan for nine years (before becoming a music professor), I saw many students who loved music, but just didn't love the school music options. Only [10 percent of students](#) at the secondary level nationally end up enrolling in music classes.

Discussion

Question 1

Which of these passages did you enjoy reading more? Why?

Show Answer

Question 2

What **differences** between the two passages stand out to you? Type these differences here.

Show Answer

Question 3

What **similarities** in the passages are apparent to you? Type these similarities here.



Show Answer

Question 4

Both passages here are excerpts from longer essays. Which of these would you want to keep reading to

1. gain a deeper understanding of the history of U.S. music education?
2. convince a friend to enroll in a college music course with you?
3. prepare a presentation for a school board meeting about how to attract more students to music classes?

Show Answer

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- Why music lessons need to keep up with the times. **Authored by:** Clint Randles. **Provided by:** The Conversation. **Located at:** <http://theconversation.com/why-music-lessons-need-to-keep-up-with-the-times-58268>. **License:** [CC BY-NC-ND: Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives](#)

Read the following two passages about starting a business, noting what they have in common and where they differ.

Passage #1: “Making a Profit”

For-Profit Businesses

An organization that aims to earn profit through its operations and is concerned with its own interests and not those of the public (non-profit) is known as a for-profit corporation.

Structure

A for-profit cooperation is usually an organization operating in the private sector that sets goals which eventually help the organization itself. This kind of a company often makes shares of ownership available to the general public. The purchasers of those shares then become the company’s shareholders; shareholders have bought a portion of ownership of the corporation by giving away a certain amount of money (differentiating from company to company) or assets of a particular value. Such organizations are usually not aided by the government, as they are working for private financial gains, unlike a non-profit organization, which exists to serve a mission. The nature of a for-profit corporation is such that it is required to pay

applicable taxes and register with the state. Any donation they receive will also be subject to the tax policies of the concerned country. As these organizations are all corporations and have a separate identity from their owners the owners are not in their personal capacity required to satisfy any debts which the company might owe to anyone.

Aims

Unlike non-profit organizations, the policies of these organizations are usually profit oriented. Managers (corporate employees) here have a profit-oriented mindset and aim at maximizing the revenue of the firm, which in turn contributes to the profits of the shareholders/owners. Their aim can be accompanied by a goal of serving the society; however, that usually happens only in cases of specific corporations (B-corporations, which we'll learn about later).

Non-Profit Businesses

Some organizations are not established solely for the purpose of making and retaining profit; however, they function in much the same way as a business. They establish goals and work to meet them in an effective, efficient manner. Thus, most of the business principles introduced in this text also apply to non-profits. Let's take a look at some of the characteristics of the non-profit organization.

A non-profit business, often referred to as an NPO (non-profit organization), is an organization that uses its surplus revenues to further achieve its purpose or mission, rather than distributing its surplus income to the organization's directors (or equivalents) as profit or dividends. This is known as the distribution constraint. The decision to adopt a non-profit legal structure is one that will often have taxation implications, particularly where the non-profit seeks income tax exemption, charitable status and so on.

Passage #2: "The Ant King: A California Fairy Tale"

Sheila split open and the air was filled with gumballs. Yellow gumballs. This was awful for Stan, just awful. He had loved Sheila for a long time, fought for her heart, believed in their love until finally she had come around. They were about to kiss for the first time and then this: yellow gumballs.

Stan went to a group to try to accept that Sheila was gone. It was a group for people whose unrequited love had ended in some kind of surrealist moment. There is a group for everything in California.

After several months of hard work on himself with the group, Stan was ready to open a shop and sell the thousands of yellow gumballs. He did this because he believed in capitalism, he loved capitalism. He loved the dynamic surge and crash of Amazon's stock price, he loved the great concrete malls spreading across America like blood staining through a handkerchief, he loved how everything could be tracked and mirrored in numbers. When he closed the store each night he would count the gumballs sold, and he would determine his gross revenue, his operating expenses, his operating margin; he would adjust his balance sheet and learn his debt-to-equity ratio; and after this exercise each night, Stan felt he understood himself and was at peace, and he could go home to his apartment and drink tea and sleep, without shooting himself or thinking about Sheila.

On the night before the IPO of gumballs.com, Sheila came to Stan in a dream. She was standing in a kiddie pool; Stan and his brothers and sisters were running around splashing and screaming; she had managed to insert herself into a Super 8 home movie of Stan's family, shot in the late seventies. She looked terribly sad.

"Sheila, where are you?" Stan said. "Why did you leave me, why did you become gumballs?"

"The Ant King has me," Sheila said. "You must rescue me."

Stan woke up, he shaved, he put on his Armani suit, and drove his Lexus to his appointment with his venture capitalists and investment bankers. But the dream would not leave him.

...

"Gumballs are more than candy, isn't that right, Stan?" said Monique, smiling broadly.

Stan nodded. His feet were still wet, inside his argyle socks. "Yes, gumballs have a lot of, ah, a lot greater significance than just candy."

Monique paused and looked at Stan brightly, waiting for him to go on. Across the table, the three Credit Suisse First Boston underwriters—Emilio Toad, Harry Hornpecker, and Moby Pfister—sat stone-faced and unreacting in their gray double-breasted suits.

Stan tried to remember the gumballs.com business plan. “They have hard shells,” he said. “People, ah, they want challenge . . . the hardness, the gumminess . . .”

Monique broke in smoothly. Monique, all seven post-gender-reassignment-surgery feet of her; Monique, always dressed to the nines and tens; Monique was a Valley legend for her instincts, her suavity, her rapacious, exemplary greed. Stan had sold Monique on the idea of gumballs.com, and she had invested—found him the right contacts, the right team—and here they were at the Big Day, the Exit Strategy. “Stan!” she cried joyously, fixing him with a penetrating stare. “Don’t be shy! Tell them about how gumballs are sex! Tell them about our top-gun semiotics professors, tell them about gumballs as a cultural trope! You see,” she said, swooping onto Hornpecker, Pfister & Toad, “you can’t think of this as a candy thing, a food & bev thing, a consumer cyclic thing; no way, José! Think Pokémon. Think World Wide Wrestling. Think Star Wars!” “Could we get back to the numbers,” said Emilio Toad in a voice that sounded like a cat being liquefied in an industrial-strength mixer. The gray faces of Harry Hornpecker and Moby Pfister twitched in relief.

Discussion

Question 1

Which of these passages did you enjoy reading more? Why?

Show Answer

Question 2

What **differences** between the two passages stand out to you? Type these differences here.

Show Answer

Question 3

What **similarities** in the passages are apparent to you? Type these similarities here.

Show Answer

Question 4

Both passages here are excerpts from longer works. Which of these would you want to keep reading to

1. gain a deeper understanding of business practices?
2. learn about one of the more unique business start-ups in a fictional setting?
3. be entertained?
4. be well-informed?

Show Answer

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TEXT: CHARACTERISTICS OF TEXTS, PART 3

Read the following two passages about human nutrition, noting what they have in common and where they differ.

Passage #1: “Nutrition and Health – The Association between Eating Behavior and Various Health Parameters: A Matched Sample Study”

Introduction

Our diet has an impact on our well-being and on our health. Studies have shown a vegetarian diet to be associated with a lower incidence of hypertension, cholesterol problems, some chronic degenerative diseases, coronary artery disease, type II diabetes, gallstones, stroke, and certain cancers [1]–[7]. A vegetarian diet is characterized by a low consumption of saturated fat and cholesterol, due to a higher intake of fruits, vegetables and whole-grain products [3], [4], [8]. Overall, vegetarians have a lower body mass index [1], [4], [5], [7], [9]–[12], a higher socioeconomic status [13], and better health behavior, i.e. they are more physically active, drink less alcohol, and smoke less [9], [13], [14]. On the other hand, the mental health effects of a vegetarian diet or a Mediterranean diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products and fish are divergent [9], [15]. For example, Michalak et al. [16] report that a vegetarian diet is associated with an elevated prevalence of mental disorders. A poor meat intake has been shown to be associated with lower mortality rates and higher life expectancy [17], and a diet which allows small amounts of red meat, fish and dairy products seems to be associated with a reduced risk of coronary heart disease as well as type 2

diabetes [18]. Additionally, evidence concerning lower rates of cancer, colon diseases including colon cancer, abdominal complaints, and all-cause mortality is, however, inconsistent [5]–[7], [19]–[22]. Not only is the intake of certain nutrients, like red meat, associated with an increased health risk [18], [23]–[26], high-caloric intake also plays a crucial role [23], [27]. Moreover, there seems to be proof that lifestyle factors like physical activity may be more crucial in lowering disease rates than individual dietary habits [20], [28]–[29]. While, generally speaking, diets based on plants, like vegetarian diets, seem to be associated with a certain health benefit, a lower risk to contract certain chronic diseases [30], and the ability to improve health [31]–[32], restrictive and monotonous vegetarian diets include the risk of nutritional deficits [2], [18], [19], [30], [33]. Baines et al. [9] report that vegetarians take more medication than non-vegetarians. To summarize, a number of studies have shown vegetarian diets and diets with poor meat intake to be associated with lower mortality rates for certain diseases. Research about the dietary habits in Austria is, however, rather sparse and mainly focused on genetic factors [33]–[36]. Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate health differences between different dietary habit groups among Austrian adults.

Passage #2: “The Science Behind Healthy Eating Patterns”

Associations Between Eating Patterns and Health

Evidence shows that healthy eating patterns, as outlined in the Guidelines and Key Recommendations, are associated with positive health outcomes. The evidence base for associations between eating patterns and specific health outcomes continues to grow. Strong evidence shows that healthy eating patterns are associated with a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD). Moderate evidence indicates that healthy eating patterns also are associated with a reduced risk of type 2 diabetes, certain types of cancers (such as colorectal and postmenopausal breast cancers), overweight, and obesity. Emerging evidence also suggests that relationships may exist between eating patterns and some neurocognitive disorders and congenital anomalies.

Within this body of evidence, higher intakes of vegetables and fruits consistently have been identified as characteristics of healthy eating patterns; whole grains have been identified as well, although with slightly less consistency. Other characteristics of healthy eating patterns have been identified with less consistency and include fat-free or low-fat dairy, seafood, legumes, and nuts. Lower intakes of meats, including processed meats; processed poultry; sugar-sweetened foods, particularly beverages; and refined grains have often been identified as characteristics of healthy eating patterns. Additional information about how food groups and dietary components fit within healthy eating patterns is discussed throughout the *2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines*. For example, as discussed later in this chapter in the section [About Meats and Poultry](#), evidence from food pattern modeling has demonstrated that lean meats can be part of a healthy eating pattern, but as discussed in [Chapter 2](#), average intakes of meats, poultry, and eggs, a subgroup of the protein foods group, are above recommendations in the Healthy U.S.-Style Eating Pattern for teen boys and adult men.

Associations Between Dietary Components and Health

The evidence on food groups and various health outcomes that is reflected in this 2015-2020 edition of the *Dietary Guidelines* complements and builds on the evidence of the previous 2010 edition. For example, research has shown that vegetables and fruits are associated with a reduced risk of many chronic diseases, including CVD, and may be protective against certain types of cancers. Additionally, some evidence indicates that whole grain intake may reduce risk for CVD and is associated with lower body weight. Research also has linked dairy intake to improved bone health, especially in children and adolescents.

Discussion

Question 1

Which of these passages did you enjoy reading more? Why?

Show Answer

Question 2

What **differences** between the two passages stand out to you? Type these differences here.

Show Answer

Question 3

What **similarities** in the passages are apparent to you? Type these similarities here.

Show Answer

Question 4

Both passages here are excerpts from longer essays. Which of these would you want to keep reading to

1. get ideas for how you might change your diet to benefit your personal health?
2. learn more about dietary habits of people living in Austria?
3. use as a potential source in a research essay about human nutrition?

Show Answer

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TEXT: CHARACTERISTICS OF TEXTS, CONCLUSION

Introduction

Clearly, the sample texts in the previous pages contained a lot of differences, even though they had some overlaps in topic. Let's review what they all were in more detail.

Part 1, Passage #1

[“Music Education”](#) comes from Wikipedia, the well-known online encyclopedia.

The full story demonstrates some features common to reference material:

- highly structured and organized text, using headings and sub-headings
- factual content
- includes in-text citation (or footnotes) and a list of References at the end
- embedded links to related sources
- historical information
- images to help illustrate the topic
- formal tone
- clear and easy to read



WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia

A reference work's primary goal is to inform readers.

Part 1, Passage #2

[“Why Music Lessons Need to Keep Up with the Times,”](#) by Clint Randles, comes from [The Conversation](#), an online news source.

The full article demonstrates some features common to journalism:

- most important information appears near the opening of the article
- reports facts
- quotes and interviews from experts on the topic
- no in-text citations, no citations at the end
- embedded links to related sources
- images to help illustrate the topic

THE CONVERSATION

A news article's primary goal is to **inform** readers.

Part 2, Passage #1

"[Making a profit](#)" comes from the chapter "Role of Business" in an *Introduction to Business* course textbook.

The full source demonstrates some features common to textbooks:

- clearly stated learning outcomes for each section
- formal tone
- direct language
- definitions of key terms
- no in-text citations, though references may be included at the end of a chapter
- images to help illustrate the topic



Introduction to
Business Fall 2015

A textbook's primary goal is to **educate** readers.

Part 2, Passage #2

"[The Ant King: A California Fairy Tale](#)" is a short story available in the collection *The Ant King and Other Stories* by Benjamin Rosenbaum.

The full story demonstrates some features common to literature:

- introduces characters
- follows a narrative sequence of events, revealing a plot
- includes description to set scene
- may use first-person, second-person, or third-person voice
- uses dialogue to convey what characters say to one another
- no in-text citations, no citations at the end

THE ANT KING AND OTHER STORIES

A work of literature's primary goal is to **entertain** readers.

Part 3, Passage #1

“Nutrition and Health The Association between Eating Behavior and Various Health Parameters: A Matched Sample Study” by Nathalie T. Burkert, Johanna Muckenhuber, Franziska Großschädl, Éva Rásky, and Wolfgang Freidl, came from *PLoS One*, an online academic journal.

The full article demonstrates some features common to reference material:

- highly structured and organized text, using headings and sub-headings
- describes an experiment or an analysis, including the authors’ findings and interpretations
- includes in-text citation (or footnotes) and a list of References at the end
- advanced vocabulary, specific to the field of study
- images to help illustrate the topic



Further Examination

Of all the types of texts used in these examples, academic journals are typically the most different from other reading material students may have encountered before entering college, and the most difficult to read. This video offers helpful strategies for how to read through an academic journal article most effectively: Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/3SmOq6gENPM>

An academic journal article’s primary goal is to **distribute new ideas** to readers.

Part 3, Passage #2

“The Science Behind Healthy Eating Patterns” is an excerpt from the *2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, a publication from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The full article demonstrates some features common to government publications:

- structured and organized text, using headings and sub-headings
- presents research and findings made possible through publically-funded programs or agencies
- can be either highly specialized, for a specific target audience, or highly generalized, for a broad American readership
- may originate from any level of government: local, state, national, or global



A government publication’s primary goal is to **record and share information produced by government agencies**.

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SELF CHECK: TYPES OF WRITING

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TRY IT: TYPES OF WRITING

To Do

As prewriting for your Summary and Analysis Essay, write notes evaluating your reading selection. Use the purpose statements and descriptions of different kinds of text, found earlier in this section, to guide you.

- Write 1-2 paragraphs describing what kind of source your chosen reading selection illustrates, and
- How well it meets the stated goals of the kind of source it illustrates.

Worked Example

video/text model for this task

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OUTCOME: READING STRATEGIES

Evaluate general reading strategies

But I already know how to read!

Of course you do! But just as games get more and more complicated as you level up, “reading” involves more and more brain processes as you progress through your education. This section gives you some tips and tools to “level up” your reading for college-level work.

The authors whose texts you read in college, whether the texts are fact or fiction, are engaging in a slow-motion conversation on a topic. Your goal is to **listen carefully** to the author’s side of the conversation so that you, too, can **participate in the conversation**. You don’t want to simply parrot back what other people have said in the conversation, and you don’t want to talk about something completely irrelevant. Instead, you want to listen (read) carefully and then contribute to the conversation in a meaningful way.



What You Will Learn to Do

- evaluate rhetorical context of a text (purpose, author, audience)
- evaluate previewing as a reading strategy
- evaluate active reading as a reading strategy
- evaluate summarizing as a reading strategy
- evaluate reviewing as a reading strategy

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Video: The Rhetorical Situation
- Text: Academic Reading Strategies
- Video: Active Academic Reading
- Self Check: Reading Strategies
- Try It: Reading Strategies

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VIDEO: THE RHETORICAL SITUATION

The following video presents the key pieces of information OUTSIDE of a given text, that help shape what appears inside of it. These pieces of information are referred to as the **rhetorical context**, or **rhetorical situation**.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/z8LATT9woCE>

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TEXT: ACADEMIC READING STRATEGIES

Completing reading assignments is one of the biggest challenges in academia. However, are you managing your reading efficiently? Consider this cooking analogy, noting the differences in process:

- *Shannon has to make dinner. He goes to the store and walks through every aisle. He decides to make spaghetti, so he revisits aisles and reads many packages thoroughly before deciding which groceries to buy. Once he arrives home, he finds a recipe for spaghetti, but needs to go back to the store for ingredients he forgot.*
- *Taylor also has to make dinner. He wants lots of carbohydrates because he's running a marathon soon so he decides to make spaghetti. After checking some recipes, he makes a list of ingredients. At the grocery store, he skims aisles to find his ingredients and chooses products that meet his diet.*

Taylor's process was more efficient because his purpose was clear. Establishing why you are reading something will help you decide how to read it, which saves time and improves comprehension. This guide lists some purposes for reading as well as different strategies to try at different stages of the reading process.

Purposes for Reading

People read different kinds of text (e.g., scholarly articles, textbooks, reviews) for different reasons. Some purposes for reading might be

- to scan for specific information
- to skim to get an overview of the text
- to relate new content to existing knowledge
- to write something (often depends on a prompt)
- to critique an argument
- to learn something
- for general comprehension

Strategies

Strategies differ from reader to reader. The same reader may use different strategies for different contexts because their purpose for reading changes. Ask yourself "why am I reading?" and "what am I reading?" when deciding which strategies to try.

Before Reading

- Establish your purpose for reading
- Speculate about the author's purpose for writing
- Review what you already know and want to learn about the topic (see the guides below)
- Preview the text to get an overview of its structure, looking at headings, figures, tables, glossary, etc.
- Predict the contents of the text and pose questions about it. If the authors have provided discussion questions, read them and write them on a note-taking sheet.
- Note any discussion questions that have been provided (sometimes at the end of the text)

Sample pre-reading guides— [K-W-L guide](#) • [Critical reading questionnaire](#)

During Reading

- Annotate and mark (sparingly) sections of the text to easily recall important or interesting ideas
- Check your predictions and find answers to posed questions
- Use headings and transition words to identify relationships in the text
- Create a vocabulary list of other unfamiliar words to define later
- Try to infer unfamiliar words' meanings by identifying their relationship to the main idea
- Connect the text to what you already know about the topic
- Take breaks (split the text into segments if necessary)

Sample annotated texts— [Journal article](#) · [Book chapter excerpt](#)

After Reading

- Summarize the text in your own words (note what you learned, impressions, and reactions) in an outline, concept map, or matrix (for several texts)
- Talk to someone about the author's ideas to check your comprehension
- Identify and reread difficult parts of the text
- Define words on your vocabulary list (try a [learner's dictionary](#)) and practice using them

Sample graphic organizers— [Concept map](#) · [Literature review matrix](#)

Works Consulted

Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (2002). *Teaching and researching reading*. Harlow: Longman.

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VIDEO: ACTIVE ACADEMIC READING

The following video presents another perspective on the academic reading process, including time management strategies. The speaker is from Aarhus University in Denmark, so the examples in the video are in Danish. That gives us the advantage of getting to ignore the specific texts, and instead focus on the tips she offers.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/J1yVoPJ7Q6w>

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SELF CHECK: READING STRATEGIES

Visit this page in your course online to check your understanding.

TRY IT: READING STRATEGIES

To Do

With your selected reading, preview the text. Refer to the “Before Reading” section of the Academic Reading Strategies page in this outcome. Use one of the two pre-reading guides mentioned there to organize your reading strategy: the [K-W-L Guide](#) or the [Critical Reading Questionnaire](#).

Complete the reading strategy guide of your choice.

Use it to guide the active, close reading of your text.

OUTCOME: SPECIALIZED READING STRATEGIES

Evaluate reading strategies for specialized texts

According to one [report](#), the amount people that read tripled from 1980 to the late 2000s, and it's probably safe to say that trend continues today. But as we jam more and more words into our heads, how we read those words has changed in a fundamental way: we've moved from paper to screens. It's left many wondering what we've lost (or gained) in the shift... ((Note: [Sneed, Annie. "Everything Science Knows About Reading on Screens." Co.Design. 8 Jul 2015. Web. 7 June 2016.](#)))

We've already examined the idea that the kind of reading we do in educational settings can be quite different from reading we do for pleasure. It makes sense, then, that even further differentiation can be found inside of academic reading.

Some types of reading require specific strategies, and specific approaches, that are unique to that experience. This section will explore some of those situations in greater depth.

What You Will Learn to Do

- evaluate strategies for reading on digital devices
- evaluate strategies for reading math, social science, and science texts
- evaluate strategies for reading graphics (charts, etc.)

The Learning Activities in This Outcome Include

- Text: Online Reading Comprehension
- Text: How to Read Effectively in Math
- Text: How to Read Effectively in the Social Sciences
- Text: How to Read Effectively in the Sciences
- Text: 5 Step Approach for Reading Charts and Graphs
- Self Check: Specialized Reading Strategies
- Try It: Specialized Reading Strategies



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TEXT: ONLINE READING COMPREHENSION

Introduction

Author and teacher Kevin Hodgson offers some insight about what it's like as we move towards an increasingly digitized world. Read his article below.

Strategies for Online Reading Comprehension

Imagine, if you will, that you are beside me as I peer over the shoulder of my twelve-year-old son. He's using a web browser to search for an article on creating stop-motion movies, which is one of his hobbies. I barely have time to say, "That looks interesting," before he has clicked on a hyperlink and is off on entirely different page. A video catches his eye and he ignores me completely as he hits the "play" button, only to discover the video is a commercial for an upcoming movie. I want to say something, but I don't have time. The mouse works its magic, and he is off again, this time in full reverse, clicking on arrows that direct him back to the original page. I keep silent now, watching him scan the article for the headlines in bold. Then he is following yet another link to yet another page.

And so it goes.

As a culture, we traditionally think of reading in terms of sounding out words, understanding the meaning of those words, and putting those words into some contextual understanding. Is this new kind of activity my son embodies even “reading”? It’s a question worth asking.

And yet, if you read The National Council of Teachers of English’s definition of reading, you’ll recognize some semblance of what my son was doing, even as he jumped here and there with the mouse:

Readers read for different purposes. Sometimes they read for pleasure. Sometimes they read for information. Their reason for reading impacts the way they read. They may skim or read carefully depending on why they are reading. Throughout this process, readers monitor the meaning they are constructing. When the text does not meet their purposes, they may switch to another text. Readers expect what they are reading to make sense. They use a repertoire of strategies, such as rethinking, re-reading or reading on to clarify ideas, to make sure they understand what they read in order to accomplish their purposes. ((Note: <http://www.learnncc.org/lp/pages/6958#note1>))

This NCTE definition notes that “When the text does not meet their purposes, they may switch to another text,” and that seemed on the surface to be what my son was up to. But I wonder if he knew what he was doing. Could he articulate why he was making the choices he was making? In short, no. He could not. He has not yet developed the information-synthesizing skills and understanding of the medium to make those connections.

If the kind of text we are encountering in these online travels is embedded with so many links and media, and if those texts are connected to other associated pages (with even more links and media), hosted by who-knows-whom, the act of reading online quickly becomes an act of hunting for treasure, with red herrings all over the place that can easily divert our attention.

Perhaps it would help to first examine the ways in which the two reading environments differ: How is traditional, in-class reading different from online reading? The following list was put together through a crowd-sourcing effort on Twitter by a handful of teachers.

Traditional reading (in school)	Online reading
Writers/sources are typically deemed authoritative by virtue of being published.	Because it’s easy for anyone to publish online, authority of information typically merits more evaluation.
Information typically consists only of text, sometimes with images.	Hyperlinks, images, audio, and video are usually part of the reading experience.
Information typically flows sequentially (from the first word of the text to the last).	Information can flow non-sequentially (one word might lead via hyperlink to an entire new piece of reading).
Reading is focused on one page at a time — choice of the reader is limited.	Reading can be interactive (reader response possibilities, potentially limitless decisions about where to go with the text, etc.).

Given that we are reading more online, and are experiencing these kinds of fluid information environments, it seems that we need to find ways to process the information we are finding, and how to find it with more precision and understanding. Here are few ideas that might be helpful.

Reading strategies

Colorado State University offers a useful [guide to reading on the web](#). The following list includes some of the CSU strategies to strengthen reading comprehension:

- Synthesize online reading into meaningful chunks of information. Use summarizing and reviewing techniques to put a text's ideas into your own words.
- Scan a page, as opposed to reading every word. Using your eye to sift through key words and phrases allows you to focus on what is important.
- Avoid distractions as much as necessary. [Readability](#) is one tool that can make this possible. Advertising-blocking tools are another effective way to reduce unnecessary, and unwanted, content from a web page.
- Understand the value of a hyperlink before you click the link. This means reading the destination of the link itself. It is easier if the creator of the page puts the hyperlink into context, but if that is not the case, then you have to make a judgment about the value, safety, and validity of the link.
- Navigate a path from one page in a way that is clear and logical.

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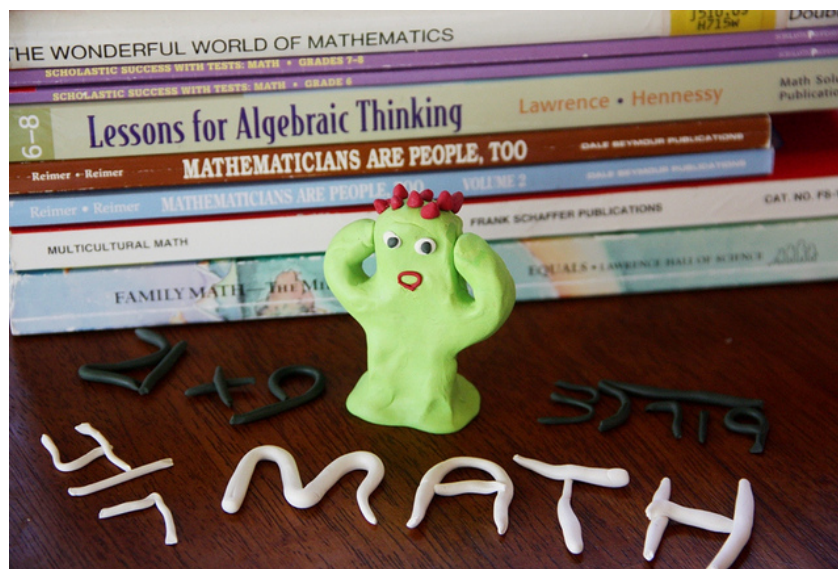
- Strategies for Online Reading Comprehension. Authored by: Kevin Hodgson. Located at: <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/6958>. License: [CC BY-NC-SA: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike](#)

Introduction

Math text typically alternates passages of explanation in English with pieces of mathematics such as example problems.

When reading explanatory material in a math text...

- Read every word, one word at a time. You can't catch the "drift" by skimming
- Every word counts (even 2-letter ones)



Forget About Speed Reading

Take your time. Make sure you understand each sentence before going on to the next.

- Remember that familiar words may have different mathematical meanings you need to learn
- If you don't understand how a word is used, STOP and find out before going on
- Reread as many times as necessary from the beginning
- When reading math text, **slower is better**

When looking at mathematics (equations and numerical expressions)...

- See how each line follows from the line before
- Read any written explanations the author gives you
- Be sure you know where each line comes from before going on
- Do not skip steps!

Read with pencil and paper in hand

- Reproduce examples as you go along
- Try to work out each line for yourself, step by step

Go over problems that the author has worked out in detail

Successful students rely heavily upon these. Go through them until you understand every step.

How to work a solved problem in the textbook

1. Work through the problem one step at a time
2. Close the book and try to work it again on your own
3. Repeat until you can reproduce the solution with the book closed
4. Try not to memorize the solution
5. Keep track of "what to do" to move from each line to the next
6. It's okay if your version has more lines than the author's (it may take you two or three steps to accomplish what the author does in one). This is a good sign that you're thinking for yourself!
7. Be patient. It's common to spend an hour or two on a single page. It's worth your time to learn the process.

After you can work through the solved problems on your own, the homework should be much easier since there will be similar problems. **Time spent on problems the author has solved for you will pay off in higher grades.**

Don't worry if the author or your instructor makes it "look easy." They work hard when you aren't looking. The author chooses "cleaned up" problems for his or her textbook. Teachers do the same thing when preparing for a lecture. Good math is messy! If you get really lost, scrap your work and start over on that problem.

Math texts with visual illustrations

Spend time studying any pictures. Every line and symbol is there for a specific reason. Take the time to understand the picture thoroughly—in detail. Pay special attention to graphs and charts (they convey lots of information in a small space).

Conclusion

You don't merely "read" a math textbook—you work through it. The information has to be dug out, not just skimmed over. It is a slow process, but it's the only way to really understand what the math text is trying to tell you.

The bottom line is to **go slow** when reading math text. It's not a race to see how fast you finish, but how much you understand.

So be patient, remember that "slow is fast," and enjoy math reading!



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TEXT: HOW TO READ EFFECTIVELY IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

How to work through long reading assignments

Faced with a long list of readings in any social science field, you need to learn to read extensively as well as intensively; it is rarely practical to read everything word for word and line for line. Although close textual reading and interpretation is part of social science tradition, it is often not possible, especially for introductory and intermediate level survey courses. Instead of trying to read every line and word, consider the following suggestions for more efficient and effective course reading.

Organize reading over the weeks and months.

Look over the material to be covered (syllabus and tables of contents in assigned books). Estimate the amount of reading for the semester and try to divide the work on a weekly basis. Try to keep your work and pace steady. It will become less burdensome and easier to manage.

Begin any reading assignment by reading the abstract, preface, introductions, and conclusions.

These are often the most important parts of any text because the author often signals his or her major themes and arguments. It is necessary, however, to look over, sometimes very carefully and completely, the



central portions of the text to identify the evidence provided for the major themes/ theses. Often, the topic (first) sentences of paragraphs provide the links in the author's argument.

Pre-reading (of a book or article):

1. Look at the title page and the preface
2. Study the table of contents to obtain a general sense of a book's structure
3. Check the index
4. Read the publisher's blurb
5. Skim the summary statements in the opening and closing paragraphs of pivotal chapters
6. Formulate what you think you know about this issue. What do you consider the essential points and key explanatory factors? You may know nothing about the topic; use this ignorance to devise a list of what you need the author to tell you in order to be come informed.

Mechanics of reading and note taking

Read the text and make marginal notes (on post-its or separate piece of paper) indicating what seemed like the strongest parts of the text. When you have completed a once through the text, go back and take notes in outline form, by paraphrasing sentences or paragraphs until you have reduced the many pages of text to a few pages. (Make sure to keep an accurate citation to the work so that any future use of these notes and paraphrases can be appropriately cited. You do not want to find yourself engaged in plagiarism.)

Do not rely on underlining. Do not rely on highlighting. This is insufficient.

In order to "know" a text, you need to convert it into your own words, or your own organization of the text. The text needs to be processed several different ways in your brain. Underlining is passive and does not help you learn the material.

Analytical reading

1. Classify the book or article according to kind and subject matter. Into what genre does that work fit? What is the book about?
2. Number the major parts in their order and relations. Outline these as you have outlined the whole.
3. Define the specific problem or problems the author has tried to solve. What question does the author claim to address? You might also want to think about how this reading fits into the course. Why did the instructor place the reading at this point in the course? What is the topic on the syllabus? How does this reading provide an answer or information for this topic?
4. What theoretical statements does the author make? A theoretical statement proposes a relationship. For example, structural theories of deviance suggest that deviance (that which is to be explained) is a consequence of the structure (organization of the parts) of a society. In other words, social structure produces deviance.
5. What are the concepts and variables used? Become familiar with the author by defining key words. Know the details of the argument. In the example above: what is social structure? What is meant by deviance? Do structural theorists/ writers assume the reader knows what is meant by social structure? Do you need to find out what this means in order to understand the reading?
6. How does the author's argument/ position compare with that of others who address the same question or related questions? Where are the points of similarity and difference
7. What value judgments does the author make? What values does the author assume readers will share? What assumptions does the author make that may be contestable?
8. What is the author's methodology? (Here you should be concerned not only with the methods used but the kinds of arguments implied or given about what methods are more or less appropriate.) What

constitutes evidence in this reading? Know the author's arguments by finding them in, or constructing them out of, sequences of sentences.

9. Determine which of the problems the author has solved and which she has not. Of those not solved, decide which the author knows she has failed to solve. If you disagree with the author, on what basis do you rest your disagreement? Is the author uninformed, misinformed, illogical, imprecise, or incomplete? Criticize fairly; do not pass judgment based on personal opinion, taste, or preference. Is the argument internally consistent? Does the evidence (both that presented by the author and other evidence in the field) support the argument?

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- Image of day planner. Authored by: Mike Rohde. Located at: <https://flic.kr/p/eufzY>. License: [CC BY-NC: Attribution-NonCommercial](#)

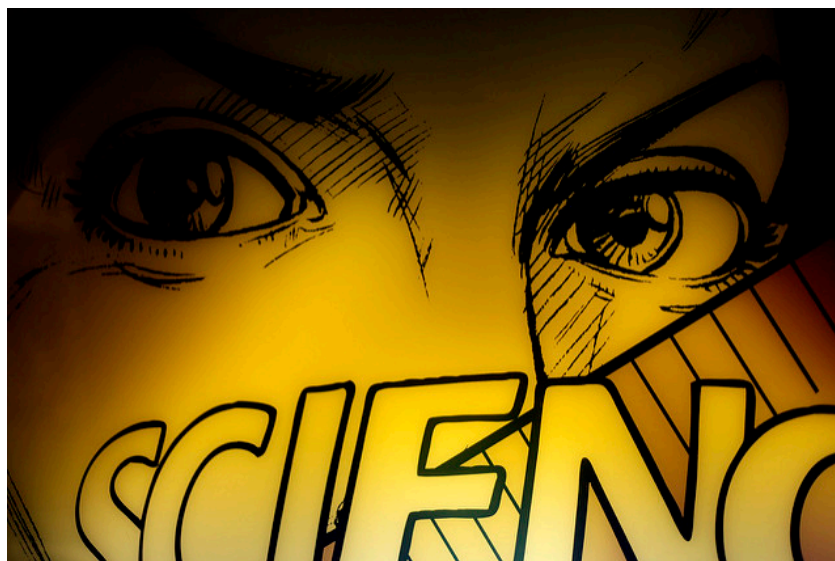
TEXT: HOW TO READ EFFECTIVELY IN THE SCIENCES

Explore Your Science Textbook

Explore The Textbook. Go over the course outline, the table of contents, and compare the two. In addition, explore the Lab manual. Go over the course outline or lab sheet, go over the table of contents, and compare the two. This process helps you to develop a base understanding for how the material is organized. This is key to understanding the course contents.

Explore Your Assignments. You benefit from knowing what you're required to learn. Read the introduction of your assigned chapter and connect it with previous chapters or your prior knowledge of the topic. It is important to read the headings, subheadings, summary, and review questions. Remember that most science texts contain review questions; use them to guide you readings.

Look Over the pictures, tables, diagrams, photographs, and other images. Sometimes those elements are easier to understand than the words.



Check The Vocabulary

As For Vocabulary: learn basic scientific root, prefixes and suffixes; use glossary and indexes; use context clues contain in the paragraphs; and as last resort, use a dictionary or encyclopedia to understand and develop scientific concepts or vocabulary.

Analyze For Comprehension.

Remember that scientific texts usually follow the same writing patterns. Once you can recognize and analyze them, your comprehension will increase.

The Classification Pattern: used by scientists to group and sub-group various things, objects, or areas. For example, a scientist who wishes to discuss the structure of a plant may break his topic into various subheadings as roots, stems, leaves, or flowers. Recognizing these structural parts in order of importance or position is essential to good comprehension and note taking.

The Process Description Pattern: what the process is and how the process works. You need to understand what the description pattern is about. Is it about the process? or how the process works?

The Factual-Statement Pattern: facts are usually used in defining things, in comparing or contrasting things, and in citing examples or illustrations. In science, the word “fact” has a more exacting meaning than other areas.

The Problem-Solving Pattern: usually found in passages from science texts which describe or recount past scientific problems, or scientific discoveries made through experimentation. When you’re confronted with the problem solving pattern, use the following questions to help you understand and analyze the passages.

- What is the question or problem?
- How was the question answered?
- How do we know it was answered?

In addition, application of these questions can help you to separate the major and minor points.

Experiment-Instruction Pattern: to understand this pattern and to make sure that you follow the instructions exactly, use the following questions.

- What is the purpose of the experiment?
- What equipment is needed?
- What, in order, are the basic steps involved?

- What are the results?

Usually you must alternate between the reading matter and the experimental tool, so have the questions firmly in mind before attempting the experiment. In addition, use the questions when you have been given an assignment from your lab manual.

The Combination Pattern: not all science texts follow one pattern. Sometimes the writer may use a combination of patterns. For instance, a reading passage may begin with factual statement of definition, move to classifying the components or parts of the term being classified, and end up discussing a process. An awareness of all patterns is needed in this case to aid in distinguishing the main ideas and supporting details in the various pattern used.

Synthesize For Understanding

Taking Notes is important for several reasons:

1. it helps you keep your mind on what you are reading
2. paying close attention as you read will result in longer retention if you connect it to what you already know
3. good notes are helpful for review
4. if you mark correctly, not only will you connect the author's ideas with your own, but you will also have a record of your thoughts and reactions.



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TEXT: 5 STEP APPROACH FOR READING CHARTS AND GRAPHS

Visual data is meant to be “read,” just like text on a page. Images with data often contain crucial information that isn’t available elsewhere in a text.

Ask these questions when you encounter visual data in your reading:

1. What is the topic?
 - look for the title and reword it in your own words
2. What is being measured?

- look for labels to get an idea of what the graph is saying
- 3. **How is it being measured?**
 - look for units
 - ask yourself if the units make sense with what you know about the graph so far
- 4. **Is color-coding use and if so, how?**
 - color-coding is often used to add additional information to a graph without taking up extra space
 - check for a key that explains the color coding
- 5. **Can I summarize this information in my own words?**
 - look for a trend or a piece of information that you find interesting and mentally form a sentence about it
 - if you are struggling with this step, don't get frustrated or give up—start over from Step 1. Each time you investigate the graph you are building up your knowledge and understanding of the information.

Practice the 5 Steps on the Infographic below. What do you learn as a result of your evaluation of this image?

REDUCING FOOD WASTE

WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO TODAY



USDA's Economic Research Service estimates

31%

of the overall food supply at the retail and consumer level **went uneaten** in the U.S. in 2010



Scheduling recess before lunch can **reduce plate waste by**

AS MUCH AS 30%



Extending lunch periods from

20 TO 30

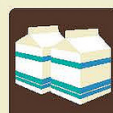
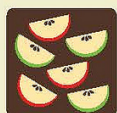
minutes reduced plate waste by nearly one-third



SMARTER LUNCHROOM STRATEGIES,

such as **how foods are named and where they are placed in the cafeteria,** can facilitate healthy choices and increase fruit and vegetable consumption by

UP TO 70%



SCHOOLS ACROSS THE COUNTRY ARE STEPPING UP TO THE CHALLENGE WITH INNOVATIVE NEW STRATEGIES, SUCH AS:

- Allowing students to keep a lunch or breakfast food item for consumption later in the school day
- Using techniques listed on the **Smarter Lunchrooms Self-Assessment Score Card** to help reduce food waste
- Setting up a table for kids to place items they are not going to consume (packaged or pre-portioned items)
- Letting kids self-serve
- Composting food waste for school gardens
- Collaborating with local farmers on composting or food-scrap projects
- Collecting excess wholesome food after mealtimes to donate to charitable organizations
- Sign up for the **U.S. Food Waste Challenge** to share your story on how you are reducing, recovering, or recycling food waste

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SELF CHECK: SPECIALIZED READING STRATEGIES

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TRY IT: SPECIALIZED READING STRATEGIES

To Do

No matter which of the sources you selected for your Summary and Analysis Essay, it will qualify as an “online text” by the very nature of how you’re accessing it.

- Review your selected text, both as it appears in this course and how it appears in its original publication location.
 - To access the original publication location, select the “Licenses and Attributions” link at the bottom of the page, and follow the web link to the original source.

Review the [“Reading the World Wide Web” guide published by Colorado State University](#).

- How does the textbook version of the text you selected differ from its original publication appearance?
- Which do you find easier to read? Why?
- What techniques or tips from the “Reading the World Wide Web” document help you navigate your selected reading?
- What techniques might you apply to other online reading you’ll do in the near future?

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OUTCOME: VOCABULARY

Evaluate vocabulary usage

Consider the following passage by author Luciano Passuello, discussing the virtue of language development.

Vocabulary Opens Your Mind

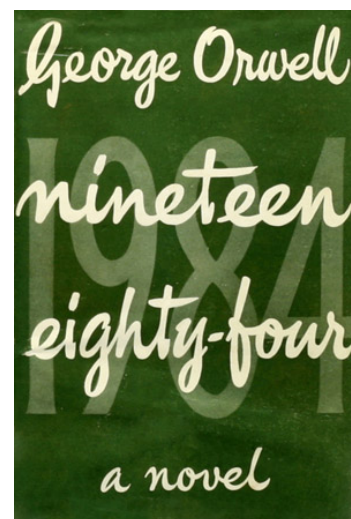
My favorite story that illustrates the importance of vocabulary is from George Orwell's dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

In a dark view of the future, Orwell pictured a world ruled by an authoritarian government that controls every citizen. In this world, no one escapes being watched by video cameras, which are present even inside people's homes. But when it comes to control, there was something even more effective than the ubiquitous cameras, and that was the official language: [Newspeak](#).

Newspeak is rigidly controlled by the government, and it's the only language whose vocabulary gets smaller every year. In Newspeak, words that convey subversive thoughts – like “freedom” – simply don't exist anymore. By systematically removing or distorting the meaning of words, the government takes away the tools to question its authority. Without words to exchange or perpetuate ideas, these ideas start to gradually disappear from people's minds. Without not even being aware of it, people became completely powerless and easily controlled.

Although this example may be a bit extreme, it serves to illustrate the point: **when you lack words, you shut down new insights and lines of reasoning.** People who possess a limited vocabulary have a much tougher time breaking out from old patterns of thought or questioning. By the same token, each new word you learn opens a new avenue of thought, empowering you to think or take action in ways you could never have before.

The basic tool for the manipulation of reality is the manipulation of words. If you can control the meaning of words, you can control the people who must use the words. – Philip K. Dick



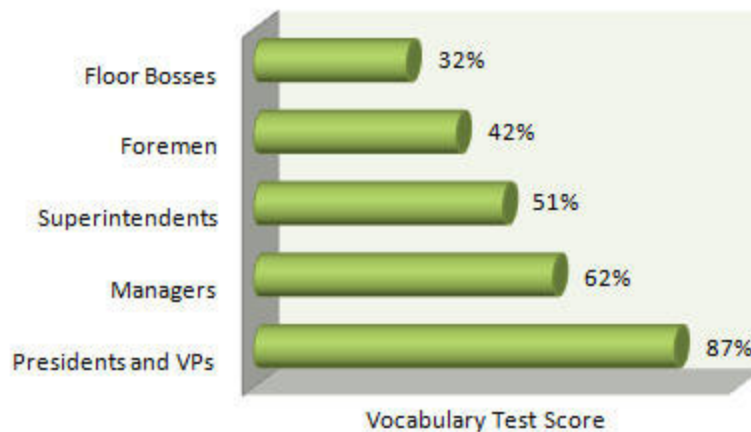
Vocabulary Gets You Results

The researcher [Johnson O'Connor](#), known for his studies about the impact of vocabulary on people's lives, has drawn many amazing conclusions from a [vast amount of tests and experiments](#), performed in more than 20 years of research.

A significant part of his research observed successful people in many walks of life, trying to correlate their success with factors such as gender, age, scholarship levels and many others, including vocabulary level. He tested people on the most diverse endeavors, such as students about to take their SATs, engineers working in their areas of expertise, executives in large corporations, and many others.

He always found the same results, no matter which area he looked at, and no matter how he analyzed the data: **a person's vocabulary level is the best single predictor of occupational success.**

This astounding discovery can be illustrated by the following study, made with managers in 39 large manufacturing companies. Below are the average results of an extensive vocabulary test, averaged and grouped by hierarchical level:



O'Connor took extreme care to statistically isolate variables that could distort the results. Scholarship level and age, for example, were taken into account to make sure it was indeed vocabulary, and not something related, that correlated with success. His studies also show that vocabulary usually comes **before** achievement, and not as a consequence of it. Even if we're not able to ultimately **prove** the correlation, it's hard to ignore O'Connor's findings.

What determines professional success? Especially for knowledge workers, I would risk saying **professional success depends entirely on thinking and communication skills**. If you analyze every activity you perform as a knowledge worker, you'll always get down to either thinking (as the activity that leads to the creation of something new) or communicating (as the activity that gets your ideas across). Well, if words are tools for both thought and communication, it's no surprise that those who master them have a much greater chance of success – not only professionally, but in their lives as a whole.

What You Will Learn To Do

- evaluate strategies for defining words from context
- evaluate additional tools for defining words (i.e. dictionaries and reference works)
- evaluate strategies for retaining and using new words in a working vocabulary

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Video: Using Context Clues
- Text: Strategies to Improve Your Vocabulary
- Text: The Relationship Between Reading and Vocabulary
- Self Check: Vocabulary
- Try It: Vocabulary

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VIDEO: USING CONTEXT CLUES

This video offers definition of what **context clues** are, when it comes to deepening your vocabulary, and examples of how to put them into practice.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/85QcLiXBm6A>

Given this understanding of what context clues are, the next video below specifies 4 types of context clues.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/hi-hg9lgo7k>

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TEXT: STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE YOUR VOCABULARY

There are several proven benefits in improving your vocabulary, but how should we go about learning new words in the most effective way? By using the following ten vocabulary-building strategies, you are guaranteed to develop a strong vocabulary and keep improving it every day.

1. Read Voraciously

It's undeniable that reading is the most effective way to get new vocabulary. When you read, you see **words being used in context** — and that's what makes it much more effective than, for example, merely memorizing word lists.

With context information surrounding each new word, there's a good chance you can guess its meaning just by understanding the overall text. Finding out the meaning of words in such a way is the natural way of learning language—and reading provides the best opportunity to get exposed to this natural way of learning.

If you're not able to infer the meaning of new words when reading, it's probably because there are too many unknown words in the text. In that case, try reading easier materials. The key to good reading is making it a pleasurable activity. Don't be afraid of coming across unknown words, but make sure the text is appropriate for your reading level.

2. Make Friends with the Dictionary

A dictionary is the first indispensable resource to improve your vocabulary. It's only by looking up a word in a dictionary that you will learn its precise meaning, spelling, alternate definitions, and find additional useful information about it. A thesaurus is also a valuable resource for learning by finding connections between words, such as their synonyms and antonyms.

Consider adding a good dictionary and thesaurus to your bookshelf. Here are some recommendations:

- [Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary](#)

- [The New Oxford American Dictionary](#)
- [The Oxford American Writer's Thesaurus](#)

For online dictionaries, there are many free options with great extra features. Even if you have a good dictionary in print already, you can't miss having a good online dictionary at your disposal:

- [OneLook](#): has a reverse lookup function (get the word from its definition) and works as a “meta-dictionary,” showing you definitions from other major online dictionaries
- [Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary](#): a well-established and well-regarded name in the realm of dictionaries
- [Ninjawords](#): searches the free dictionary [Wiktionary](#). What makes this site interesting is that you can look up multiple words simultaneously. Moreover, the results pages can be bookmarked – making them good personal reference pages
- [Thinkmap Visual Thesaurus](#): if you're a fan of [mind mapping](#), you will certainly enjoy viewing related words represented in a visual map format
- [Answers.com](#), [Dictionary.com](#), [The Free Dictionary](#) and many others: all of them are good resources – try each one at least once to help you make up your mind.

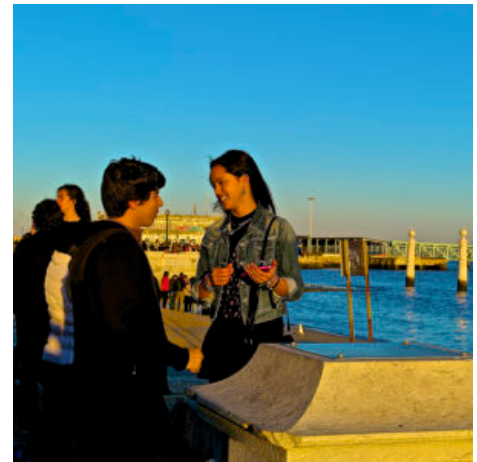
3. Use It or Lose It

Don't settle after you learn a new word by reading it or looking it up in the dictionary: these are good starts, but it's by **using the new words** that you truly commit them to your long-term memory.

Be creative and try to use your newly learned words in as many ways as possible:

- Write them down
- Say them aloud
- Create sentences with them, mentally or in writing
- Try to use them in a conversation
- Discuss them with friends

It's also important to be aware of your own language style: every time you catch yourself saying common or nonspecific words such as “nice,” try coming up with richer and more precise expressions instead.



4. Learn One New Word a Day

If you learn just one new word every day, you'll soon notice they add up pretty quickly.

Many websites provide free word-of-the-day services. Here are some to try:

- [Merriam-Webster's Online Word of the Day](#): this is the website that delivers the most useful words of all. It's also the most feature-rich: it provides audio explanation, pronunciation, and word history.
- [WordSmart Wordcast](#): provides difficulty level, comprehensive details, and audio pronunciation for the word.
- [Dictionary Word of the Day](#): another fine service, perhaps not as complete as Merriam-Webster's or WordSmart, but still worth checking out.

5. Understand the True Meaning of Words

By deeply understanding words, you can make your vocabulary grow exponentially. Instead of just memorizing words, try to really understand them by looking at their [etymology](#), [word roots](#), [prefixes](#), and [suffixes](#). At least half of English words are derived from [Greek and Latin roots](#), so enormous benefits come from being familiar with them.

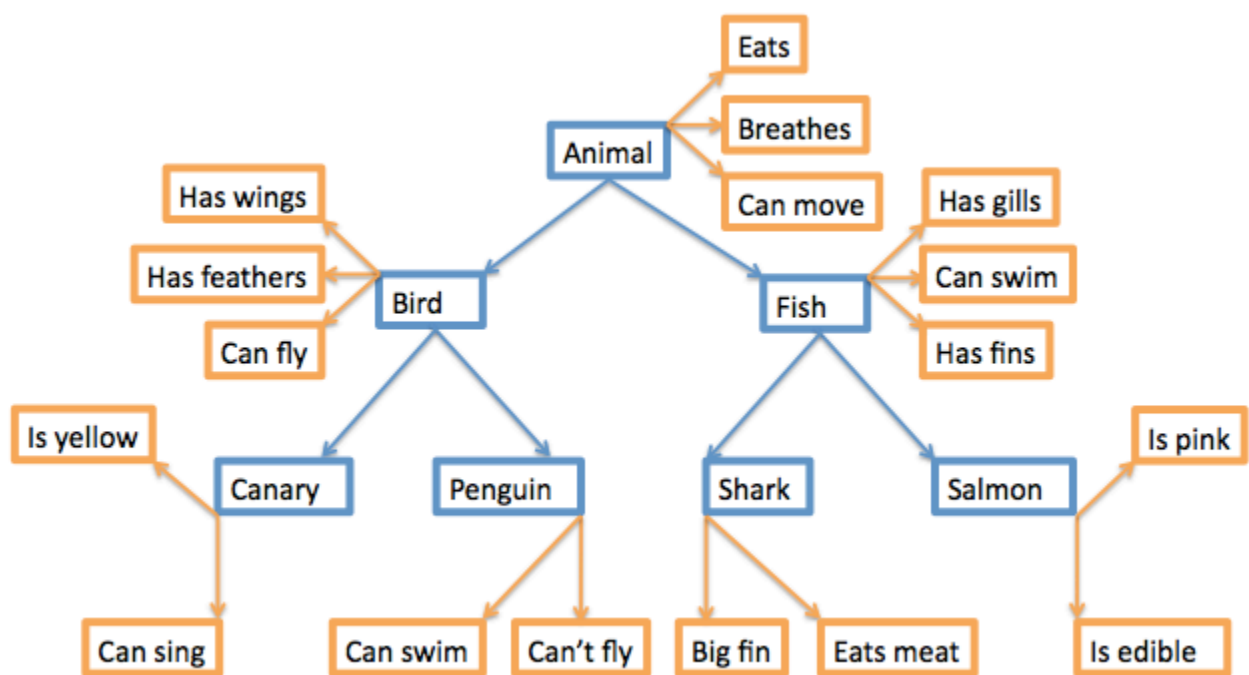
Just to pick an example, when you understand that the prefix “ortho” means *straight* or *right*, you start to find connections between seemingly unrelated words, such as *orthodontist* (a specialist who straightens teeth) and *orthography* (the correct, or straight way of writing).

Understanding the logic behind words always pays off in terms of learning and recalling. Consider the examples: “breakfast” meaning “interrupt the night’s fast,” or “rainbow” meaning “bow or arc caused by rain.” While these meanings may be trivial to native English speakers, having such insights about words, foreign or otherwise, never fails to deepen your connection to them.

6. Maintain a Personal Lexicon

By keeping a personalized list of learned words, you’ll have a handy reference you can use to review these words later. It’s very likely you’ll want to go back and refresh your memory on recent words, so keeping them in your own list is much more efficient than going back to the dictionary every time.

Even if you never refer back to your lexicon again, writing words down at least once will greatly enhance your ability to commit them to your permanent memory. Another excellent learning aid is to write an original sentence containing the word — and using your lexicon to do that is a great way of enforcing this habit. You can also add many other details as you see fit, such as the date you first came across the word or maybe a sequential number to help you reach some word quota you define.



There are many ways you can keep your personal word list; each has its own advantages and disadvantages, so make sure to pick the format that works best for you. You may prefer to keep it as a simple text file in the computer, or in a regular paper notebook, or maybe as flash cards in a shoe box.

One option is a computer spreadsheet, for its handy features such as searching, sorting, and filtering.

7. Follow a Process

To make vocabulary improvement a permanent habit in your everyday life, you should make it as habitual, automatic, and tightly integrated in your daily workflow as possible—otherwise you won’t do it when your days get too busy.

In that regard, one particularly useful concept is the one of maintaining a “Word Inbox.” By having a predefined place you use to capture the words you come across, you can process them much more efficiently.

Your process can be as simple as you wish—the key is to define it beforehand and then follow it. By knowing exactly how and how often to process your inbox, you stay on top of your vocabulary improvement process, even when there are other pressing matters crying out for your attention.

8. Play and Have Fun

Playing games and engaging in group activities are useful in any kind of learning, but particularly effective for language-related learning. Gather your family and friends and play word games together. Some interesting options are Quiddler, as well as the classics Scrabble and Boggle.

If you don’t want to spend money on boxed games, it’s easy to come up with your own word activities. You may, for example, try your own variation of “Word Evening”: at a specific day of each week, a different person brings a new word to the meal. The person reads the word, defines it, and the others must come up with a sentence using the word.

If you don’t have time or don’t want to engage in group activities, there are numerous options of word games in the Internet. You can either play them when you’re bored, or integrate them in your daily routine, such as playing a quick game after lunch, for example. Consider the following recommendations:

- [Merriam Webster’s Daily Word Game](#)
- [Merriam Webster’s Daily Crossword](#)
- [Word Games on Yahoo! Games](#)

9. Leverage Every Resource You Can

The Internet is a gold mine of resources for vocabulary building. Here are a few to get you started, though many more exist:

There are plenty of [vocabulary applications](#) you can try. There are many [vocabulary-related books](#) you can explore. There is a wealth of free literature on sites such as [Project Gutenberg](#). If you use the [Firefox](#) browser, there are many ways to integrate dictionary lookup functions, such as the plug-ins [Answers.com](#) and [DictionarySearch](#). You can find specialized vocabulary lists, such as these [feeling words](#) or [descriptive words](#). You can even learn [some classy, Shakespearian insults](#)!

The point is that you’re only limited by your willingness to learn: let curiosity be your guide and you will never run out of resources to learn from.

10. Diversify

Do something different from your daily routine: hunting, fishing, or blogging—any activity that is not a part of your normal life can become a great way to learn new words, as every niche has its own jargon and unique ways of communicating. Read different books and magazines than the ones you’re used to. Watch foreign-language movies. Take up new hobbies, hang out with different people.



By doing things out of the ordinary you will not only improve your vocabulary but also make your life much more interesting.

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TEXT: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN READING AND VOCABULARY

The following article by Alice Sullivan examines how childhood reading habits affect us later in life. Don't despair—even if we didn't read a lot as teenagers, we can still develop the habit (and the vocabulary) as adults. Note that her study focused on readers in England, though the trend is likely universal.

Your Vocabulary Aged 40 Depends on How Much You Read as a Teenager

Reading for pleasure as a child has **been powerfully linked** in research to the development of vocabulary and maths skills up to the age of 16. But does reading still have a part to play in the breadth of our adult vocabulary? Does it matter what kind of books you read, or is it just the amount of reading that counts?

Our study of a representative sample of more than **9,400 British people born in 1970 looked** at how vocabularies developed between the ages of 16 and 42. The test involved asking people to pair words from one list with words of a similar meaning from another list. For example, they were asked to find other words meaning “hirsute,” “grotesque,” or “cerebral.”

The good news is that learning doesn’t stop at the end of the school years – whether they read regularly or not. In fact, our study members demonstrated large gains in vocabulary between the ages of 16 and 42. At age 16, their average vocabulary test score was 55%. By age 42, study members scored an average of 63% on the same test.

Another piece of good news is that reports of the death of reading seem to have been exaggerated. More than a quarter, or 26%, of respondents said that they read books in their spare time on a daily basis, with a further 33% saying that they read for pleasure at least once a month. This left a minority of 41% who said that they read in their leisure time only every few months or less often.



University Influences Reading Choices

People varied widely in the types of books they liked to read – and this was linked to their level of educational attainment. We were struck by the differences in literary tastes between graduates of the elite Russell Group of UK universities and other universities. When asked which kinds of books they usually liked to read, 43% of graduates of Russell Group universities included classic fiction such as *Jane Eyre* or *Bleak House*, compared to 29% of graduates of other universities and 11% of people with no qualifications.

Contemporary literary fiction by authors such as Angela Carter or Paul Auster was even more of a select preserve. Some 48% of Russell Group graduates, 30% of other graduates and 5% of people with no qualifications said they usually liked to read this kind of fiction. Crime fiction on the other hand was the most popular reading genre, enjoyed by 43% of all respondents. It was the most popular genre across our study – 36% of people with no qualification and 55% of people with Russell Group degrees said they read crime fiction.

How Much and What You Read

So who increased their vocabularies the most between the ages of 16 and 42? Our statistical analysis took account of differences in people’s socio-economic backgrounds and in their vocabulary test scores at the ages of five, ten and 16. We found that reading for pleasure in both childhood and adulthood made a difference to rates of vocabulary growth between adolescence and middle-age.

Reading for pleasure as a child appeared to exert a long-term positive influence of vocabulary development up to the age of 42. In addition, those who continued to read for pleasure frequently at the age of 42 experienced larger vocabulary gains between adolescence and mid-life than those who did not read.

It seems that it isn't just how much you read, but also what you read that makes a difference. People in their 40s who now read high-brow fiction (such as classic fiction and contemporary literary fiction) made the greatest vocabulary gains.

Lifelong Rewards

Our research suggests that encouraging a love of reading has an important role to play in promoting learning both in childhood and in adult life. The benefits of reading do not stop in childhood, but a love of reading gained in childhood can yield lifelong rewards.

Young people today have many competing demands on their time, but new technologies should make it easier than ever to share books and information about what to read. It is vital that schools promote reading for pleasure, so it is worrying that many schools today do not have school libraries. The [threat to public libraries](#) is also a potential threat to life-long learning.

Most importantly, we need to consider how to foster a love of reading in children who come from homes with few books, as we know that [a lack of books in the home](#) is one of the most powerful predictors of educational failure. A final message from our research is that not all reading is equally beneficial to learning, and the greatest gains come from more intellectually challenging fiction.



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SELF CHECK: VOCABULARY

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TRY IT: VOCABULARY

To Do

From your selected reading, identify at least 3 words which seem vital to an accurate understanding of the text. These might be words that are unfamiliar to you, or words which are used in a unique, special way in the text.

Use context clues, word parts, and dictionaries as needed to help you come to a working definition of the terms as they are used in this reading selection.

Write a paraphrase of a definition for each of the 3 words. Consider using these paraphrased definitions in the Summary and Analysis Essay, to help you show the importance of these terms in the text.

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OUTCOME: THESIS

Evaluate thesis ideas of texts

Being able to identify the purpose and thesis of a text, while you're reading it, takes practice. This section will offer you that practice.

Questioning the text you're reading is a good place to start. When trying to isolate the thesis, or main idea, of your reading material, consider these questions:

- What is the primary subject of this text?
- Is the author trying to inform me, or persuade me?
- What does the author think I need to know about this subject?
- Why does the author think I need to know about this subject?

Sometimes the answer to these questions will be very clearly stated in the text itself. Sometimes it is less obvious, and in those cases, the techniques on the following pages will be useful.



Once the thesis idea is identified, your role as a reader is to evaluate how effective that thesis is in the text. Does this thesis, and the text as a whole, fulfill its purpose? Are you, the reader, changed by reading the text in the way that was intended by the author?

What You Will Learn To Do

- evaluate explicit thesis statements in texts
- evaluate implicit thesis statements in texts
- evaluate strategies for using thesis statements to predict content of texts

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Video: Locating and Evaluating Thesis Statements
- Text: The Organizational Statement
- Self Check: Thesis
- Try It: Thesis

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VIDEO: LOCATING AND EVALUATING THESIS STATEMENTS

The following video offers a definition of thesis statements, and guidance for finding thesis statements as you read.

Pay attention to the difference between **explicit thesis statements** and **implicit (or implied) thesis statements**.

(This video was made for a specific class, so it will make references to assignments that won't apply to you. You can also stop watching at 6:00, since the video then proceeds to writing thesis statements, which is not our focus at the moment.)

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/8a0T_ySxda8

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TEXT: THE ORGANIZATIONAL STATEMENT

Sometimes, an organization statement will be used in conjunction with a thesis. An organizational statement is a map that tells readers what they should expect to read in an essay. It introduces the two or three main pieces of evidence that the author will use to support the essay's position. While not required in a thesis, organizational statements can make for stronger thesis statements.

An organizational statement can take the form of a separate sentence or can be attached to a thesis in a single sentence, as seen in the examples below. The organizational elements appear in bold text:

Movies produced in the mid-1950s used obsessive behavior to depict teenage romance as something dangerous that should be avoided. Obsessive behavior was viewed as **rebellious, uncontrollable, and harmful**, both to the teenagers and to the people who loved them.

Since obsessive behavior was viewed as **rebellious, uncontrollable, and dangerous**, movies produced in the mid-1950s used it to depict teenage romance as something that should be avoided for the sake of young adults and the people who loved them.

Notice how the 2nd version above strengthens the original thesis, by appearing as part of the same sentence.

Evidence in the body of an essay should be presented in the same order that it appears in an organizational statement. In the example above, it means the paper would have to discuss rebelliousness, an uncontrollable nature, and danger (as they relate to obsessive teenage romance in film) *in that order*.

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SELF CHECK: THESIS

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TRY IT: THESIS

To Do

Review the following video to help you identify the thesis statement from your selected reading.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/di1cQgc1akg>

Write a paraphrase of your reading selection's thesis—you will need this for your Summary and Analysis Essay.

Additionally, make notes to yourself regarding the effectiveness of this reading's thesis and purpose. How well do you feel this essay met its stated objective? Why do you feel this way? (This will serve as brainstorming for the analysis component of your Summary and Analysis Essay.)

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OUTCOME: SUPPORTING CLAIMS

Evaluate supporting claims of texts

Once a thesis statement is established, you as a reader will know what a text is claiming. That claim defines what the author wants you to do, think, or believe by the time you finish reading his or her work. An author's argument is only as valuable as its claim.

If the text's claim is irrelevant to anything readers care about, few will want to read the argument supporting it. If the author's claim seems obvious, readers will wonder why someone bothered to argue for it. If a claim cannot be settled by appealing to evidence, some readers may be interested in that opinion, but few will have reason to engage the argument.

Effective claims have three qualities:

1. They address important, relevant problems. Readers will think that the claim might help them address a problem they care about.
2. They are contestable. That is, readers will wonder whether the claim is true.
3. They are debatable. That is, readers will think that the claim can be proved or disproved.

A significant claim answers a question that readers care about; it leads readers to think not, *That's obvious* or *I already knew that*, but *Oh, you'll have to prove that*; and it raises the kinds of issues that can be settled by factual evidence.



What You Will Learn To Do

- evaluate various forms of support that can be used in a text to validate a thesis
- evaluate use of personal forms of support (narrative, anecdote)
- evaluate use of research-based forms of support (facts, statistics, outside authority)
- evaluate relationship between the rhetorical context of a text, and the effectiveness of the types of support used

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Text: Types of Support
- Text: Supporting Claims
- Self Check: Supporting Claims
- Try It: Supporting Claims

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TEXT: TYPES OF SUPPORT

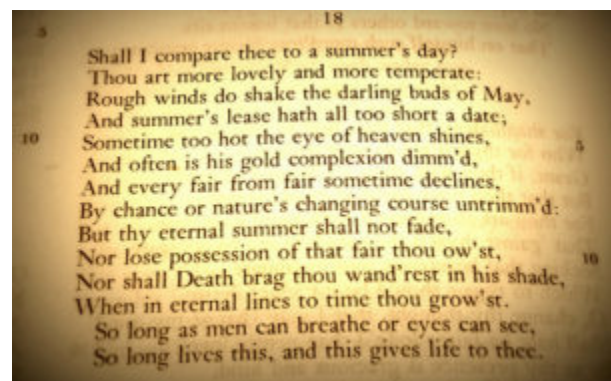
You'll find authors use a variety of kinds of support as they develop their thoughts in a text. Here are a few categories of resources you might encounter in the body of your reading:

Exhibits

Exhibits are examples or excerpts from the object of study. Humanities (like English or religious studies) makes use of exhibits in the form of primary texts. For example, an article about Shakespeare's sonnets would quote small sections of the poems. A text about Buddhism might quote English translations of the sutras (and perhaps the Sanskrit originals).

Exhibits can also include visual reproductions. A paper on Michelangelo might attach images of the paintings in the Sistine Chapel. A book about the Great Depression might use reproductions of photographs by the WPA. A study of the Jurassic period might provide photographs of dinosaur bones and excavation sites.

Exhibits allow readers to see the part of the text or the image that supports a claim. By themselves, they are not evidence. Only when the author explains how the image or text supports a reason does it become **evidence**.



Shakespeare's Sonnet 18, which might serve as an exhibit in a text

Expert Testimony

Expert testimony includes quotations from scholars and summaries of previous research or scholarship. Expert testimony can reinforce an argument when readers will resist a claim; however, a quotation by an expert with similar claims is rarely sufficient as evidence on its own. Readers should expect an author to explain how that expert supports his or her argument. They will also want an author to reinforce the claim with evidence from other sources.

Before quoting an expert, an author must determine whether he or she counts as an authority. Just because someone has published an academic paper or book does not mean that, as a reader, you will believe that his theories are valid. In the sciences and social sciences, readers should expect expert testimony to be the most current research. Quoting a paper written even ten years ago may not be convincing expert testimony.

In the sciences, readers rarely expect direct quotations of secondary sources as evidence. Instead, science writers use summaries of previous research and the findings, or data, to support their own claims.



Interviews and Surveys

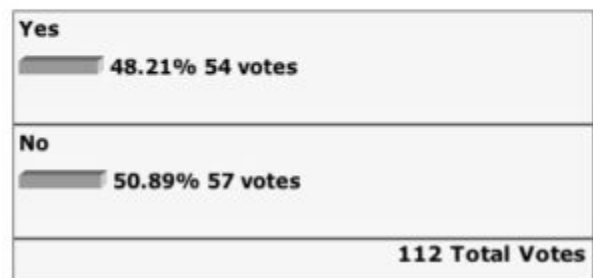
Interviews and surveys are often used as evidence in the social sciences. For example, a psychology paper might interview teachers and parents about their children's gender identities and then observe the their children behave when playing. Quotations and detailed descriptions of an author's observations count as evidence here.

Surveys are often mistaken for "facts" or used as "data." While they look like statistics or "hard numbers," surveys are created through interviews. Therefore, when seeing a survey as evidence, whether it is one an author created or one found through research, it is important for readers to question the method of the survey. Who were the participants? How were they selected? How were the questions phrased? Surveys are valid evidence in many disciplines, but they require explanation before the reader should trust the numbers.

In some texts, stories about the author's personal experience may be appropriate. Personal anecdotes may be appropriate in some sociology or psychology papers, but only when accompanied by additional evidence. In some humanities writings, personal anecdotes are acceptable as a stylistic choice in the conclusion or introduction, but not as evidence in the body paragraphs.

Results

Is it the responsibility of school districts to educate parents about gang activity online?



Results from a Dallas Morning News article survey relating to students and digital social networking.

Readers should not be persuaded by personal anecdotes if authors rely on them to support all claims, or they're used to prove a controversial claim. Readers should ask whether an author's personal experience represents a common occurrence, or one that just happened to that one person.

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TEXT: SUPPORTING CLAIMS

Kinds of Support Authors Use

Writers are generally most successful with their audiences when they can skillfully and appropriately balance the three core types of appeals. These appeals are referred to by their Greek names: **logos** (the appeal to logic), **pathos** (the appeal to emotion), and **ethos** (the appeal to authority).



Logical Appeals

Authors using logic to support their claims will include a combination of different types of evidence. These include the following:

- established facts
- case studies
- statistics
- experiments
- analogies and logical reasoning
- citation of recognized experts on the issue

Authoritative Appeals

Authors using authority to support their claims can also draw from a variety of techniques. These include the following:

- personal anecdotes
- illustration of deep knowledge on the issue
- citation of recognized experts on the issue
- testimony of those involved first-hand on the issue

Emotional Appeals

Authors using emotion to support their claims again have a deep well of options to do so. These include the following:

- personal anecdotes
- narratives
- impact studies
- testimony of those involved first-hand on the issue

As you can see, there is some overlap on these lists. One technique might work on two or more different levels.

Most texts rely on one of the three as the primary method of support, but may also draw upon one or two others at the same time.

Using the STAR method to Assess Appeals to Logic

Mapping or diagramming arguments you read in a text may help you judge whether an appeal is adequately supported. Applying the STAR Criteria—Sufficiency, Typicality, Accuracy, and Relevance—is one such technique for assessing whether an argument has sufficient depth and clarity.

Measure	Question	Examples & Notes
Sufficiency	Is there <i>enough</i> evidence cited to support the conclusion?	Generally, only “strongly” and not “weakly” supported conclusions should be accepted. The more controversial a claim is, the more evidence authors should provide before expecting an audience to accept it. If the evidence is not sufficient, the author may need to modify or qualify the claim, by stating that something is true ‘sometimes’ rather than ‘always’.
Typicality	Is the cited evidence typical or representative?	If an author makes a claim about a whole group but the evidence is based on a small or biased sample of that group, the evidence is not “typical.” Similar problems stem from relying just on personal experiences (anecdotal evidence) and from “cherry picking” data by citing only the parts that support a conclusion while ignoring parts that might challenge it.
Accuracy	Is the cited evidence up to date and accurate?	Authors using polls, studies and statistics must ask whether the data were produced in a biased way and also ask whether the sample was large and representative of its target population so that results were outside the “margin of error.” (Margin of error: If a sample is too small or not well chosen, results may be meaningless because they may represent random variation.)
Relevance	Is the cited evidence directly relevant to the claim(s) it is being used to support?	An author may supply lots of evidence, but the evidence may support something different from what the person is actually claiming. If the evidence is not relevant to the claim, the author may need to modify or qualify the claim—or even to acknowledge that the claim is indefensible.

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SELF CHECK: SUPPORTING CLAIMS

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TRY IT: SUPPORTING CLAIMS

To Do

- Locate all of the supporting claims used in your selected text.
- Identify what kind of supporting claim each is. As a reminder, the categories defined earlier in this section include
 - exhibits (or primary sources)
 - expert testimony
 - interviews and surveys
 - anecdotes
- Identify the kind of appeal each supporting claim is meant to address. As a reminder, the categories of appeals defined earlier in this section include
 - logical appeals
 - authoritative appeals
 - emotional appeals
- Note how effective you think each type of support used is, relating back to the source's thesis. Which do you find most convincing? Why? Which do you find least convincing? Why?

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OUTCOME: LOGIC AND STRUCTURE

Evaluate use of logic and structure in texts

In previous writing classes you've taken, you've likely encountered certain patterns to help you construct essays, like the 5-paragraph essay or the 3-point thesis statement. You may have also noticed that very few things you read, either for class or in the "real world," follow these formulas themselves. Those patterns serve as good scaffolds for learning to write, but more accomplished (and more widely-read) authors tend to move beyond these simple patterns.

That said, they still use *some* kind of pattern to help them write, and to help their audiences anticipate what will come next. As an active reader, you will need to first identify these patterns, and then evaluate how well these patterns fit with the purpose of the text. You have the power to critique how well-suited, or not, the author's pattern matches with his purpose.

If **focus** is the foundation for constructing a piece of writing, **organization** is the the structural framework for that writing. Organization is important to effective writing because it provides readers with a framework to help them fulfill their expectations for the text. A well-organized piece of writing supports readers by making it easy for them to follow, while a poorly organized piece leads readers through a maze of confusion and confounded or unmet expectations.

Organization, simply put, is the logical progression and completeness of ideas in a text.



In this section, we'll look at logic as a science of reasoning that aids writers in being creative in the generation of ideas. What follows is a discussion of some of the uses of logic that writers employ in creating persuasive or argumentative essays.

A sound, well-reasoned, and compelling text is one of the most effective and persuasive communicative acts that human beings ever create.

What You Will Learn to Do

- evaluate basic features of rhetorical modes (narrative, comparison, definition, etc.)
- evaluate logical structures in argument
- evaluate the impact of logical fallacies

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Text: Rhetorical Modes
- Text: Inductive and Deductive Reasoning
- Text: Diagramming and Evaluating Arguments
- Text: Logical Fallacies
- Text: Evaluating Appeals to Ethos, Logos, and Pathos
- Self Check: Logic and Structure
- Try It: Logic and Structure

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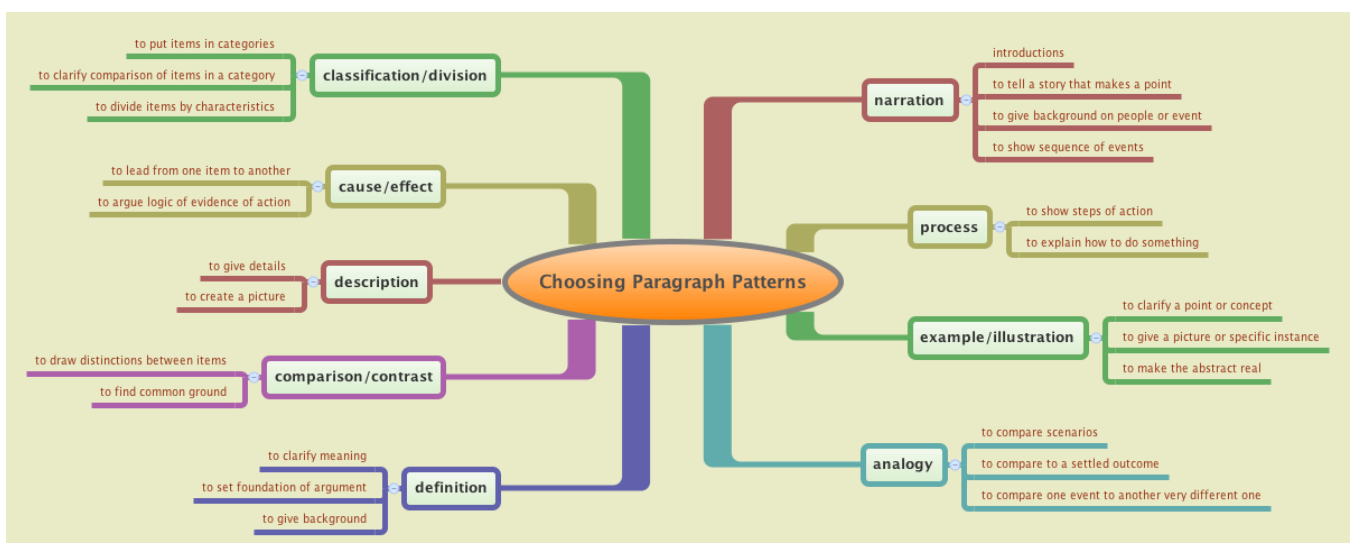
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- The Imperative of Logic in Composition and Writing. **Authored by:** Samuel Asuquo Ekanem and Eton Dien Simon. **Provided by:** Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies. **Located at:** <http://www.mcser.org/journal/index.php/ajis/article/view/3354/3306>. **License:** [CC BY: Attribution](#)
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TEXT: RHETORICAL MODES

We've been focusing on broad categories of reading materials so far: literature, journalism, textbooks, and academic writing. Since most of the reading (and writing!) you'll do throughout your college career falls into the "academic writing" category, this is a good point to slow down and examine the building blocks of academic writing more closely.

Rhetoric is the study of writing, and the basic types of academic writing are referred to as **rhetorical modes**.



As you can see in the chart above, different styles of non-fiction writing serve different purposes. It's quite possible that a single text—or even a single paragraph—will contain multiple rhetorical modes, each used to serve a distinct purpose in support of the article's thesis.

Consider nine of the most common types of rhetorical modes. What might lead an author to select one type of writing over another? How might each be used differently to serve the purpose of a text?

1. Narration

The purpose of **narration** is to tell a story or relate an event. Narration is an especially useful tool for sequencing or putting details and information into some kind of logical order, usually chronological.

Literature uses narration heavily, but it also can be useful in non-fiction, academic writing for strong impact.

2. Description

The purpose of description is to recreate, invent, or visually present a person, place, event, or action so that the reader can picture that which is being described. It is heavily based on **sensory details**: what we experience through our five senses.

3. Example

It's common to see examples used in all kinds of situations—an idea can be considered too general or abstract until we see it in action. An **exemplification essay** extends this idea even further: it carries one or more examples into great detail, in order to show the details of a complex problem in a way that's easy for readers to understand.

4. Definition

In the vocabulary section we talked about word definitions in depth. A **definition essay** takes the concept of “definition” more broadly, moving beyond a dictionary definition to deeply examine a word or concept as we actually use and understand it.

5. Process Analysis

Analyzing a process can also be thought of as “how-to” instruction. Technical writing includes a lot of process analysis, for instance. Academic writing can incorporate process analysis to show how an existing problem came to be, or how it might be solved, by following a clear series of steps.

6. Division/Classification

Classification takes one large concept, and divides it into individual pieces. A nice result from this type of writing is that it helps the reader to understand a complex topic by focusing on its smaller parts. This is particularly useful when an author has a unique way of dividing up the concepts, to provide new insight into the ways it might be viewed.

7. Comparison/Contrast

Comparison focuses on **similarities** between things, and contrast focuses on their **differences**. We innately make comparisons all the time, and they appear in many kinds of writings. The goal of comparison and contrast in academic essays is generally to show that one item is superior to another, based on a set of evaluations included as part of the writing.

8. Cause/Effect

If narration offers a sequence of events, cause/effect essays offer an explanation about why that sequence matters. Cause/effect writing is particularly powerful when the author can provide a cause/effect relationship that the reader wasn't expecting, and as a result see the situation in a new light.

9. Problem/Solution

This type of academic writing has two equally important tasks: clearly identifying a problem, and then providing a logical, practical solution for that problem. Establishing that a particular situation IS a problem can sometimes be a challenge—many readers might assume that a given situation is “just the way it is,” for instance.

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TEXT: INDUCTIVE AND DEDUCTIVE REASONING

Two Ways of Understanding

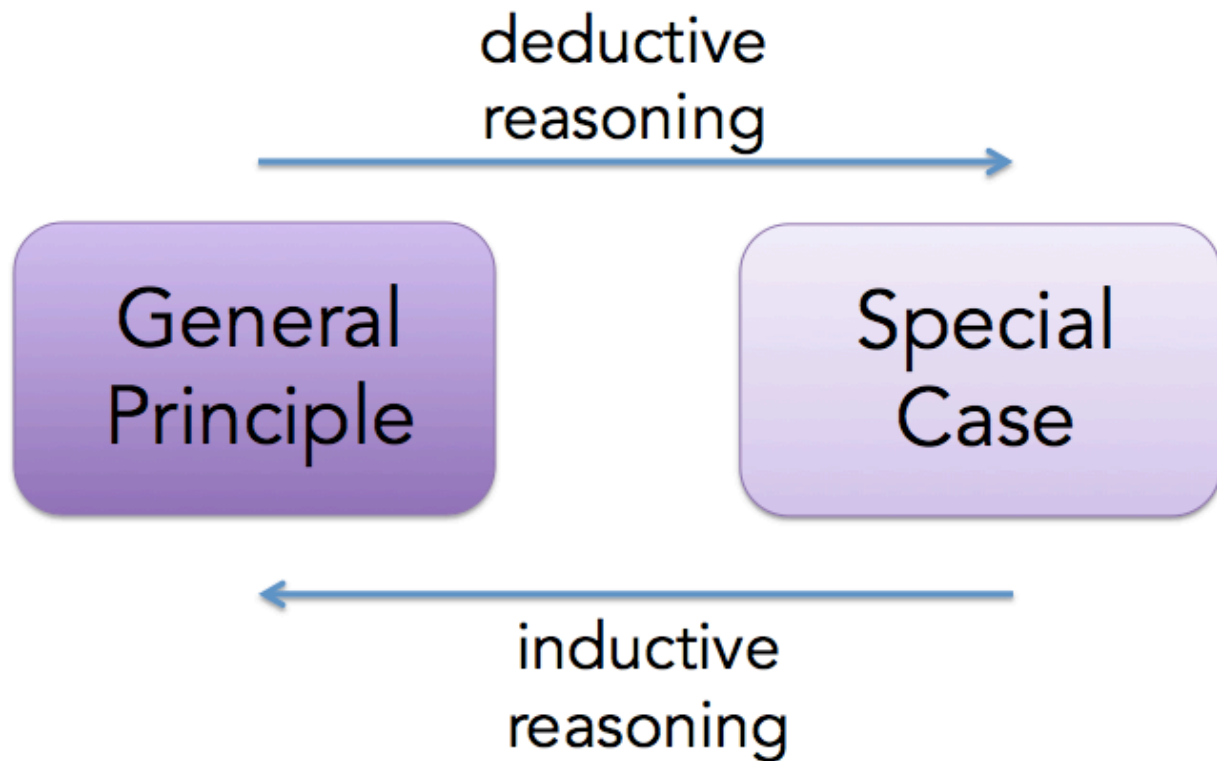
We have two basic approaches for how we come to believe something is true.

The first way is that we are exposed to several different examples of a situation, and from those examples, we conclude a general truth. For instance, you visit your local grocery store daily to pick up necessary items. You notice that on Friday, two weeks ago, all the clerks in the store were wearing football jerseys. Again, last Friday, the clerks wore their football jerseys. Today, also a Friday, they're wearing them again. From just these observations, you can conclude that on **all** Fridays, these supermarket employees will wear football jerseys to support their local team.

This type of pattern recognition, leading to a conclusion, is known as **inductive reasoning**.

Knowledge can also move the opposite direction. Say that you read in the news about a tradition in a local grocery store, where employees wore football jerseys on Fridays to support the home team. This time, you're starting from the overall rule, and you would expect individual evidence to support this rule. Each time you visited the store on a Friday, you would expect the employees to wear jerseys.

Such a case, of starting with the overall statement and then identifying examples that support it, is known as **deductive reasoning**.



The Power of Inductive Reasoning

You have been employing **inductive reasoning** for a very long time. Inductive reasoning is based on your ability to recognize meaningful patterns and connections. By taking into account both examples and your understanding of how the world works, induction allows you to conclude that something is likely to be true. By using induction, you move from specific data to a generalization that tries to capture what the data “mean.”

Imagine that you ate a dish of strawberries and soon afterward your lips swelled. Now imagine that a few weeks later you ate strawberries and soon afterwards your lips again became swollen. The following month, you ate yet another dish of strawberries, and you had the same reaction as formerly. You are aware that swollen lips can be a sign of an allergy to strawberries. Using induction, you conclude that, more likely than not, you are allergic to strawberries.

Data: After I ate strawberries, my lips swelled (1st time).

Data: After I ate strawberries, my lips swelled (2nd time).

Data: After I ate strawberries, my lips swelled (3rd time).

Additional Information: Swollen lips after eating strawberries may be a sign of an allergy.

Conclusion: Likely I am allergic to strawberries.

Inductive reasoning can never lead to absolute certainty. Instead, induction allows you to say that, given the examples provided for support, the claim more likely than not is true. Because of the limitations of inductive reasoning, a conclusion will be more credible if multiple lines of reasoning are presented in its support.

The results of inductive thinking can be skewed if relevant data are overlooked. In the previous example, inductive reasoning was used to conclude that I am likely allergic to strawberries after suffering multiple instances of my lips swelling. Would I be as confident in my conclusion if I were eating strawberry shortcake on each of those occasions? Is it reasonable to assume that the allergic reaction might be due to another ingredient besides strawberries?

This example illustrates that inductive reasoning must be used with care. When evaluating an inductive argument, consider

- the amount of the data,
- the quality of the data,
- the existence of additional data,
- the relevance of necessary additional information, and
- the existence of additional possible explanations.

Inductive Reasoning Put to Work

A synopsis of the features, benefits, and drawbacks of inductive reasoning can be found in this video.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/wzEOwleZNnA>

The Power of Deductive Reasoning

Deductive reasoning is built on two statements whose logical relationship should lead to a third statement that is an unquestionably correct conclusion, as in the following example.

All raccoons are omnivores.
This animal is a raccoon.
This animal is an omnivore.

If the first statement is true (All raccoons are omnivores) and the second statement is true (This animal is a raccoon), then the conclusion (This animal is an omnivore) is unavoidable. If a group must have a certain quality, and an individual is a member of that group, then the individual must have that quality.

Going back to the example from the opening of this page, we could frame it this way:

Grocery store employees wear football jerseys on Fridays.
Today is Friday.
Grocery store employees will be wearing football jerseys today.

Unlike inductive reasoning, deductive reasoning allows for certainty as long as certain rules are followed.

Evaluating the Truth of a Premise

A formal argument may be set up so that, on its face, it looks logical. However, no matter how well-constructed the argument is, the additional information required must be true. Otherwise any inferences based on that additional information will be invalid.

Inductive reasoning can often be hidden inside a deductive argument. That is, a generalization reached through inductive reasoning can be turned around and used as a starting “truth” a deductive argument. For instance,

Most Labrador retrievers are friendly.
Kimber is a Labrador retriever.
Therefore, Kimber is friendly.

In this case we cannot know for certain that Kimber is a friendly Labrador retriever. The structure of the argument may look logical, but it is based on observations and generalizations rather than indisputable facts.

Methods to Evaluate the Truth of a Premise

One way to test the accuracy of a premise is to apply the same questions asked of inductive arguments. As a recap, you should consider

- the amount of the data,
- the quality of the data,
- the existence of additional data,
- the relevance of the additional data, and
- the existence of additional possible explanations.

Determine whether the starting claim is based upon a sample that is both representative and sufficiently large, and ask yourself whether all relevant factors have been taken into account in the analysis of data that leads to a generalization.

Another way to evaluate a premise is to determine whether its source is credible.

- Are the authors identified?
- What is their background?
- Was the claim something you found on an undocumented website?
- Did you find it in a popular publication or a scholarly one?
- How complete, how recent, and how relevant were the studies or statistics discussed in the source?

Overview and Recap

A synopsis of the features, benefits, and drawbacks of deductive reasoning can be found in this video.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/oBnKgxcdSyM>

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TEXT: DIAGRAMMING AND EVALUATING ARGUMENTS

Evaluate Unstated or Suppressed Premises As Well As Stated Ones

An **unstated** or **suppressed premise** is assumed rather than voiced outright, but is nevertheless needed for an argument to work. Consider this highly unscientific poll conducted by a TV news station. “Which do you believe



Senator Hillary Clinton is most out of touch with: illegal immigration, border security, or the American people?" The pollster is operating as if it is unquestionable that Clinton is out of touch with *something*. In other words, the question **presupposes** that she is "out of touch." However, this unstated premise is debatable once it is brought out into the open. Is she in fact out of touch at all?

A listener or reader who is not alert to such **unstated** or **suppressed premises** is, without realizing it, agreeing to debate on the communicator's terms—when those terms may be unfair. In fact, on more complex or serious issues it is often things people take for granted that may actually deserve the most critical scrutiny. For example, in the argument "This medication is labelled as totally natural, so it is safe for me to take it," the suppressed premise—that "natural" guarantees "safe"—is not trivial and can certainly be challenged.

Argument Diagramming

Besides recognizing the use of induction and deduction, you can use **diagramming** or **outlining** to develop an understanding of an argument's overall structure. Remember that an argument as defined here isn't a "quarrel," but rather a group of statements, some of which, the premises, are offered in support for another, the conclusion. So the first order of business in analyzing an argument is to recognize what the main claim is—the conclusion—and what other claims are being used to support it—the premises. This is much easier to do when the author is explicit about the steps in the argument, where premise and conclusion "indicator" terms appear in the text as signposts.

Words that introduce or signal an argument conclusion include *therefore, so, we may conclude/infer, thus, and consequently*. Words that introduce or signal argument premises include *it follows that, implies that, as a result, because* (non-causal meaning), *since, for the reason that, for, and*. (Note: **and** often signals the introduction of a further premise, as in "You should believe Z **because** reason 1 **and** reason 2.")

When you are diagramming or outlining an argument, if the "flow" of an argument from premises to conclusion isn't readily apparent, then remember to use the above indicator terms to help you decide which claim is the conclusion and which claims are the premises. Using the indicator terms is particularly helpful because a conclusion may be stated first, last, or anywhere in between. People do all three when they write or talk in real life, so we cannot tell whether a statement is a conclusion simply by where it is positioned in the argument.

The Purpose Behind Diagramming an Argument

Diagramming or mapping someone else's argument serves a double purpose. First, the process helps you clearly see just what the other person is saying. It helps you identify the logical structure of the argument, which is necessary if you are to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the argument in order to know whether or not to accept it. Second, you develop skills of analysis that you will need in order to organize and present arguments in support of a position that *you* may want to take on some question or issue.

Steps in Diagramming an Argument

Here are the basic moves that are required in order to create a clear diagram or outline of an argument.

1. Identify all the claims made by the author. Since a sentence can contain multiple claims, rewrite statements so that you have one claim per sentence. Adopt some sort of numbering or labeling system for the claims.
2. Eliminate "fluff." Ignore repetitions, assurances (assertions not backed by evidence or reasons), and information that is unrelated to the argument.
3. Identify which statements are premises and which statement is the main conclusion.

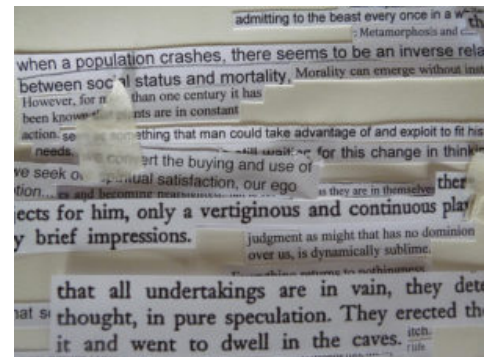
4. Recognize that there may be sub-conclusions in addition to a final or main conclusion. You may think of a sub-conclusion as the end point of a sub-argument nested inside the larger argument. Although the sub-conclusion is itself the conclusion of a nested argument, supported by premises, it also functions as a premise supporting the final or main conclusion.
5. Recognize that some premises are independent and others linked. If you were drawing or mapping the argument, you would be able to draw an arrow from an independent premise directly to the conclusion it supports. Linked premises, however, are multiple statements that must be combined to provide support for a conclusion. If you were drawing or mapping the argument, you would have to find some way to show that the linked premises as a group support the conclusion. You might use color coding, or underlining, or circling, or + signs—some way to connect the linked premises before drawing **one** arrow from the clustered premises to the conclusion they support.

Using the Argument's Paragraphing to Evaluate the Premises

An author must organize her material to guide the audience through her argument. One tool available to an author is the paragraph. The sentences clustered together in a paragraph should be tightly connected in terms of content. In the most common form of paragraph, the clustered sentences collectively develop an idea explicitly stated in a topic sentence. The paragraphs themselves should be placed in an order that reflects some overall plan so that the paragraphs reveal the steps or stages of the argument.

The premises may be said to be key steps or stages in the argument. A well-constructed argument therefore may use each premise as a topic sentence for a paragraph. Additionally, a premise may serve as the guiding idea for a group of paragraphs, each developing a subtopic. For example, the premise, reached by induction, that “College students overestimate the amount of binge drinking that is taking place” might introduce a cluster of three paragraphs, each showing that the overestimation varies by subgroup—with member of sororities, member of fraternities, and non-Greek populations arriving at different estimates.

Look to see whether the author has used paragraphing-by-premise to organize her argument and outline its structure for the audience. You should also ask yourself whether any paragraphs are missing. That is, as you consider what premises serve as the foundations of the argument, be alert for the suppressed ones, the premises that the author presupposes. These unacknowledged premises may be ones that the author hopes the audience will not notice or question. In your analysis call her on it by determining where a paragraph on that premise should have appeared in the argument.



The Similarity Between Conclusions and Thesis Statements

When we talk about a paper, we usually talk about the paper's main claim as being its thesis statement. But of course a paper that just makes a claim or states an opinion but offers no supporting reasons or arguments isn't much of a paper. We would be bothered by reading an editorial in which someone stated a strong opinion on some public issue yet did nothing to justify that opinion.

When an author supports a thesis with reasons, then the thesis statement can be described as the conclusion of an argument, with the supporting reasons being that argument's premises. The argument now has a structure that can be outlined or diagrammed.

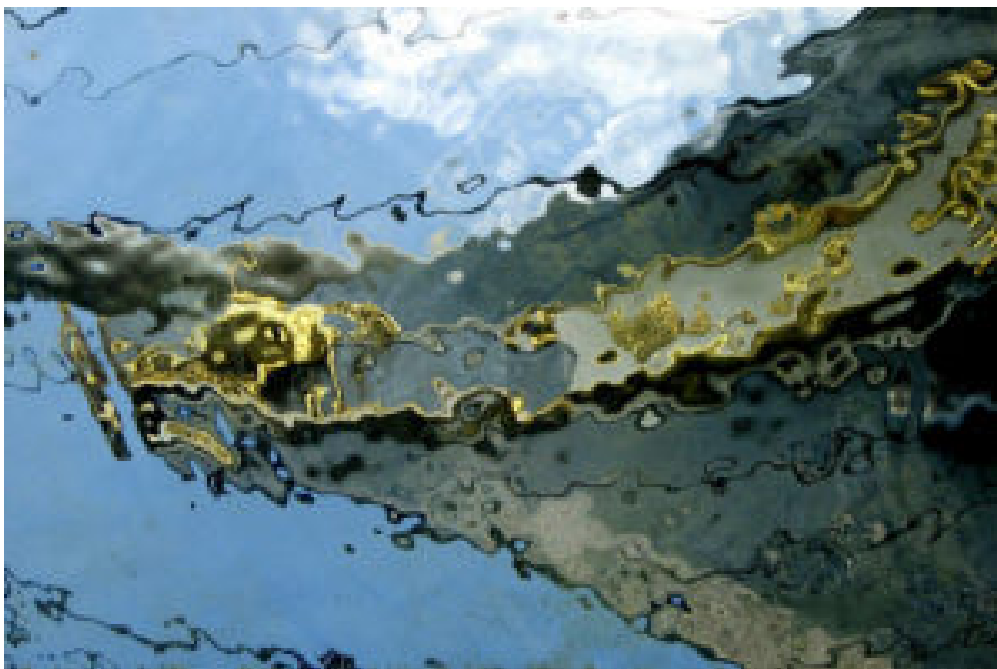
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TEXT: LOGICAL FALLACIES

Defining Fallacy

Fallacies are errors or tricks of reasoning. We call a fallacy an *error* of reasoning if it occurs accidentally; we call it a *trick* of reasoning if a speaker or writer uses it in order to deceive or manipulate his audience. Fallacies can be either formal or informal.

Whether a fallacy is an error or a trick, whether it is formal or informal, its use undercuts the validity and soundness of any argument. At the same time, fallacious reasoning can damage the credibility of the speaker/writer and improperly manipulate the emotions of the audience/reader.



Formal Fallacies

Most **formal fallacies** are errors of logic: the conclusion doesn't really "follow from" (is not supported by) the premises. Either the premises are untrue or the argument is invalid. Below is an example of an invalid deductive argument.

Premise: All black bears are omnivores.

Premise: All raccoons are omnivores.

Conclusion: All raccoons are black bears.

Bears are a subset of omnivores. Raccoons also are a subset of omnivores. But these two subsets do not overlap, and that fact makes the conclusion illogical. The argument is invalid—that is, the relationship between the premises doesn't support the conclusion.

Recognizing Formal Fallacies

“Raccoons are black bears” is instantaneously recognizable as fallacious and may seem too silly to be worth bothering about. However, that and other forms of poor logic play out on a daily basis, and they have real world consequences. Below is an example of a fallacious argument:

Premise: All Arabs are Muslims.

Premise: All Iranians are Muslims.

Conclusion: All Iranians are Arabs.

This argument fails on two levels. First, the premises are untrue because although many Arabs and Iranians are Muslim, not all are. Second, the two ethnic groups are sets that do not overlap; nevertheless, the two groups are confounded because they (largely) share one quality in common. One only has to look at comments on the web to realize that the confusion is widespread and that it influences attitudes and opinions about U.S. foreign policy.



Informal Fallacies

Informal fallacies take many forms and are widespread in everyday discourse. Very often they involve bringing irrelevant information into an argument or they are based on assumptions that, when examined, prove to be incorrect. Formal fallacies are created when the relationship between premises and conclusion does not hold up or when premises are unsound; informal fallacies are more dependent on misuse of language and of evidence.

It is easy to find fairly well-accepted lists of informal fallacies, but that does not mean that it is always easy to spot them. Some moves are always fallacious; others may be allowable given the context.

Using Ethos, Logos, and Pathos to Test Arguments for Fallacies

One way to go about evaluating an argument for fallacies is to return to the concept of the three fundamental appeals: **ethos**, **logos**, and **pathos**.

As a quick reminder,

- **Ethos** is an argument that appeals to ethics, authority, and/or credibility
- **Logos** is an argument that appeals to logic
- **Pathos** is an argument that appeals to emotion

Once you have refreshed your memory of the basics, you may begin to understand how ethos, logos, and pathos can be used appropriately to strengthen your argument or inappropriately to manipulate an audience through the use of fallacies. Classifying fallacies as fallacies of ethos, logos, or pathos will help you both to understand their nature and to recognize them when you encounter them. Please keep in mind, however, that some fallacies may fit into multiple categories.

Fallacies of ethos relate to credibility. These fallacies may unfairly build up the credibility of the author (or his allies) or unfairly attack the credibility of the author's opponent (or her allies). Some fallacies give an unfair advantage to the claims of the speaker or writer or an unfair disadvantage to his opponent's claims. These are **fallacies of logos**. **Fallacies of pathos** rely excessively upon emotional appeals, attaching positive associations to the author's argument and negative ones to his opponent's position.

Conclusion

Both formal and informal fallacies are errors of reasoning, and if a speaker or writer relies on such fallacies, even unintentionally, she undercuts her argument. For example, if someone defines a key term in her argument in an ambiguous, vague, or circular way, her argument will appear very weak to an critical audience.

In addition, when listeners or readers spot questionable reasoning or unfair attempts at audience manipulation, more than their evaluation of the author's argument (*logos*) may be compromised. Their evaluation of the credibility of the speaker (*ethos*), and perhaps their ability to connect with that speaker on the level of shared values (*pathos*), also may be compromised. At the very least, the presence of fallacies will suggest to an audience that the speaker or writer lacks argumentative skill.

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TEXT: EVALUATING APPEALS TO ETHOS, LOGOS, AND PATHOS

Introduction

As a reader and a listener, it is fundamental that you be able to recognize how writers and speakers depend upon **ethos**, **logos**, and **pathos** in their efforts to communicate. As a communicator yourself, you will benefit from being able to see how others rely upon ethos, logos, and pathos so that you can apply what you learn from your observations to your own speaking and writing.

Evaluate an Appeal to Ethos

When you evaluate an appeal to **ethos**, you examine how successfully a speaker or writer establishes authority or credibility with her intended audience. You are asking yourself what elements of the essay or speech would cause an audience to feel that the author is (or is not) trustworthy and credible.

A good speaker or writer leads the audience to feel comfortable with her knowledge of a topic. The audience sees her as someone worth listening to—a clear or insightful thinker, or at least someone who is well-informed and genuinely interested in the topic.

Some of the questions you can ask yourself as you evaluate an author's ethos may include the following:

- Has the writer or speaker cited her sources or in some way made it possible for the audience to access further information on the issue?
- Does she demonstrate familiarity with different opinions and perspectives?
- Does she provide complete and accurate information about the issue?
- Does she use the evidence fairly? Does she avoid selective use of evidence or other types of manipulation of data?
- Does she speak respectfully about people who may have opinions and perspectives different from her own?
- Does she use unbiased language?
- Does she avoid excessive reliance on emotional appeals?
- Does she accurately convey the positions of people with whom she disagrees?
- Does she acknowledge that an issue may be complex or multifaceted?
- Does her education or experience give her credibility as someone who should be listened to on this issue?

Some of the above questions may strike you as relevant to an evaluation of **logos** as well as **ethos**—questions about the completeness and accuracy of information and whether it is used fairly. In fact, illogical thinking and the misuse of evidence may lead an audience to draw conclusions not only about the person making the argument but also about the logic of an argument.

Recognizing a Manipulative Appeal to Ethos

In a perfect world, everyone would tell the truth and we could depend upon the credibility of speakers and authors. Unfortunately, that is not always the case. You would expect that news reporters would be objective and tell new stories based upon the facts. Janet Cooke, Stephen Glass, Jayson Blair, and Brian Williams all lost their jobs for plagiarizing or fabricated part of their news stories. Janet Cooke's Pulitzer Prize was revoked after it was discovered that she made up "Jimmy," an eight-year old heroin addict (Prince, 2010). Brian Williams was fired as anchor of the NBC Nightly News for exaggerating his role in the Iraq War.

Others have become infamous for claiming academic degrees that they didn't earn as in the case of Marilee Jones. At the time of discovery, she was Dean of Admissions at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). After 28 years of employment, it was determined that she never graduated from college (Lewin, 2007). However, on her website (<http://www.marileejones.com>) she is still promoting herself as "a sought after speaker, consultant and author" (para. 1) and "one of the nation's most experienced College Admissions Deans" (para. 2).

Beyond lying about their own credentials, authors may employ a number of tricks or fallacies to lure you to their point of view. Some of the more common techniques are described below. Others may be found in the appendix. When you recognize these fallacies being committed you should question the credibility of the speaker and the legitimacy of the argument. If you use these when making your own arguments, be aware that they may undermine or destroy your credibility.

Fallacies That Misuse Appeals to Ethos

Ad hominem: attacking the person making an argument rather than the argument itself.

Example: “Of course that doctor advocates vaccination—he probably owns stock in a pharmaceutical company.”

False authority: relying on claims of expertise when the claimed expert (a) lacks adequate background/credentials in the relevant field, (b) departs in major ways from the consensus in the field, or (c) is biased, e.g., has a financial stake in the outcome.

Example: “Dr. X is an engineer, and **he** doesn’t believe in global warming.”

Guilt by association: linking the person making an argument to an unpopular person or group.

Example: “My opponent is a card-carrying member of the ACLU.”

Poisoning the well: undermining an opponent’s credibility before he or she gets a chance to speak.

Example: “The prosecution is going to bring up a series of so-called experts who are getting a lot of money to testify here today.”

Transfer fallacy: associating the argument with someone or something popular or respected; hoping that the positive associations will “rub off” onto the argument.

Examples: In politics, decorating a stage with red, white, and blue flags and bunting; in advertising, using pleasant or wholesome settings as the backdrop for print or video ads.

Name-calling: labeling an opponent with words that have negative connotations in an effort to undermine the opponent’s credibility.

Example: “These rabble-rousers are nothing but feminazis.”

Plain folk: presenting yourself as (or associating your position with) ordinary people with whom you hope your audience will identify; arguers imply that they or their supporters are trustworthy because they are ‘common people’ rather than members of the elite.

Example: “Who would you vote for—someone raised in a working-class neighborhood who has the support of Joe the Plumber or some elitist whose daddy sent him to a fancy school?”

Testimonial fallacy: inserting an endorsement of the argument by someone who is popular or respected but who lacks expertise or authority in the area under discussion.

Example: “I’m not a doctor, but I play one on TV”—a famous example of a celebrity endorsement for a cough syrup (Deis, 2011, n.p.).



The most general structure of this argument runs something like the following: Person A claims that Person A is a respected scientist or other authority; therefore, the claim they make is true.

Evaluate an Appeal to Logos

When you evaluate an appeal to **logos**, you consider how logical the argument is and how well-supported it is in terms of evidence. You are asking yourself what elements of the essay or speech would cause an audience to believe that the argument is (or is not) logical and supported by appropriate evidence.

To evaluate whether the evidence is appropriate, apply the **STAR** criteria: how **S**ufficient, **T**ypical, **A**ccurate, and **R**elevant is the evidence?

Recognizing a Manipulative Appeal to Logos

Diagramming the argument can help you determine if an appeal to logos is manipulative. Are the premises true? Does the conclusion follow logically from the premises? Is there sufficient, typical, accurate, and relevant evidence to support inductive reasoning? Is the speaker or author attempting to divert your attention from the real issues? These are some of the elements you might consider while evaluating an argument for the use of logos.

Pay particular attention to numbers, statistics, findings, and quotes used to support an argument. Be critical of the source and do your own investigation of the “facts.” Maybe you’ve heard or read that half of all marriages in America will end in divorce. It is so often discussed that we assume it must be true. Careful research will show that the original marriage study was flawed, and divorce rates in America have steadily declined since 1985 (Peck, 1993). If there is no scientific evidence, why do we continue to believe it? Part of the reason might be that it supports our idea of the dissolution of the American family.

Fallacies that misuse appeals to logos or attempt to manipulate the logic of an argument are discussed below. Other fallacies of logos may be found in the appendix.

Fallacies That Misuse Appeals to Logos

Hasty generalization: jumping to conclusions based upon an unrepresentative sample or insufficient evidence.

Example: “10 of the last 14 National Spelling Bee Champions have been Indian American. Indian Americans must all be great spellers!”

Appeal to ignorance—true believer’s form: arguing along the lines that if an opponent can’t prove something *isn’t* the case, then it is reasonable to believe that it *is* the case; transfers the burden of proof away from the person making the claim (the proponent).

Example: “You can’t prove that extraterrestrials *haven’t* visited earth, so it is reasonable to believe that they *have* visited earth.”

Appeal to ignorance—skeptic’s form: confusing absence of evidence with evidence of absence; assumes that if you cannot *now* prove something exists, then it is shown that it doesn’t exist.

Example: “There’s no proof that starting classes later in the day will improve the performance of our high school students; therefore, this change in schedule will not work.”

Begging the question: circular argument because the premise is the same as the claim that you are trying to prove.

Example: “This legislation is sinful because it is the wrong thing to do.”

False dilemma: misuse of the either/or argument; presenting only two options when other choices exist

Example: “Either we pass this ordinance or there will be rioting in the streets.”

Post hoc ergo propter hoc: Latin phrase meaning “after this, therefore because of this”; confuses correlation with causation by concluding that an event preceding a second event must be the cause of that second event.

Example: “My child was diagnosed with autism after receiving vaccinations. That is proof that vaccines are to blame.”

Non-sequitur: Latin for “does not follow”; the conclusion cannot be inferred from the premises because there is a break in the logical connection between a claim and the premises that are meant to support it, either because a premise is untrue (or missing) or because the relationship between premises does not support the deduction stated in the claim.

Example (untrue premise): “If she is a Radford student, she is a member of a sorority. She is a Radford student. Therefore she is a member of a sorority.”

Smoke screen: avoiding the real issue or a tough question by introducing an unrelated topic as a distraction; sometimes called a **red herring**.

Example: “My opponent says I am weak on crime, but I have been one of the most reliable participants in city council meetings.”

Straw man: pretending to criticize an opponent’s position but actually misrepresenting his or her view as simpler and/or more extreme than it is and therefore easier to refute than the original or actual position; unfairly undermines credibility of **claim** if not **source** of claim.

Example: “Senator Smith says we should cut back the Defense budget. His position is that we should let down our defenses and just trust our enemies not to attack us!”

Logical Fallacies



Red Herring

The red herring is as much a debate tactic as it is a logical fallacy. It is a fallacy of distraction, and is committed when a listener attempts to divert an arguer from his argument by introducing another topic. This can be one of the most frustrating, and effective, fallacies to observe. The fallacy gets its name from fox hunting, specifically from the practice of using smoked herrings, which are red, to distract hounds from the scent of their quarry. Just as a hound may be prevented from catching a fox by distracting it with a red herring, so an arguer may be prevented from proving his point by distracting him with a tangential issue.

Evaluate an Appeal to Pathos

People may be uninterested in an issue unless they can find a personal connection to it, so a communicator may try to connect to her audience by evoking emotions or by suggesting that author and audience share attitudes, beliefs, and values—in other words, by making an appeal to **pathos**. Even in formal writing, such as academic books or journals, an author often will try to present an issue in such a way as to connect to the feelings or attitudes of his audience.

When you evaluate pathos, you are asking whether a speech or essay arouses the audience's interest and sympathy. You are looking for the elements of the essay or speech that might cause the audience to feel (or not feel) an emotional connection to the content.

An author may use an audience's attitudes, beliefs, or values as a kind of foundation for his argument—a layer that the writer knows is already in place at the outset of the argument. So one of the questions you can ask yourself as you evaluate an author's use of pathos is whether there are points at which the writer or speaker makes statements assuming that the audience shares his feelings or attitudes. For example, in an argument about the First Amendment, does the author write as if he takes it for granted that his audience is religious?

Recognizing a Manipulative Appeal to Pathos

Up to a certain point, an **appeal to pathos** can be a legitimate part of an argument. For example, a writer or speaker may begin with an anecdote showing the effect of a law on an individual. This anecdote will be a means of gaining an audience's attention for an argument in which she uses evidence and reason to present her full case as to why the law should/should not be repealed or amended. In such a context, engaging the emotions, values, or beliefs of the audience is a legitimate tool whose effective use should lead you to give the author high marks.

An appropriate appeal to **pathos** is different than trying to unfairly play upon the audience's feelings and emotions through fallacious, misleading, or excessively emotional appeals. Such a **manipulative** use of pathos may alienate the audience or cause them to "tune out". An example would be the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) commercials featuring the song "*In the Arms on an Angel*" and footage of abused animals. Even Sarah McLachlan, the singer and spokesperson featured in the commercials admits that she changes the channel because they are too depressing (Brekke, 2014).

Even if an appeal to pathos is not manipulative, such an appeal should complement rather than replace reason and evidence-based argument. In addition to making use of pathos, the author must establish her credibility (**ethos**) and must supply reasons and evidence (**logos**) in support of her position. An author who essentially replaces logos and ethos with pathos alone should be given low marks.

See below for the most common fallacies that misuse appeals to pathos.

Fallacies That Misuse Appeals to Pathos

Appeal to fear: using scare tactics; emphasizing threats or exaggerating possible dangers.

Example: "Without this additional insurance, you could find yourself broke and homeless."

Appeal to guilt and appeal to pity: trying to evoke an emotional reaction that will cause the audience to behave sympathetically even if it means disregarding the issue at hand.

Example: "I know I missed assignments, but if you fail me, I will lose my financial aid and have to drop out."

Appeal to popularity (bandwagon): urging audience to follow a course of action because "everyone does it."

Example: "Nine out of ten shoppers have switched to Blindingly-Bright-Smile Toothpaste."

Slippery Slope: making an unsupported or inadequately supported claim that "One thing inevitably leads to another." This may be considered a fallacy of logos as well as pathos but is placed in this section because it often is used to evoke the emotion of fear.

Example: "We can't legalize marijuana; if we do, then the next thing you know people will be strung out on heroin."

Appeal to the people: also called **stirring symbols** fallacy; the communicator distracts the readers or listeners with symbols that are very meaningful to them, with strong associations or connotations.

Example: This fallacy is referred to in the sentence "That politician always wraps himself in the flag."

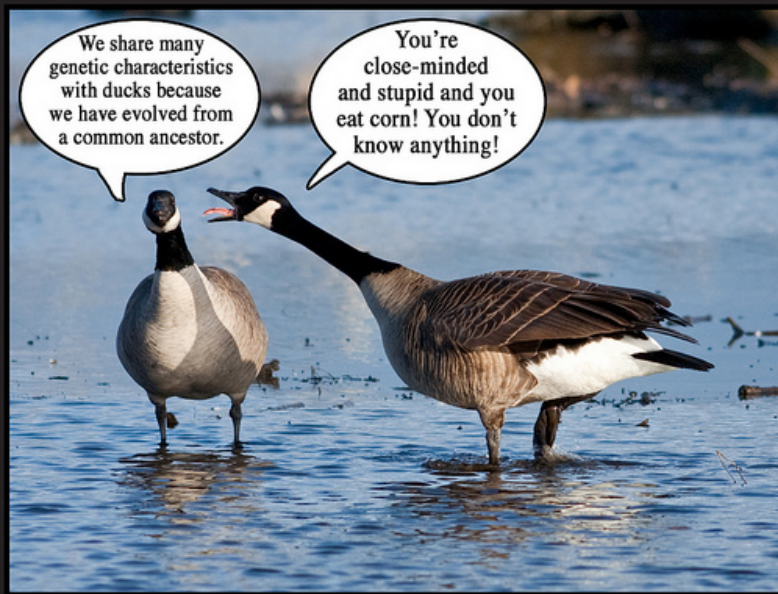
Appeal to tradition: people have been done it a certain way for a long time; assumes that what has been customary in past is correct and proper.

Example: "A boy always serves as student-body president; a girl always serves as secretary."

Loaded-Language and other emotionally charged uses of language: using slanted or biased language, including God terms, devil terms, euphemisms, and dysphemisms.

Example: In the sentence "Cutting access to food stamps would encourage personal responsibility," the god term is "personal responsibility." It might seem as if it would be hard to argue against "personal responsibility" or related god terms such as "independence" and "self-reliance." However, it would require a definition of "personal responsibility," combined with evidence from studies of people's behavior in the face of food stamp or other benefit reductions, to argue that cutting access to food stamps would lead to the intended results.

Logical Fallacies



The Ad Hominem

Here is an example of a common logical fallacy known as the ad hominem argument, which is Latin for "argument against the person" or "argument toward the person." Basically, an ad hominem argument goes like this: Person 1 makes claim X. There is something objectionable about Person 1. Therefore claim X is false.

Conclusion

Fallacies can crop up whenever definitions, inferences, and facts are at issue. Once we become familiar with fallacies we may start to see them everywhere. That can be good and bad. Since persuasion is ever-present, it is good to be on guard against various hidden persuaders. But whether a persuasive strategy is considered fallacious may be dependent on context. Editorials and advertisements—both political and commercial—frequently use such strategies as transfer and appeals to popularity. We need to be critically aware of the techniques of persuasion being used on us, but since we *expect* advertisements, political speeches, and editorials on public policy or ethical issues to try to sway us emotionally, perhaps only extreme examples deserve to be judged harshly for being fallacious.

In addition, something that looks as if it is a fallacy may turn out not to be on closer examination. For example, not everything that smacks of slippery slope is fallacious. There are indeed some *genuine* slippery slopes, where an initial decision or action may have both great and inevitable repercussions. So whether that fallacy has been committed depends upon what the author has done (or failed to do) to support his claim. Similarly, while personal attacks (*ad hominem*) in most cases are unfair and considered fallacious, there are special situations in which a person's character may be directly relevant to his or her qualifications. For example, when somebody is running for political office or for a judgeship, casting doubt on his or her character may be appropriate—if one has facts to back it up—since it relates to job expectations. But wholesale character assassination remains a rhetorical ploy of the propagandist or demagogue.

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SELF CHECK: LOGIC AND STRUCTURE

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TRY IT: LOGIC AND STRUCTURE

To Do

Follow the guidance earlier in this section to [Diagram the Argument](#) of your selected reading.

This diagram will allow you to deeply understand the argument, but also the structure of your chosen reading. The summary component of the Summary and Analysis Essay you write will closely follow the same structure.

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OUTCOME: SUMMARY SKILLS

Evaluate summary skills for reading comprehension

Have you read the book *Animal Farm*, by George Orwell? It's required reading at many schools, but don't worry if you either haven't read it or don't remember much about it. The following video offers an interesting synopsis of the book to refresh your memory.

(Note: the video contains adult language.)

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/ITKfr1qOZ0w>

- This is likely not the kind of summary you might be used to seeing for school books, but was it effective for you?
- Do you feel that you have a good understanding of what the book was about, just from watching this video? If you have read the book, does this serve as an accurate representation of what you remember?
- Would you be tempted to read the book, after watching this video?

What Summaries Do

The following pages will detail more about how summaries of reading material work most effectively. Consider this video as an example as you read.

Note that the video only used one direct quotation, and that wasn't even from *Animal Farm*. The quote comes as part of the analysis component, serving to emphasize a point about the interpretation of the book. The entire plot summary of the book relies on paraphrase, instead.

Note also that the summary and the analysis components are distinctly divided, so that it's very clear for viewers to tell what is objective plot recap, and what is subjective interpretation of the text.

What You Will Learn To Do

- evaluate annotation strategies
- evaluate strategies to paraphrase a text's thesis statement
- evaluate strategies to quote significant passages from a text
- evaluate strategies to distinguish a text's major claims from minor ones
- evaluate strategies to convey the essential features of a text to someone who hasn't read it

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Text: How to Annotate
- Text: Paraphrasing
- Video: Quote Bombs
- Text: Summary Writing
- Self Check: Summary Skills
- Try It: Summary Skills

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- Animal Farm - Thug Notes Summary and Analysis. Authored by: WiseCrack. Located at: <https://youtu.be/ITKfr1qOZ0w>. License: All Rights Reserved. License Terms: Standard YouTube License

TEXT: HOW TO ANNOTATE

An active reading strategy for articles or textbooks is **annotation**. Think for a moment about what that word means. It means to add notes (an-NOTE-tate) to text that you are reading, to offer explanation, comments or opinions to the author's words. Annotation takes practice, and the better you are at it, the better you will be at reading complicated articles.

Where to Make Notes

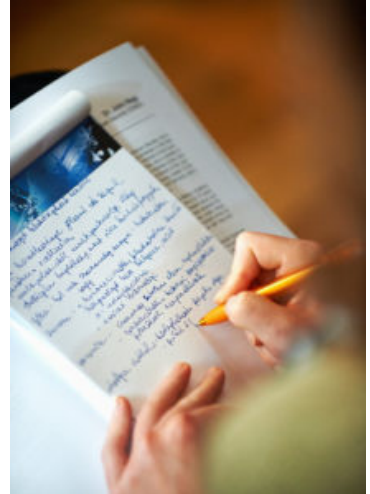
First, determine how you will annotate the text you are about to read.

If it is a printed article, you may be able to just write in the margins. A colored pen might make it easier to see than black or even blue.

If it is an article posted on the web, you could also use [Diigo](#), which is a highlighting and annotating tool that you can use on the website and even share your notes with your instructor. Other note-taking plug-ins for web browsers might serve a similar function.

If it is a textbook that you do not own (or wish to sell back), use post it notes to annotate in the margins.

You can also use a notebook to keep written commentary as you read in any platform, digital or print. If you do this, be sure to leave enough information about the specific text you're responding to that you can find it later if you need to. (Make notes about page number, which paragraph it is, or even short quotes to help you locate the passage again.)



What Notes to Make

Now you will annotate the document by adding your own words, phrases, and summaries to the written text. For the following examples, the article "[Guinea Worm Facts](#)" was used.

1. Scan the document you are annotating. Some obvious clues will be apparent before you read it, such as titles or headers for sections. Read the first paragraph. Somewhere in the first (or possibly the second) paragraph should be a BIG IDEA about what the article is going to be about. In the margins, near the top, write down the big idea of the article in your own words. This shouldn't be more than a phrase or a sentence. This big idea is likely the article's thesis.
2. Underline topic sentences or phrases that express the main idea for that paragraph or section. You should never underline more than 5 words, though for large paragraphs or blocks of text, you can use brackets. (Underlining long stretches gets messy, and makes it hard to review the text later.) Write in the margin next to what you've underlined a summary of the paragraph or the idea being expressed.
3. Connect related ideas by drawing arrows from one idea to another. Annotate those arrows with a phrase about how they are connected.

Better to prevent than to treat later!

Traditional removal of a Guinea worm consists of winding the worm — up to 3 feet (1 meter) long — around a small stick and manually extracting it...

The best way to stop Guinea worm disease is to prevent people from entering sources of drinking water with an active infection...

4. If you encounter an idea, word, or phrase you don't understand, circle it and put a question mark in the margin that indicates an area of confusion. Write your question in the margin.
 - "Depending on the outcome of the assessment, the commission recommends to WHO which formerly endemic countries should be declared free of transmission, i.e., certified as free of the disease." → ?? What does this mean? Who is WHO?
5. Anytime the author makes a statement that you can connect with on a personal level, annotate in the margins a summary of how this connects to you. Write any comments or observations you feel appropriate to the text. You can also add your personal opinion.
 - "Guinea worm disease incapacitates victims for extended periods of time making them unable to work or grow enough food to feed their families or attend school." → My dad was sick for a while and couldn't work. This was hard on our family.
6. Place a box around any term or phrase that emphasizes scientific language. These could be words you are not familiar with or will need to review later. Define those words in the margins.
 - "Guinea worm disease is set to become the second human disease in history, after smallpox, to be eradicated." → Eradicated = to put an end to, destroy

To summarize how you will annotate text:

1. Identify the BIG IDEA
2. Underline topic sentences or main ideas
3. Connect ideas with arrows
4. Ask questions
5. Add personal notes
6. Define technical words

Like many skills, annotating takes practice. Remember that the main goal for doing this is to give you a strategy for reading text that may be more complicated and technical than what you are used to.

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TEXT: PARAPHRASING

Introduction

Recall from the video in the opening of this section that “Sparky Sweets, PhD” didn’t use any direct quotes from *Animal Farm*, even for capturing the book’s thesis idea. Instead, he cast the main idea in unique language, which both made it memorable and also demonstrated his deep understanding of the concept. Read on for advice on paraphrasing effectively, from Texas A&M University.

When you paraphrase, you recast someone else's words into an entirely new form. A good paraphrase doesn't simply substitute synonyms for the original words but substantially rewrites the passage—without changing its meaning or emphasis. Always cite anything you paraphrase; failure to cite someone else's ideas, even if you reword them, is plagiarism.

When to Paraphrase

There are many reasons to use a paraphrase as opposed to a direct quotation. You might need to paraphrase in any of the following situations:

- The ideas in the original passage are more important than the style or authority of the author.
- The ideas are more memorable than the author's language.
- The original language is difficult to comprehend or highly technical.
- A quotation is too long and/or wordy.
- The original passage needs to be clarified.
- The source of a quotation is unknown.

Writing a Paraphrase

First, re-read the original work to be sure you understand it. Then, set it aside and write what you think it means in your own words. Putting the original out of sight is helpful since it frees you from the temptation to merely rearrange the words or substitute a synonym or two. A successful paraphrase will typically involve several of the following: changing word order or sentence structure, combining related ideas, eliminating jargon or wordiness, simplifying the original, and using synonyms for key terms. If the original uses a very distinct term or phrase that you don't want to eliminate (or simply can't improve upon), use the term or phrase in quotation marks and incorporate it into your paraphrase. Finally, check to be sure you haven't altered the meaning of the original.

Incorporating a Paraphrase

It's important to integrate the paraphrase smoothly into the rest of your writing. A useful technique is to begin by acknowledging the source of the material. For instance, when paraphrasing a researcher named John Doe, you might say, "According to Doe . . ." or "As researcher Doe stated . . ." You can also give information about the source: "According to John Doe, a prominent statistician, the idea of . . ." You may also want to provide context to help your reader understand why you're including the paraphrased material: "Researcher John Doe reached a similar conclusion when he stated that . . ." Finally, be sure to cite the original.

Sample Paraphrase

Original quotation from President Kennedy's inaugural address: "And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country. My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man."

Paraphrase: In the closing of his inaugural address, President Kennedy implored both Americans and people from other nations to put aside their personal interests in order to work for the common good.

Checklist

- Does the paraphrase consist entirely of your own words?
- Did you do more than just substitute synonyms or change the sentence structure?
- Did you make it clear that you are using someone else's thoughts?
- Did you keep the general meaning and emphasis of the original?
- Did you correctly cite the paraphrase?

Practice Paraphrasing

The original passage:

“Scientists and policymakers generally agree that the likelihood of flooding in the UK will increase as a result of climate change. It is also accepted that sensible land use and development planning plays a role in the management of flood risk, while allowing necessary development to continue”
(Dept...Government, 2006, Evans et al., 2004; Thorne et al., 2007).

The paraphrase:

Scientists and policymakers agree that climate change means that the likelihood of UK flooding will increase. It is also agreed that the role of sensible land use and development planning are important in the management of flood risk, also allowing necessary development to continue (Dept...Government, 2006; Evans et al., 2004; Thorne et al., 2007).

Answer these questions about the paraphrase example from above to decide if it is a good or bad paraphrase.

1. Has the student changed a lot of the words from the original passage?

Show Answer

2. Has the student changed the word order and structure compared to the original passage?

Show Answer

3. Has the student included a citation for the information?

Show Answer

4. Overall, do you think this is a good paraphrase?

Show Answer

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VIDEO: QUOTE BOMBS

In summary writing, paraphrases are generally preferable to direct quotations. However, sometimes unique words or phrases should be included, to give an accurate representation of the text.

When to Use Quotes

There are three main reasons why you should use quotes in print journalism:

1. Accuracy
 - If you include the exact words which authors themselves used you will reduce the risk of misreporting what they meant, particularly around complex, key ideas.
2. Clarity
 - When we give a text's exact words our readers can see both the ideas and the way they were presented.
3. Reality
 - Authors often use unique and lively language. Quotes allow you to capture an author's style and tone.

Contextualizing Quotes

This video discusses how to avoid throwing “quote bombs” into your writing, by giving enough context before and after a quote for it to make sense to another reader.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/ONxZeLhJbOg>

Quoting Out of Context

Finally, remember to quote responsibly.

The practice of **quoting out of context** is an informal fallacy and a type of false attribution. This happens when a passage is removed from its surrounding matter in such a way as to distort its intended meaning.

Arguments based on this fallacy typically take two forms:

1. As a straw man argument, frequently found in politics, it involves quoting an opponent out of context in order to misrepresent his or her position (typically to make it seem more simplistic or extreme) in order to make it easier to refute.
2. As an appeal to authority, it involves quoting an authority on the subject out of context, in order to misrepresent that authority as supporting some position.

In either case, while quoting a person out of context can be done intentionally to advance an agenda or win an argument, it may also occur accidentally if someone misinterprets the meaning and omits something essential to clarifying it, thinking it non-essential.

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TEXT: SUMMARY WRITING

Process and Hints to Summary Writing

One major challenge with summary writing is deciding what to include and what to leave out. A bit of instruction on the process to follow, along with useful techniques, will have you writing expert summaries in no time.

1. Read the text for understanding, without editing. Make sure you understand the content, including major and minor sections, as well as the overlying message being conveyed. Look closely at topic sentences and key words repeated throughout.
2. Read through the material and cross out non-vital information. Underline what you believe to be the most important points, even if those points are words or phrases.
3. Write your summary in your own words. Follow both the organization of the original as well as its tone, though you need to make sure your own point of view is purely objective (reporting content of the text, only). Opinions should not appear in a summary. Any words or phrases from the original need to be properly documented and punctuated.
4. Your summary should be 15 to 20% the length of the original.
5. Be sure to go back when you've finished your summary and compare it to the original for accuracy.

Effective and Ineffective Summaries

Original Text

“For nearly 1,400 years Islam, though diverse in sectarian practice and ethnic tradition, has provided a unifying faith for peoples stretching from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean and beyond. Starting in the 1500s, Western ascendancy, which culminated in colonization, eroded once glorious Muslim empires and reduced the influence of Islam. After the breakup of the Ottoman Empire following World War I and the decline of European colonial empires following World War II, Muslim nations adopted Western ideologies—communism, socialism, secular nationalism, and capitalism. Yet most Muslims remained poor and powerless. Their governments, secular regimes often backed by the West, were corrupt and repressive” (Belt 78). Belt, Don. “The World of Islam.” *National Geographic*. January 2002: 76-85. Print.

Poorly-Written Summary

Despite Western-style governments, Muslim countries are mired in deep poverty and radical governments. This despite the fact that the religion has existed for several centuries. European colonization ruined the Islamic religion for a long time. You would find it hard to imagine how many Muslims there really are out there.

Analysis

This summary

- does not follow the order of information found in the original
- the phrase “several centuries” minimizes the historic significance of the religion
- sentence-level problems like “mired,” “you would,” and “out there” change the formal tone of the original to a biased, informal representation
- it is approximately half the length of the original, which is too long
- no credit is given to the original source

Well-Written Summary

For almost 1,500 years, Islam has united people globally. Western interference, through colonization and political ideologies, has not improved Muslims’ lives (Belt 78).

Analysis

This summary

- follows the order of the original
- maintains the original tone
- is approximately 20% of the original’s length
- is properly documented and punctuated

Practice Summarizing

Try your hand at summarizing the following passages.

Practice Paragraph 1

"In 1925 the land aristocracy of Germany owned most of the large estates which occupied 20.2 per cent of the arable land of the country. They had 40 per cent of the land east of the Elbe River. All told, these large estates constituted but 0.4 per cent of the total number of landholdings in Germany. At the base of the pyramid were those who occupied small holdings: 59.4 per cent of the total holdings of Germany accounted for only 6.2 per cent of the arable land" (Lasswell 17).

Lasswell, Harold. *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How*. New York: Meridian Books, Inc. 1960. Print.

Type your summary in the space provided.

Practice Paragraph 2

"The Indian tribes of North and South America do not contain all the blood groups that are found in populations elsewhere. A fascinating glimpse into their ancestry is opened by this unexpected biological quirk. For the blood groups are inherited in such a way that, over a whole population, they provide some genetic record of the past. The total absence of blood group A from a population implies, with virtual certainty, that there was no blood group A in its ancestry; and similarly with blood group B. And this is in fact the state of affairs in America" (Bronowski 92).

Bronowski, J. *The Ascent of Man*. Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1973. Print.

Type your summary in the space provided.

Practice Paragraph 3

"A solenoid is an electrically energized coil that forms an electromagnet capable of performing mechanical functions. The term 'solenoid' is derived from the word 'sole' which in reference to electrical equipment means 'a part of,' or 'contained inside, or with, other electrical equipment.' The Greek word solenoides means 'Channel,' or 'shaped like a pipe.' A simple plunger-type solenoid consists of a coil of wire attached to an electrical source, and an iron rod, or plunger, that passes in and out of the coil along the axis of the spiral. A return spring holds the rod outside the coil when the current is deenergized, as shown in figure 1" (Lannon 432).

Lannon, John. *Technical Communication*. New York: Longman, 2000. Print.

Type your summary in the space provided.

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SELF CHECK: SUMMARY SKILLS

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TRY IT: SUMMARY SKILLS

To Do

You've accomplished a lot of prewriting and organizing of your summary in earlier Try It activities. Now it is time to draft the summary itself, using the work you've already done and applying all of the summary skills discussed in this module.

This summary should be no longer than 1/3 the length of the original source. (For instance, if your reading selection is 15 paragraphs long, your summary will be no longer than 5 paragraphs long.)

This summary should convey a full understanding of the original source to a person who has not read it. It will:

- include a paraphrase of the source's thesis or purpose
- convey the major ideas of the source
- include only brief quotations, if they are helpful to capture the unique aspects of the original source
- represent the tone and style of the source
- mimic the organizational structure of the source

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PUTTING IT TOGETHER: READING

You may have noticed that while this module provided guidance about the development of READING skills, an awful lot of it relied upon WRITING.

The two skills are very much entwined. Perhaps you've heard advice suggesting that the best way to improve writing ability is to read more. It turns out the reverse is also true, as this passage from *Writing to Read: Evidence for How Writing Can Improve Reading* demonstrates:

“While writing is important in its own right, the evidence clearly shows that writing supports reading and reading development. Increasing how often students write has positive benefits on their development as readers,” [Steve] Graham, Currey Ingram Chair in Special Education and Literacy at Vanderbilt University’s Peabody College, said. “In addition, previous research demonstrates that writing about information presented in science, math, English and social studies also supports students’ learning in those subjects. If we want to maximize students’ accomplishments in these critical areas, writing needs to become part of the solution.”

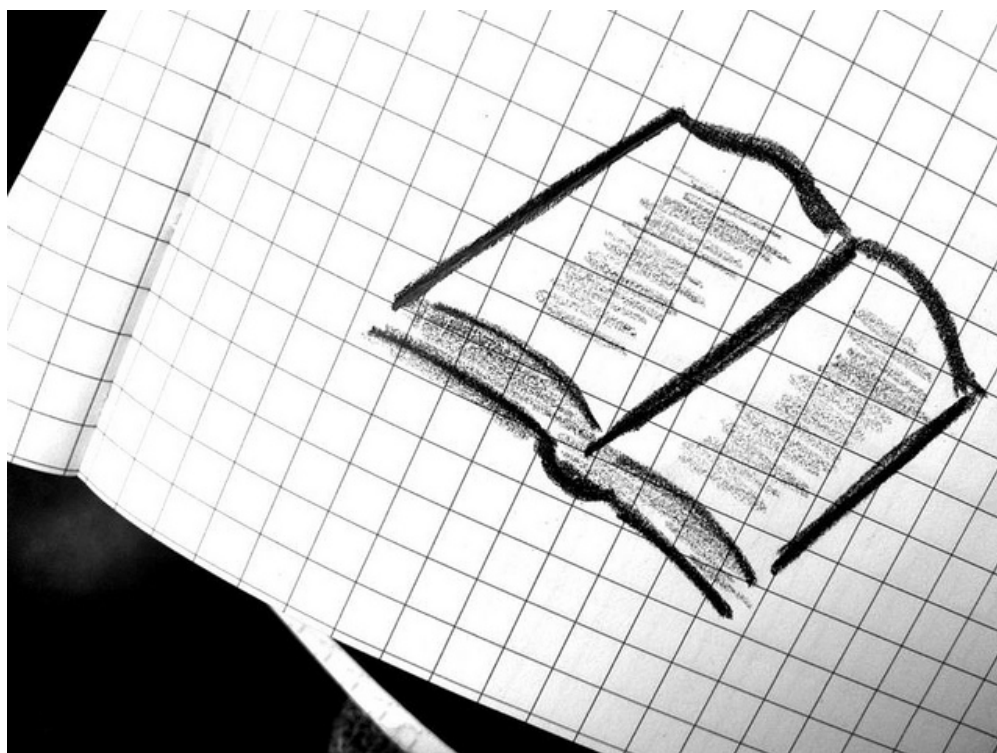
Annotating while you read, and summarizing what you read after the fact, are acts of writing, of course. They also are vital ways of improving your reading skills overall.

Reading and writing are academic skills, to be sure. They are also success skills for life, at large. Consider this final thought from *Writing to Read*:

“In an age overwhelmed by information, the ability to read, comprehend and write—in other words, to organize information into knowledge—must be viewed as tantamount to a survival skill,” Vartan Gregorian, president of Carnegie Corporation of New York, said. “As Americans, we must keep our democracy and our society from being divided not only between rich and poor, but also between those who have access to information and knowledge, and thus, to power—the power of enlightenment, the power of self-improvement and self-assertion, the power to achieve upward mobility, and the power over their own lives and their families” ability to thrive and succeed—and those who do not.”

Reading is a survival skill.

Reading is power.



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ASSIGNMENT: TYPES OF WRITING

As prewriting for your Summary and Analysis Essay, write notes evaluating your reading selection. Use the purpose statements and descriptions of different kinds of text, found earlier in this section, to guide you.

- Write 1-2 paragraphs describing what kind of source your chosen reading selection illustrates, and
- How well it meets the stated goals of the kind of source it illustrates.

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ASSIGNMENT: READING STRATEGIES

1. With your selected reading, preview the text. Refer to the “Before Reading” section of the Academic Reading Strategies page in this outcome. Use one of the two pre-reading guides mentioned there to organize your reading strategy: the [K-W-L Guide](#) or the [Critical Reading Questionnaire](#).
2. Complete the reading strategy of your choice. Submit it here.
3. Use it to guide the active, close reading of your text.

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ASSIGNMENT: SPECIALIZED READING STRATEGIES

No matter which of the sources you selected for your Summary and Analysis Essay, it will qualify as an “online text” by the very nature of how you’re accessing it.

- Review your selected text, both as it appears in this course and how it appears in its original publication location.
 - To access the original publication location, select the “Licenses and Attributions” link at the bottom of the page, and follow the web link to the original source.

Review the [“Reading the World Wide Web” guide published by Colorado State University](#).

1. How does the textbook version of the text you selected differ from its original publication appearance?
2. Which do you find easier to read? Why?
3. What techniques or tips from the “Reading the World Wide Web” document help you navigate your selected reading?
4. What techniques might you apply to other online reading you’ll do in the near future?

ASSIGNMENT: VOCABULARY

From your selected reading, identify at least 3 words which seem vital to an accurate understanding of the text. These might be words that are unfamiliar to you, or words which are used in a unique, special way in the text.

Use context clues, word parts, and dictionaries as needed to help you come to a working definition of the terms as they are used in this reading selection.

Write a paraphrase of a definition for each of the 3 words. Consider using these paraphrased definitions in the Summary and Analysis Essay, to help you show the importance of these terms in the text.

ASSIGNMENT: THESIS

Review the following video to help you identify the thesis statement from your selected reading.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/di1cQgc1akg>

Write a paraphrase of your reading selection's thesis—you will need this for your Summary and Analysis Essay.

Additionally, make notes to yourself regarding the effectiveness of this reading's thesis and purpose. How well do you feel this essay met its stated objective? Why do you feel this way? (This will serve as brainstorming for the analysis component of your Summary and Analysis Essay.)

ASSIGNMENT: SUPPORTING CLAIMS

1. Locate all of the supporting claims used in your selected text.
2. Identify what kind of supporting claim each is. As a reminder, the categories defined earlier in this section include
 - exhibits (or primary sources)
 - expert testimony
 - interviews and surveys

- anecdotes
3. Identify the kind of appeal each supporting claim is meant to address. As a reminder, the categories of appeals defined earlier in this section include
 - logical appeals
 - authoritative appeals
 - emotional appeals
 4. Note how effective you think each type of support used is, relating back to the source's thesis. Which do you find most convincing? Why? Which do you find least convincing? Why?

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ASSIGNMENT: LOGIC AND STRUCTURE

Follow the guidance earlier in this section to Diagram the Argument of your selected reading. Submit your Diagram here.

This diagram will allow you to deeply understand the argument, but also the structure of your chosen reading. The summary component of the Summary and Analysis Essay you write will closely follow the same structure.

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ASSIGNMENT: SUMMARY SKILLS

You've accomplished a lot of prewriting and organizing of your summary in earlier Try It activities. Now it is time to draft the summary itself, using the work you've already done and applying all of the summary skills discussed in this module.

This summary should be no longer than 1/3 the length of the original source. (For instance, if your reading selection is 15 paragraphs long, your summary will be no longer than 5 paragraphs long.)

This summary should convey a full understanding of the original source to a person who has not read it. It will:

- include a paraphrase of the source's thesis or purpose
- convey the major ideas of the source
- include only brief quotations, if they are helpful to capture the unique aspects of the original source
- represent the tone and style of the source
- mimic the organizational structure of the source

(This is NOT the complete draft of the Summary and Analysis Essay. You will be adding in the "analysis" component as the last step before you submit the final draft.)

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ASSIGNMENT: SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS ESSAY

FINAL DRAFT

Throughout this module you have been reading and analyzing your reading selection closely. Build from the work you've done so far, including the summary draft. Add the analysis component, noted below. Work with tutors at the Enhancement Center as needed to finalize your draft into the strongest submission possible. Submit the final version here.

Summary and Analysis Essay Overview

Select a reading from the reading anthology available in this course, and apply all steps of the critical reading process to it. The culmination of this close reading will be a Summary and Analysis Essay, which accurately captures the purpose, meaning, and tone of the reading selection. Directed to an audience unfamiliar with your reading selection, your summary will demonstrate the text's thesis or controlling idea, its major ideas, and its mode of development.

The **summary section** of the essay will report only what's in the reading selection, and **will not** include personal response or interpretation.

The **analysis section** of the essay will then move into your personal reactions and interpretations of the work. You will report to your readers how well you feel it meets its rhetorical purpose, and how well the components of its style, structure, and evidence serve to support the text's thesis.

Assignment Details

Look for the Try It pages along the way to help you prepare for and complete the Summary and Analysis Essay.

The finished Summary and Analysis Essay will be 250-500 words long. It will

- mimic the structure of the reading selection
- report the thesis or controlling idea of the reading selection
- present major supporting details of the reading selection
- include at least one direct quotation
- include multiple paraphrases
- end with a 2-3 paragraph section that analyzes the rhetorical purpose and features of the text, to conclude with your evaluation of how effectively this text meets its purpose for its intended audience.

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WRITING PROCESS

WHY IT MATTERS: WRITING PROCESS

Why is it necessary to evaluate the process of writing?

Differing Purposes of High School and College

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, on the other hand, 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, including ways in which you're expected to behave as an independent thinker and learner.

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 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.

College Writing Is Different

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.

The Writing Process

This amount of work devoted to mastering a writing project can seem daunting, at first. Break it into smaller tasks, following the stages of the Writing Process, makes it a lot more manageable, and even enjoyable.

THE WRITING PROCESS



Through this module, we will examine each of these stages of the writing process in detail, and evaluate how each helps further establish you as a critical thinker, writer, and scholar.

Learning Outcomes

- Evaluate topic selection activities
- Evaluate prewriting activities
- Evaluate activities to find evidence in support of a claim
- Evaluate essay organizational techniques
- Evaluate drafting activities
- Evaluate revision activities
- Evaluate proofreading activities

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PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT: PERSUASIVE ESSAY

Persuasive Essay Introduction

This module will ask you to practice the stages of the writing process. You will develop an essay to be finalized by the end of this module.

The term “college student” corrals a wide range of types of students in a single term. It stands to reason that different groups of people have different motivations for entering higher education, different goals while they are there, and different definitions of success once they graduate. For this essay, you will **select a specific category of college students, define a practice that could lead to enhanced success for that category, and argue for the adoption of that practice.**

The **thesis** for this essay will persuade readers in the target audience to adopt the practice you’ve identified, in order to help them achieve better outcomes while in college. The thesis will be supported in the body of the essay with **evidence** demonstrating why this practice will increase success and how it can be implemented.

Assignment Details

Look for the Try It pages along the way to help you complete the Persuasive Essay. The Try It activities will engage you in each step of the writing process.

The final essay will be 750-1000 words long. It will include a thesis statement that is supported by evidence. It will be well-organized, and display evidence of careful application of the writing process.

Rubric

In order to successfully complete this assessment, a submitted essay must reach “Meets or Exceeds Expectations” in all categories.

Criteria		Ratings	
Topic & Thesis Statement	Meets or Exceeds Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none">essay topic has been personalized to refine the assignment promptcontains a clearly identifiable persuasive thesis statement that drives the essay content	Approaching Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none">essay topic is a generic answer to the assignment promptcontains a persuasive thesis statement that relates to most essay content	Does Not Meet Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none">essay topic does not match the assignment promptdoes not contain a persuasive thesis statement, <i>or</i> thesis statement does not relate to most essay content

Evidence	Meets or Exceeds Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sufficient and varied evidence provided to justify the thesis statement • draws on academic and personal sources as needed 	Approaching Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • insufficient evidence provided to justify the thesis statement • draws only upon personal sources (personal examples, anecdotes) 	Does Not Meet Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no evidence provided, <i>or</i> evidence does not justify the thesis statement
Organization	Meets or Exceeds Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contains a clearly identifiable introduction, body section, and conclusion • follows a logical pattern of development • applies transitions effectively 	Approaching Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contains an introduction, and/or body section, and/or conclusion • has a pattern of development, but needs further attention to paragraphing • insufficient use of transitions 	Does Not Meet Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • missing introduction, body section, or conclusion elements • no clear pattern of development • little to no use of transitions
Editing and Proofreading	Meets or Exceeds Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evidence that higher-order editing concerns have been identified and addressed • evidence that lower-order proofreading concerns have been identified and addressed, though minor patterns of error might remain 	Approaching Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • higher-order editing concerns may not have been addressed • lower-order editing concerns may not have been addressed. Significant patterns of error remain. 	Does Not Meet Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fundamental issues with higher-order editing concerns present in draft • fundamental issues with lower-order editing concerns present in draft

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OUTCOME: TOPIC SELECTION

Evaluate topic selection activities

I have likened writing . . . to going on a journey, with some notion of the destination I will arrive at, but not the whole picture—which emerges gradually as a series of revelations, as the journey goes along. — Rose Tremain, novelist and Chancellor of the University of East Anglia



Metaphors are a powerful way to take ownership of any task you're given. Creating a personal metaphor will allow you to interpret the process in a way that makes sense to you, and to anticipate more clearly all the steps that will be necessary to complete the task.

For now, let's consider the metaphor that Ms. Tremain offers us here: writing is a journey. Compare the process of receiving a writing assignment to receiving the opportunity to take a trip. Sure, one may sound like a lot more fun initially than the other, but it's not hard to see some interesting overlaps in the process involved to prepare for either one.

With either a new essay project or a new trip, the first task is to figure out a destination. You will have some limiting factors initially. The length of the finished essay; the length of time you'll be traveling. The amount of time before the essay is due; the amount of time before the trip begins. The number of resources required to consult; the number of stops you can make along your way.

Your Own Writing Metaphor

Perhaps this writing-as-travel metaphor makes sense to you. Perhaps not. Are there other comparisons to the writing process that hold more personal value for you? Consider what parallels you see as you move through this module.

What You Will Learn to Do

- evaluate strategies for personalizing an assigned topic
- evaluate strategies for finding a focus for an unassigned topic
- evaluate strategies for moving from general to specific

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Text: Where to Start a Paper
- Text: Choosing and Developing Topics
- Text: Back to the Future of Topics
- Video: Developing Your Topic
- Self Check: Topic Selection
- Try It: Topic Selection



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TEXT: WHERE TO START A PAPER

Starting a paper is almost always the hardest part of the writing process. Consider these questions as you prepare to start your paper. It may even be helpful to write out your answers.



What question(s) must I answer in order to fulfill the assignment?

What “code words” does my assignment contain? (Code words could be abstract terms such as “concepts of freedom” and “system of belief,” or they could be terms that demand a certain task of you, such as “analyze,” “compare,” “explore reasons for,” etc.)

Which areas of my readings or sources are still unclear to me? How necessary are they for writing a first draft?

Who is the audience for this paper? Don’t always assume that you’re writing for your professor; s/he may want you to write for people unfamiliar with the topic. If you’re in doubt, ask your professor. What are the most important things that my audience needs to know?

What are a few main points that I want to convey in this paper?

Are any of these points contradictory or overly vague? (For example, if you wrote “I want to show how factories in Japan and America are both similar and different,” your goals are probably too broad; “Macbeth was both good and evil” could be easily read as a contradictory statement.)

Can I refine any of these goals? (For instance, for the second example above, you might decide to focus on how Macbeth was a good man who fell because of his lust for power.)

Can I support my main ideas? Are they unsupported speculations and opinions? Depending on the type of paper, opinions might be acceptable. Generally, professors look for support from readings and other academic sources—when in doubt, ask.

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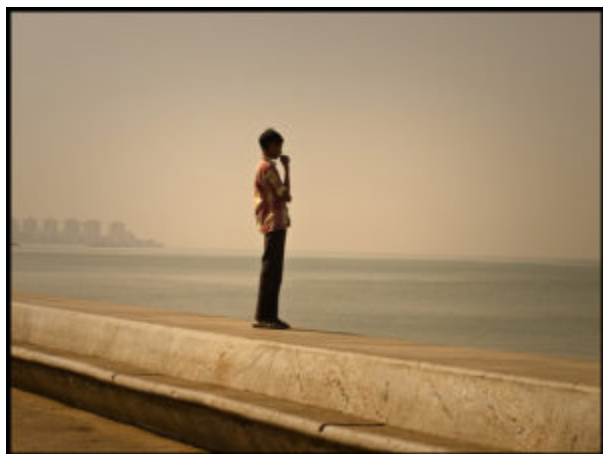
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TEXT: CHOOSING AND DEVELOPING TOPICS

Part of what separates good writers from great writers is the ability to organize and relate multiple ideas in one place. We will explore how the concept of “topics” (or, to use the traditional term, *topoi*) has developed and how you might begin to practice developing your own topics.

Finding a Place to Stand



Though it seems particularly pressing in our current social media, online-all-the-time culture, the idea of “information overload” has troubled humans for centuries. Despite these concerns, many of our ancestors found productive ways to manage information overload. And their strategies remain helpful today. With the *topoi* (a word that refers to “topics” but that also means “places”), ancient rhetoricians, including Aristotle and Cicero, developed techniques that writers used to gather, categorize, and identify important topics worthy of discussion. *Topoi* have two functions that are still important now: organizing information and exploring common features in sets of information.

First, *topoi* were used to organize information. Using notebooks, rhetoricians gathered research material including common sayings, overheard quotes, everyday opinions, annotations on texts, and insights. After collecting these materials over time, a rhetor would begin to see similar ideas repeat and begin to make relationships with other ideas. These similarities would form “headings” that grouped together related sayings or sentiments. This form of *topoi* would later develop into what became called **commonplace books**. Not unlike your computer’s web browser and the multiple “bookmarks” you might collect, these books helped writers and speakers collect and organize information so they could prepare talks and write texts. Commonplaces were the “storehouses” of information that helped rhetors engage with civic and cultural life.

The second use of *topoi* identified similar features or “places” that occurred in arguments. So-called **common topics** were those general features shared in any idea or argument regardless of the content of that argument, including definition, relationship, and/or division. For instance, ancient rhetoricians might ask “Is the argument about a definition?” If they discovered that a definition was, in fact, controversial, then they knew they could follow certain common patterns and use common strategies. Other common topics included comparison, cause-and-effect contradictions, and antecedent/consequence.

These common features provided a structure for any arguments. The structure helped the writer identify what types of arguments might be available and which arguments were likely to be less successful. It gave them a “place to stand,” so to speak. It’s clear that this way of thinking remains with us today: we often describe someone’s argument as staking a “position” within a debate or controversy.

Out of a few initial questions, rhetoricians have developed many topics in many cultures. For instance, the commonplace that “America is the best nation on Earth” is frequently repeated to stake a position and develop an argument. Or, consider a topic like “voting laws”: you could easily collect various sources that present both common topics and special topics. Common topic issues of cause and effect (perceived voter fraud and revisions of voting laws) or definition (what defines a legal voter registration?) easily give way to special topics found in deliberative discussions (what makes for *good* elections laws? What is *expedient* for ensuring an inclusive voting system?) And, frequently, the shared commonplace that “voting is the lifeblood of democracy” helps ground and sustain many relevant arguments on the topic.

So *topoi* help rhetors organize and explore research material. That kind of organization can help us develop our own positions on current issues.

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TEXT: BACK TO THE FUTURE OF TOPICS

Today, the commonplace books that rhetoricians once maintained to organize and develop topics for their own use have been replaced by books, libraries, television, radio, and the Internet. A lot of the work done by people in the media, government, business, and academia comes down to taming the flow of information that's now faster than ever. As an academic reader and writer, you're joining that effort. One of your goals should be to become a critical thinker and writer who possesses the skills to organize, explore, and develop topics on your own. You can gain those skills with practice. Lots of practice.

To help that practice, you can use some tools you're already familiar with and some others that may be new to you.

Finding Items for a Topic

Students sometimes believe they really don't know what to write and argue about. When the Internet was developing a few years ago as a common communication medium, a lot of commentators believed it would make being an informed researcher and citizen easier: after all, having access to the Internet means having access to more information than anyone has ever had access to before in human history. But the problem is that having access to the Internet means having access to more information than anyone has ever had access to before in human history. To start looking for and working with a topic, for instance, your first inclination might be to use Google and simply "search" for a term. If we tried to look for information on voting laws, though, we'd get a return of over 32,000,000 items in less than a second.



There are two problems with this approach (at least).

First, the quality of the items should cause us some doubt. This basic search returns wikipedia articles, news stories, government agency sources, and even a non-profit organization website. While some of these might be helpful, the items have neither given us a detailed "place" to begin our topic nor a clear "place" to stand.

Our second problem concerns the amount of information. We just can't sift through 32 million items, so we need a tool that does some of the selecting and organizing for us. [Google News](#) is one example of just such a tool. This site allows us to better focus on a topic as it unfolds in real time. If we use our "voting laws" search term, Google News and its "Realtime Coverage" option posts the most recent news articles in the subject, provides investigative "in depth" articles, makes available opinion pieces, and even includes a timeline for articles

published on the topic. These features give us places for specific types of items, and they help us because they are already loosely organized and defined.

Next Steps

Sites like Google News are great places to *begin* research on a topic because they provide a range of different types of items and a helpful model for how to organize those items. On the other hand, these sites are bad places to *end* your research. Google News, for instance, does not capture **scholarly resources**. These sources are often vital to provide even more in-depth and focused coverage on topics.

For the purposes of beginning your research topic, however, selecting a range of articles from an array of sources will help you explore the various “places” contained in any topic. For instance, a typical news story is usually brief and only has room to offer minimal information. The common topics most likely to occur here are those best used to communicate basic facts: cause-effect, definition, and/or antecedent/consequence. An investigative journalism essay, a longer piece taking much more time to develop and much more space for coverage, will be better suited for more nuanced kinds of common topics such as contradictions, limits, and/or similarity/difference. More particular examples, such as YouTube videos of a politician’s speeches, might offer exposure to those “special topics” found in deliberative, judicial, and ceremonial discourses. Opinion essays or “op-eds” might offer access to commonplaces and a good place to see how they are used.

But whichever source types you use, you should know that any well-researched paper will be supported by a balance of items from many different media, viewpoints, and levels of expertise.

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VIDEO: DEVELOPING YOUR TOPIC

The following video demonstrates the process of selecting and refining a research process. (Notice that this video also makes use of a metaphor to describe this process!)

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/x4XZxlqSuyY>

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SELF CHECK: TOPIC SELECTION

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TRY IT: TOPIC SELECTION

To Do

Remember that the goal of the Persuasive Essay is to **select a specific category of college students, define a practice that could lead to enhanced success for that category, and argue for the adoption of that practice.**

Step 1: Brainstorm Categories of College Students

List as many different “types” of college students that come to mind in a 3-minute window. These types might include degree or certification programs, gender, socioeconomic background, race, ethnicity, academic performance, sports, where they go to school, how they pay for it, and more.

Step 2: Reflect

At the end of 3 minutes, stop writing and review the list you generated. Which groups on that list seem most interesting to you? Which would you like to explore further, or learn more about? Which would you find value in helping to achieve success in school?

Circle your 2 or 3 top picks.

Step 3: Focus

Perform some initial research on the student types you circled in Step 2. Use the guide for initial research in this section to help you.

Based on what you learn from the first few articles you read and skim, narrow your selection to one type. You may combine up to two elements into one type of student, if you’d like. For instance, if you’re most interested in “student athletes,” you might further refine that as “female student athletes” or “college soccer players.”

Worked Example

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OUTCOME: PREWRITING

Evaluate prewriting activities

In the previous module, we used Topic Selection to pick our ideal destination. With that in mind, we now turn to the next phase, Prewriting.

In our metaphor of the writing process as a journey, once the “destination” of a particular topic has been decided, now we can focus on the planning for the trip itself. What are our options in how to get there? What to do once we’re there? What does the desired outcome look like?

In prewriting, every option is on the table. Some will turn out to be better than others, but it’s important to surface the good with the bad so we can make that evaluation later. What looks like a kooky idea initially, might just be the right way to keep you interested and challenged while writing, and end up with a final product that exceeds the goals of the project assignment.



What You’ll Learn To Do

- evaluate purpose and defining characteristics of prewriting
- evaluate various prewriting strategies
- evaluate rhetorical context for the writing task
- evaluate the role of a working thesis statement

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Text: Prewriting
- Video: Prewriting Strategies for Diverse Learners
- Text: Rhetorical Context
- Video: Working Thesis Statements
- Self Check: Prewriting
- Try It: Prewriting



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TEXT: PREWRITING

During the pre-writing stage, also known as the brainstorming stage, a writer seeks to generate and develop ideas about a topic.

Techniques and strategies

- using free mental associations that might eventually lead to written notes or outlines
- creating a personal inventory of interests and fascinations, likes and dislikes
- conducting online or print catalog searches using keywords and questions
- using the inductive or deductive reasoning process to identify a manageable topic
- reading a text that addresses a similar topic; perhaps reading the table of contents, index, and chapter headings and subheadings to gain insight on the topic
- creating a uniform set of questions to be answered about a topic (e.g. the “five Ws and an H” model: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?)
- writing handwritten notes—organized or disorganized—on a note card, on paper, or in electronic form
- writing a preliminary outline—formal or informal—about the intended topic and subtopics
- creating a graphic organization of ideas (e.g. Venn diagram or circle clusters)
- writing a draft of the thesis or hypothesis with an outline of key supporting details
- creating a very rough draft of the opening paragraph that includes a topical overview

Starting off on the right foot

The term “pre-writing” may be a bit misleading because writing can and often does occur at this critical stage. For example, written notes and outlines, including graphic organizers, can serve as a record of one’s ideas and the sources of those ideas. A preliminary thesis or hypothesis could inform the process and the product.

Many people do brainstorm via their thoughts without recording those ideas and sources in permanent form prior to the next steps in the writing process. Most emerging writers, however, need to record their pre-writing ideas in permanent form so that those ideas can clearly inform and guide the thinking and writing process, resulting in a coherent, well-organized product or text.

Many students — and some teachers — want to skip the pre-writing stage because they see it as unnecessarily burdensome and time-consuming. However, teachers who dismiss the pre-writing stage as being completely unnecessary are performing a disservice to many of their students. Pre-writing is an essential part of the entire writing process because it enables the writer to begin documenting the process by which the eventual product will be formed and evaluated. It is part of a procedure that is necessary for accountability and reliability. Most professions include accountability and reliability in their standard operating procedures as written reports of preparatory work for use by the practitioner and for potential legal documentation and reference. Writers are no less responsible for accountability for their work than are lawyers and medical personnel.



Resources

Skipping the pre-writing stage is like taking a vacation without first choosing a destination: If you don't know where you're going, how will you get there? Fortunately, pre-writing can take many forms, and there are strategies that suit every type of writer.

The strategies and processes used in the pre-writing stage not only help the writer formulate a topic and solidify ideas, they also serve as a kind of rehearsal for the rest of the writing process. As the writer uses the vocabulary associated with a particular topic, he or she becomes more well-versed in the subject and is able to express ideas with more confidence, organization, and clarity. All of this brings to mind the old joke, "How do you get to Carnegie Hall?"

The answer, of course: "Practice. Practice. Practice."

Just as a musician must practice his instrument in order to achieve his goal, the practice undertaken during the pre-writing stage guides the writer toward a specific goal: developing a well-defined topic that will eventually be couched in the language of a succinct thesis or hypothesis.

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VIDEO: PREWRITING STRATEGIES FOR DIVERSE LEARNERS

Learning Styles

The video below moves beyond a simple explanation of what prewriting is, and shows how different prewriting activities partner best with particular learning styles.

What's Your Learning Style?

Have you taken a Learning Styles assessment to help you determine your preferred Learning Style? Knowing your preferences will help guide you to best practices for studying and completing projects in all your college classes.

Common Learning Styles include

- Visual
- Auditory
- Reading/Writing
- Kinesthetic

Most of don't fall purely in one category, but rather are a blend of two or more preferences.

If you'd like to know more about your preferred Learning Styles, try this free online tool: [The VARK Questionnaire](#).

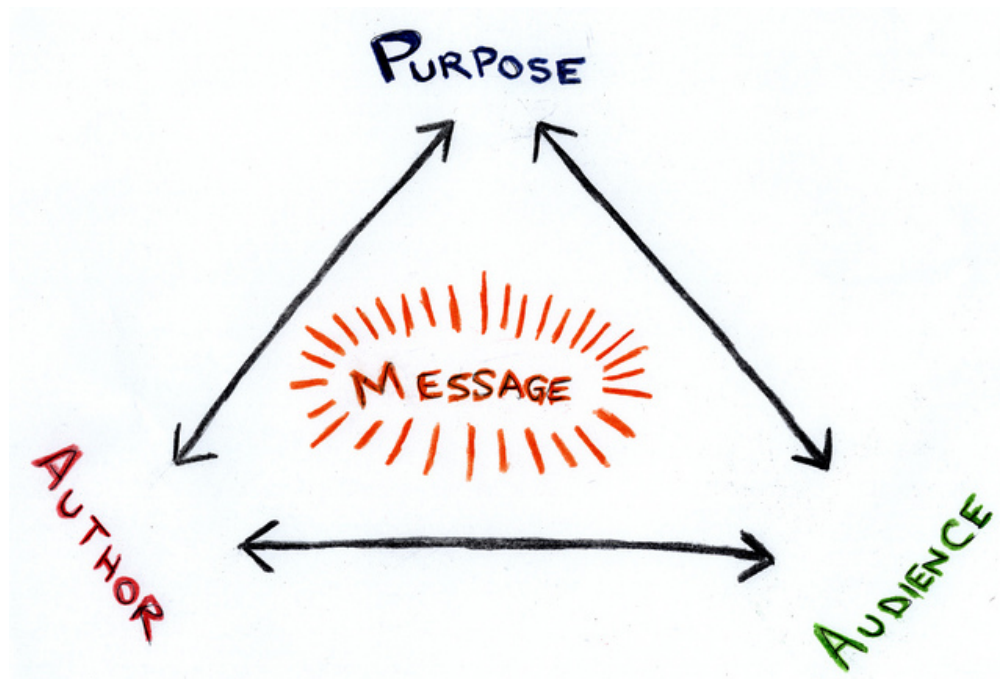
This video was produced for elementary school teachers, which means that its target audience doesn't include you, a college writer. However, it still offers valuable insight into the relationship between prewriting and learning styles, and how to harness your own learning style to use the most effective prewriting strategy for your personal needs.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/Cnq93SbEuX0>

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TEXT: RHETORICAL CONTEXT

Any piece of writing is shaped by external factors before the first word is ever set down on the page. These factors are referred to as the **rhetorical situation**, or **rhetorical context**, and are often presented in the form of a pyramid.



The three key factors—purpose, author, and audience—all work together to influence what the text itself says, and how it says it. Let's examine each of the three in more detail.

Purpose

Any time you are preparing to write, you should first ask yourself, "Why am I writing?" All writing, no matter the type, has a purpose. Purpose will sometimes be given to you (by a teacher, for example), while other times, you will decide for yourself. As the author, it's up to you to make sure that purpose is clear not only for yourself, but also—especially—for your audience. If your purpose is not clear, your audience is not likely to receive your intended message.

There are, of course, many different reasons to write (e.g., to inform, to entertain, to persuade, to ask questions), and you may find that some writing has more than one purpose. When this happens, be sure to consider any conflict between purposes, and remember that you will usually focus on one main purpose as primary.

Bottom line: Thinking about your purpose before you begin to write can help you create a more effective piece of writing.

Why Purpose Matters

- If you've ever listened to a lecture or read an essay and wondered "so what" or "what is this person talking about," then you know how frustrating it can be when an author's purpose is not clear. By clearly defining your purpose before you begin writing, it's less likely you'll be that author who leaves the audience wondering.
- If readers can't identify the purpose in a text, they usually quit reading. You can't deliver a message to an audience who quits reading.
- If a teacher can't identify the purpose in your text, they will likely assume you didn't understand the assignment and, chances are, you won't receive a good grade.

Useful Questions

Consider how the answers to the following questions may affect your writing:

- What is my primary purpose for writing? How do I want my audience to think, feel, or respond after they read my writing?
- Do my audience's expectations affect my purpose? Should they?
- How can I best get my point across (e.g., tell a story, argue, cite other sources)?
- Do I have any secondary or tertiary purposes? Do any of these purposes conflict with one another or with my primary purpose?

Audience

In order for your writing to be maximally effective, you have to think about the audience you're writing for and adapt your writing approach to their needs, expectations, backgrounds, and interests. Being aware of your audience helps you make better decisions about what to say and how to say it. For example, you have a better idea if you will need to define or explain any terms, and you can make a more conscious effort not to say or do anything that would offend your audience.

Sometimes you know who will read your writing – for example, if you are writing an email to your boss. Other times you will have to guess who is likely to read your writing – for example, if you are writing a newspaper editorial. You will often write with a primary audience in mind, but there may be secondary and tertiary audiences to consider as well.

What to Think About

When analyzing your audience, consider these points. Doing this should make it easier to create a profile of your audience, which can help guide your writing choices.

Background-knowledge or Experience — In general, you don't want to merely repeat what your audience already knows about the topic you're writing about; you want to build on it. On the other hand, you don't want to talk over their heads. Anticipate their amount of previous knowledge or experience based on elements like their age, profession, or level of education.

Expectations and Interests — Your audience may expect to find specific points or writing approaches, especially if you are writing for a teacher or a boss. Consider not only what they *do* want to read about, but also what they *do not* want to read about.

Attitudes and Biases — Your audience may have predetermined feelings about you or your topic, which can affect how hard you have to work to win them over or appeal to them. The audience's attitudes and biases also affect their expectations — for example, if they expect to disagree with you, they will likely look for evidence that you have considered their side as well as your own.

Demographics — Consider what else you know about your audience, such as their age, gender, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, political preferences, religious affiliations, job or professional background, and area of residence. Think about how these demographics may affect how much background your audience has about your topic, what types of expectations or interests they have, and what attitudes or biases they may have.

Applying Your Analysis to Your Writing

Here are some general rules about writing, each followed by an explanation of how audience might affect it. Consider how you might adapt these guidelines to your specific situation and audience. (Note: This is not an exhaustive list. Furthermore, you need not follow the order set up here, and you likely will not address all of these approaches.) (Note: (Rules adapted from David McMurrey's online text, *Power Tools for Technical Communication*))

Add information readers need to understand your document / omit information readers don't need. Part of your audience may know a lot about your topic, while others don't know much at all. When this happens, you have to decide if you should provide explanation or not. If you don't offer explanation, you risk alienating or confusing those who lack the information. If you offer explanation, you create more work for yourself and you risk boring those who already know the information, which may negatively affect the larger view those readers have of you and your work. In the end, you may want to consider how many people need an explanation, whether those people are in your primary audience (rather than a secondary audience), how much time you have to complete your writing, and any length limitations placed on you.

Change the level of the information you currently have. Even if you have the right information, you might be explaining it in a way that doesn't make sense to your audience. For example, you wouldn't want to use highly advanced or technical vocabulary in a document for first-grade students or even in a document for a general audience, such as the audience of a daily newspaper, because most likely some (or even all) of the audience wouldn't understand you.

Add examples to help readers understand. Sometimes just changing the level of information you have isn't enough to get your point across, so you might try adding an example. If you are trying to explain a complex or abstract issue to an audience with a low education level, you might offer a metaphor or an analogy to something they are more familiar with to help them understand. Or, if you are writing for an audience that disagrees with your stance, you might offer examples that create common ground and/or help them see your perspective.

Change the level of your examples. Once you've decided to include examples, you should make sure you aren't offering examples your audience finds unacceptable or confusing. For example, some teachers find personal stories unacceptable in academic writing, so you might use a metaphor instead.

Change the organization of your information. Again, you might have the correct information, but you might be presenting it in a confusing or illogical order. If you are writing a paper about physics for a physics professor who has his or her PhD, chances are you won't need to begin your paper with a lot of background. However, you probably would want to include background information in the beginning of your paper if you were writing for a fellow student in an introductory physics class.

Strengthen transitions. You might make decisions about transitions based on your audience's expectations. For example, most teachers expect to find topic sentences, which serve as transitions between paragraphs. In a shorter piece of writing such as a memo to co-workers, however, you would probably be less concerned with topic sentences and more concerned with transition words. In general, if you feel your readers may have a hard time making connections, providing transition words (e.g., "therefore" or "on the other hand") can help lead them.

Write stronger introductions — both for the whole document and for major sections. In general, readers like to get the big picture up front. You can offer this in your introduction and thesis statement, or in smaller introductions to major sections within your document. However, you should also consider how much time

your audience will have to read your document. If you are writing for a boss who already works long hours and has little or no free time, you wouldn't want to write an introduction that rambles on for two and a half pages before getting into the information your boss is looking for.

Create topic sentences for paragraphs and paragraph groups. A topic sentence (the first sentence of a paragraph) functions much the same way an introduction does – it offers readers a preview of what's coming and how that information relates to the overall document or your overall purpose. As mentioned earlier, some readers will expect topic sentences. However, even if your audience isn't expecting them, topic sentences can make it easier for readers to skim your document while still getting the main idea and the connections between smaller ideas.

Change sentence style and length. Using the same types and lengths of sentences can become boring after awhile. If you already worry that your audience may lose interest in your issue, you might want to work on varying the types of sentences you use.

Use graphics, or use different graphics. Graphics can be another way to help your audience visualize an abstract or complex topic. Sometimes a graphic might be more effective than a metaphor or step-by-step explanation. Graphics may also be an effective choice if you know your audience is going to skim your writing quickly; a graphic can be used to draw the reader's eye to information you want to highlight. However, keep in mind that some audiences may see graphics as inappropriate.

Author

The final unique aspect of anything written down is who it is, exactly, that does the writing. In some sense, this is the part you have the most control over—it's you who's writing, after all! You can harness the aspects of yourself that will make the text most effective to its audience, for its purpose.

Analyzing yourself as an author allows you to make explicit why your audience should pay attention to what you have to say, and why they should listen to you on the particular subject at hand.

Questions for Consideration

- What personal motivations do you have for writing about this topic?
- What background knowledge do you have on this subject matter?
- What personal experiences directly relate to this subject? How do those personal experiences influence your perspectives on the issue?
- What formal training or professional experience do you have related to this subject?
- What skills do you have as a communicator? How can you harness those in this project?
- What should audience members know about you, in order to trust what you have to tell them? How will you convey that in your writing?

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VIDEO: WORKING THESIS STATEMENTS

Thesis Statement Basics

The following video offers a writing instructor's perspective about how fundamental a thesis statement is to organizing an effective persuasive, researched essay. While he talks about many aspects of a thesis, it particularly stresses the flexibility you're allowed while writing, revising, and revisiting a thesis many times as you build an essay.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/SOCxXv7aqXw>

Thesis Analysis

The Writing Center at The University of North Carolina Chapel Hill offers these questions to consider as you examine the effectiveness of a thesis statement. It's effective strategy to revisit these questions several times throughout the writing process, to measure how well your thesis serves your project as it continues to grow and evolve.

- What is your general topic or what problem area are you interested in? How would you express it in a few words?
- What central question are you trying to answer about your topic?
- What do you think is the best answer to your central question? From your research so far, what have you concluded? What is your main point about your topic?
- In one sentence, how would you describe your findings to someone who asked you about your research?
- How does your idea differ from other views you have read? What do you have to say about your topic that is new?
- Ask why? And how? Of what seems like a thesis statement when it begins to emerge. What relationship exists between the ideas you are describing? For example, are you suggesting that one idea causes another? Contradicts another? Subsumes another?

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SELF CHECK: PREWRITING

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TRY IT: PREWRITING

To Do

The term “college student” corrals a wide range of types of students in a single term. It stands to reason that different groups of people have different motivations for entering higher education, different goals while they are there, and different definitions of success once they graduate.

For this essay, you will **select a specific category of college students, define a practice that could lead to enhanced success for that category, and argue for the adoption of that practice.**

Starting from the perspective of the student group you previously identified for your topic, concentrate on the types of challenges that seem to face that particular population of students.

1. Create a list, mind-map, or 10-minute free write that explores the challenges specific to your chosen student group, related to higher education.
2. Circle the 2 challenges that jump out to you from this activity, that seem the most relevant or important.
3. Do you have ideas at this point of how either of these challenges might be addressed?
 - Write a sentence or two that selects one challenge and proposes a solution for it, specific to this student population.
 - What particular benefit will come to your group of students, if they make the change you suggest?
 - The answers to these two questions will form your working thesis statement. This can change later, but will give you a focus for the next steps of the writing process.

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OUTCOME: FINDING EVIDENCE

Evaluate activities to find evidence in support of a claim

Once a working thesis statement is in place, your essay has begun to establish a **claim**—something the project is stating to be true. No matter how elegant the claim itself is, though, it’s only a small piece of the writing task. A claim by itself is powerless to influence a critically-thinking audience, and you should assume that any audience reading your work will consist of critical thinkers.

Consider this claim made by the character Andy in the TV show *The Office*:

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/dkx6ABckzVg>

Unlike his conversational partner Dwight, you may find Andy’s claims unconvincing because he provides no **evidence** to support his assertions.

Returning to the Journey

If we revisit the “writing process as a journey” metaphor, the finding evidence stage is often one of the most rewarding stages. Now that the destination’s been determined, we need to know what will be necessary to get us there. Locating evidence will help us identify all the resources we need for our writing “trip.”

What You Will Learn To Do

- evaluate experience or examples from personal life as they relate to a topic
- evaluate strategies for preliminary research on a topic
- evaluate strategies for synthesis of research and personal ideas
- evaluate effective techniques for quoting a source
- evaluate effective techniques for paraphrasing a source
- evaluate effective techniques for summarizing a source



The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Video: Using Personal Examples
- Text: Performing Background Research
- Text: Listening to Sources, Talking to Sources
- Self Check: Finding Evidence
- Try It: Finding Evidence

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VIDEO: USING PERSONAL EXAMPLES

Effective Uses of Personal Examples

The following video addresses the most effective ways to use personal examples in a persuasive essay, and shows what this looks like in action.

Note: the video discusses a particular persuasive essay situation, the Advanced Placement timed essay. The same advice also applies more broadly to other persuasive writing tasks, however.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/lwL10FkpcE0>

Personal Examples as Pathos

Though personal examples in persuasive writing can serve multiple purposes, they most often (and most powerfully) tend to underscore **emotional appeals** to readers. Emotional arguments are known by the term **pathos**, and serve as a way to help convince readers to agree with your thesis.

A good synonym for pathos is “presence,” by which we mean the extent to which a writer tries to create a feeling of actual, physical proximity. It’s very difficult to make writing like speech: one of the clear differences is that, in speech, the one making the argument and the audience are in the same space, whether actual or virtual. Writing takes away that necessity of shared space, which has clear advantages but also some distinct drawbacks: a writer just doesn’t have the same resources available. So, writers interested in pathos have to get inventive to make audiences/readers feel like they’re really encountering an appeal.

Several time-honored strategies can enhance your pathos appeal in many arguments:

- **Use vivid, concrete language and details.** It might be a good idea to look at one or two of the style-related chapters for a start here: clear grammatical subjects and action-oriented verbs are extremely useful. So are parallel sentence elements. The advice, “show—don’t tell” may be something you’ve heard before, but it’s definitely valuable, so try not to let claims go by without clear, relatable examples when you’re emphasizing pathos.
- **Tell stories.** It seems like every election cycle—especially the four-year presidential ones—at least one candidate will tell a story about Person X, a working-class resident of a small Midwestern town who’s trying to raise a family on a small salary and who doesn’t have good health insurance. It’s a strategy that repeats itself because it can be effective: it encourages audience members to identify with someone “like them,” and it does so in a way that uses one of the most basic human rhetorical strategies: narrative. But note that it *can* be effective: it isn’t always. If, for example, a politician uses the same story over and over again, it can clearly lose its effect. If the story seems too conveniently matched to an argument, it can seem self-serving and overly manipulated. If it’s too dramatic or graphic, it can put some listeners or readers off. So, be careful here: try out your story on a variety of potential readers.
- **Remember connotations, not just denotations.** Connotation refers to informal but still powerful definitions of a word, term, or phrase. It doesn’t matter what the **denotation** or “dictionary” meaning might be if an audience has a particular reaction to your word choice. For example, the Utah governor’s plan to sue the national government to reclaim federally owned land in the state may be a “sound economic decision” to some people but a “fatally flawed land grab” to others. Depending on the audience, one phrase might be very welcome, but the other might be fighting words.
- **Consider images and other visually diverse material.** Photographs, charts, graphs, and other visual elements can condense a lot of what would otherwise be writing into a compact space with dramatic effects. While you may not have too much latitude to use images in traditional academic writing, the conventions are changing, so it’s worth talking about with your instructors/professors. To be sure, in other kinds of writing for broader/more popular and even professional audiences, images can be extremely important.
- **THINK OF THE CHILDREN!!!** It’s amazing how many pathos appeals involve children. And, for that matter, the elderly. We would definitely never claim that there are a lot of “universal” appeals that work across political persuasions, ages, genders, and cultures, but these seem to be at the top of that very short list. This isn’t to tell you to rope in children whenever, because it may feel forced, depending on the context. But, at the very least, be alert as you notice pathos appeals in the rhetoric around you to the prevalence of sensitive or vulnerable populations.

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TEXT: PERFORMING BACKGROUND RESEARCH

After you have decided on a topic, you may not be very familiar with it. In that case, you will want to dig into some background research to educate yourself and find a way to narrow your focus to be manageable. Here are a few questions to ask as you dig.

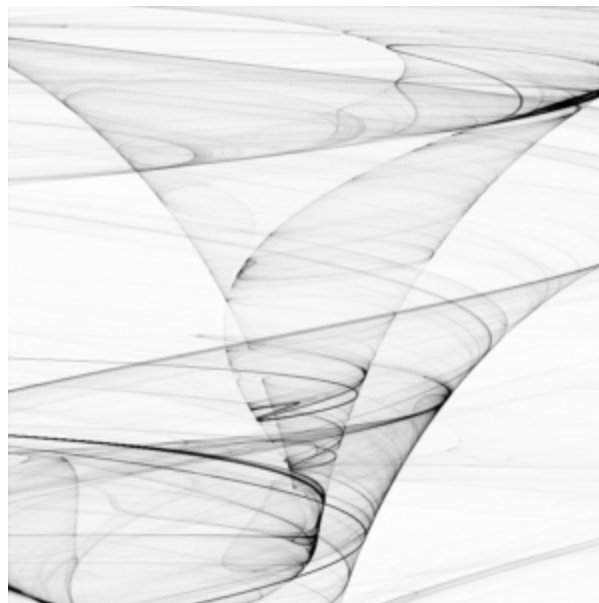
- What is the history of the issue? How have events affected it?
- What are the arguments that recur?
- Which areas of study (e.g., psychology, popular culture studies, religion, science, etc.) have addressed the topic?
- Who are the major players? People? Countries? Corporations?
- Which terms, combined with the major search terms you've already used, lead you to more detail?

Places to look for background research:

- **Newspapers.** You can collect information to pursue for the deep research in traditional, low-tech newspapers. You'll find several publications around campus, and the library has many more. Be critically evaluative of what you discover!
- **Encyclopedias.** Reference resources, like encyclopedias, dictionaries, biographies, etc., can give you a quick introduction to a word, idea, person, entity, or topic. These sources are intended to inform and introduce only and to deliver information that is as unbiased and as balanced as possible.
- **Web searching.** Spend some time on the web reading: there is absolutely nothing wrong with it. When you see terminology and other information repeat itself across sites, you'll know you're likely on the right track. But be warned: it's usually even more important to confirm the quality of the information you find on the open web than it is to confirm the quality of what you read in more proprietary sources. Sometimes misinformation spreads faster than the facts, so comparing and contrasting what you discover will lend to the credibility of the information. Though you may use websites, finding an authoritative, academic resource to re-state what you have found will lend authority to your own voice and writing.

Whenever you think about your topic, pay close attention to the issues authors address in your background information. These major subject areas will lead you to databases that have articles on a particular subject. Think about the following:

- How can I distill the issues and their questions into one- or two-word concepts? Are there significant recurring terms or phrases?



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TEXT: LISTENING TO SOURCES, TALKING TO SOURCES

Principle 1: Listen to your sources

Excerpt from student essay

These insights from cognitive science enable us to critically assess the claims made on both sides of the education reform debate. On one hand, they cast doubt on the claims of education reformers that measuring teachers' performance by student test scores is the best way to improve education....

At the same time, opponents of education reform should acknowledge that these research findings should prompt us to take a fresh look at how we educate our children. While Stan Karp of Rethinking Schools is correct when he argues that "data-driven formulas [based on standardized testing] lack both statistical credibility and a basic understanding of the human motivations and relationships that make good schooling possible" ((Note: http://www.rethinkingschools.org/archive/26_03/26_03_karp.shtm)), it doesn't necessarily follow that all education reform proposals lack merit. Challenging standards, together with specific training in emotional self-regulation, will likely enable more students to succeed.

Have you ever had the maddening experience of arguing with someone who twisted your words to make it seem like you were saying something you weren't? Novice writers sometimes inadvertently misrepresent their sources when they quote very minor points from an article or even positions that the authors of an article disagree with. It often happens when students approach their sources with the goal of finding snippets that align with their own opinion. For example, the passage above contains the phrase "measuring teachers' performance by student test scores is the best way to improve education." An inexperienced writer might include that quote in a paper without making it clear that the author(s) of the source actually dispute that very claim. Doing so is not intentionally fraudulent, but it reveals that the paper-writer isn't really thinking about and responding to claims and arguments made by others. In that way, it harms his or her credibility.

Academic journal articles are especially likely to be misrepresented by student writers because their literature review sections often summarize a number of contrasting viewpoints. For example, sociologists Jennifer C. Lee and Jeremy Staff wrote a paper in which they note that high-schoolers who spend more hours at a job are more likely to drop out of school. ((Note: Lee, J.C. and Jeremy Staff, "When Work Matters: The Varying Impact of Work Intensity on High School Drop Out," *Sociology of Education* 80, no. 2 (2007): 158-178.)) However, Lee and Staff's analysis finds that working more hours doesn't actually make a student more likely to drop out. Instead, the students who express less interest in school are both more likely to work a lot of hours *and* more likely to drop out. In short, Lee and Staff argue that disaffection with school causes students to drop-out, not working at a job. In reviewing prior research about the impact of work on dropping out, Lee and Staff write "Paid work, especially when it is considered intensive, reduces grade point averages, time spent on homework, educational aspirations, and the likelihood of completing high school." ((Note: *Ibid.*, 159.)) If you included that quote without explaining how it fits into Lee and Staff's actual argument, you would be misrepresenting that source.

Principle 2: Provide context



Another error beginners often make is to drop in a quote without any context. If you simply quote, “Students begin preschool with a set of self-regulation skills that are a product of their genetic inheritance and their family environment” (Willingham, 2011, p.24), your reader is left wondering who Willingham is, why he or she is included here, and where this statement fits into his or her larger work. The whole point of incorporating sources is to situate your own insights in the conversation. As part of that, you should provide some kind of context the first time you use that source. Some examples:

Willingham, a cognitive scientist, claims that ...

Research in cognitive science has found that ... (Willingham, 2011).

Willingham argues that “Students begin preschool with a set of self-regulation skills that are a product of their genetic inheritance and their family environment” (Willingham, 2011, p.24). Drawing on findings in cognitive science, he explains “...”

As the second example above shows, providing a context doesn’t mean writing a brief biography of every author in your bibliography—it just means including some signal about why that source is included in your text.

Even more baffling to your reader is when quoted material does not fit into the flow of the text. For example, a novice student might write,

Schools and parents shouldn’t set limits on how much teenagers are allowed to work at jobs. “We conclude that intensive work does not affect the likelihood of high school dropout among youths who have a high propensity to spend long hours on the job” (Lee and Staff, 2007, p. 171). Teens should be trusted to learn how to manage their time.

The reader is thinking, who is this sudden, ghostly “we”? Why should this source be believed? If you find that passages with quotes in your draft are awkward to read out loud, that’s a sign that you need to contextualize the quote more effectively. Here’s a version that puts the quote in context:

Schools and parents shouldn’t set limits on how much teenagers are allowed to work at jobs. Lee and Staff’s carefully designed study found that “intensive work does not affect the likelihood of high school dropout

among youths who have a high propensity to spend long hours on the job” (2007, p. 171). Teens should be trusted to learn how to manage their time.

In this latter example, it’s now clear that Lee and Staff are scholars and that their empirical study is being used as evidence for this argumentative point. Using a source in this way invites readers to check out Lee and Staff’s work for themselves if they doubt this claim.

Many writing instructors encourage their students to contextualize their use of sources by making a “quotation sandwich”; that is, introduce the quote in some way and then follow it up with your own words. If you’ve made a bad habit of dropping in unintroduced quotes, the quotation sandwich idea may help you improve your skills, but in general you don’t need to approach every quote or paraphrase as a three-part structure to have well integrated sources. You should, however, avoid ending a paragraph with a quotation. If you’re struggling to figure out what to write after a quote or close paraphrase, it may be that you haven’t yet figured out what role the quote is playing in your own analysis. If that happens to you a lot, try writing the whole first draft in your own words and then incorporate material from sources as you revise.

Principle 3: Use sources efficiently

Some student writers are in a rut of only quoting whole sentences. Some others get overly enamored of extended block quotes and the scholarly look they give to the page. These aren’t the worst sins of academic writing, but they get in the way of one of the key principles of writing with sources: shaping quotes and paraphrases efficiently. Efficiency follows from the second principle, because when you fully incorporate sources into your own explicit argument, you zero in on the phrases, passages, and ideas that are relevant to your points. It’s a very good sign for your paper when most quotes are short (key terms, phrases, or parts of sentences) and the longer quotes (whole sentences and passages) are clearly justified by the discussion in which they’re embedded. Every bit of every quote should feel indispensable to the paper. An overabundance of long quotes usually means that your own argument is undeveloped. The most incandescent quotes will not hide that fact from your professor.



Also, some student writers forget that quoting is not the only way to incorporate sources. Paraphrasing and summarizing are sophisticated skills that are often more appropriate to use than direct quoting. The first two paragraphs of the example passage above do not include any quotations, even though they are both clearly focused on presenting the work of others. Student writers may avoid paraphrasing out of fear of plagiarizing, and it’s true that a poorly executed paraphrase will make it seem like the student writer is fraudulently claiming the wordsmithing work of others as his or her own. Sticking to direct quotes seems safer. However, it is worth your time to master paraphrasing because it often helps you be more clear and concise, drawing out only those elements that are relevant to the thread of your analysis.

For example, here’s a passage from a hypothetical paper with a block quote that is fully relevant to the argument but, nevertheless, inefficient:

Drawing on a lifetime of research, Kahneman concludes our brains are prone to error: ((Note: Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 416-7.))

System 1 registers the cognitive ease with which it processes information, but it does not generate a warning signal when it becomes unreliable. Intuitive answers come to mind quickly and confidently, whether they originate from skills or from heuristics. There is no simple way for System 2 to distinguish between a skilled and a heuristic response. Its only recourse is to slow down and attempt to construct an answer on its own, which it is reluctant to do because it is indolent. Many suggestions of System 1 are casually endorsed with minimal checking, as in the bat-and-ball problem.

While people can get better at recognizing and avoiding these errors, Kahneman suggests, the more robust solutions involve developing procedures within organizations to promote careful, effortful thinking in making important decisions and judgments.

Even a passage that is important to reference and is well contextualized in the flow of the paper will be inefficient if it introduces terms and ideas that aren't central to the analysis within the paper. Imagine, for example, that other parts of this hypothetical paper use Kahneman's other terms for System 1 (fast thinking) and System 2 (slow thinking); the sudden encounter of "System 1" and "System 2" would be confusing and tedious for your reader. Similarly, the terms "heuristics" and "bat-and-ball problem" might be unfamiliar to your reader. Their presence in the block quote just muddies the waters. In this case, a paraphrase is a much better choice. Here's an example passage that uses a paraphrase to establish the same points more clearly and efficiently:

Drawing on a lifetime of research, Kahneman summarizes that our brains are prone to error because they necessarily rely on cognitive shortcuts that may or may not yield valid judgments.⁹ We have the capacity to stop and examine our assumptions, Kahneman points out, but we often want to avoid that hard work. As a result, we tend to accept our quick, intuitive responses. While people can get better at recognizing and avoiding these errors, Kahneman suggests that the more robust solutions involve developing procedures within organizations to promote careful, effortful thinking in making important decisions and judgments.

Not only is the paraphrased version shorter (97 words versus 151), it is clearer and more efficient because it highlights the key ideas, avoiding specific terms and examples that aren't used in the rest of the paper.

Whether you choose a long quote, short quote, paraphrase or summary depends on the role that the source is playing in your analysis. The trick is to make deliberate, thoughtful decisions about how to incorporate ideas and words from others.

Paraphrasing, summarizing, and the mechanical conventions of quoting take a lot of practice to master. If you suspect that you're in a quoting rut, try out some new ways of incorporating sources.

Principle 4: Choose precise verbs of attribution

It's time to get beyond the all-purpose "says." And please don't look up "says" in the thesaurus and substitute verbs like "proclaim" (unless there was actually a proclamation) or "pronounce" (unless there was actually a pronouncement). Here are 15 useful alternatives:

claims	asserts	relates	recounts	complains
reasons	proposes	suggests (if the author is speculating or hypothesizing)	contests (disagrees)	concludes
shows	argues	explains	indicates	points out

More precise choices like these carry a lot more information than "says", enabling you to relate more with fewer words. For one thing, they can quickly convey what kind of idea you're citing: a speculative one ("postulates")? A conclusive one ("determines")? A controversial one ("counters")? You can further show how you're incorporating these sources into your own narrative. For example, if you write that an author "claims" something, you're presenting yourself as fairly neutral about that claim. If you instead write that the author "shows" something, then you signal to your reader that you find that evidence more convincing. "Suggests" on the other hand is a much weaker endorsement.

Conclusion

Like so many things in adult life, writing in college is often both more liberating and burdensome than writing in high school and before. On the one hand, students might have felt in their high-school experiences that their own opinions didn't matter in academic writing, and that they can't make any claims that aren't exactly paralleled by a pedigreed quotation. Writing papers based on their own insights and opinions can seem freeing in contrast.

At the same time, a college student attending full time may be expected to have original and well-considered ideas about pre-Columbian Latin American history, congressional redistricting, sports in society, post-colonial literatures, and nano-technology, all in about two weeks. Under these conditions, it's easy to see why some would long for the days when simple, competent reporting did the job.

You probably won't have an authentic intellectual engagement with *every* college writing assignment, but approaching your written work as an opportunity to dialogue with the material can help you find the momentum you need to succeed with this work.

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SELF CHECK: FINDING EVIDENCE

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TRY IT: FINDING EVIDENCE

To Do

Revisit the working thesis you have for your essay so far. That thesis makes **claims**: it argues that a particular group of students will experience stronger college success outcomes if they adopt a particular practice.

Make a list of evidence that will be required to prove to your reader that each of the following claims is true.

Claim 1: the student population you've identified faces challenges in college success

Claim 2: the behavior or practice you've identified will offer that student population a benefit

Some evidence might come from personal experience; some evidence might come from what you've witnessed others experience; some evidence will come from research you conduct shortly; and some might be guesses or hypotheses of what you assume to be true.

Include 3-5 items of evidence for each claim.

For each item on the list, do some initial research that helps you understand each. See if you can find people who've had similar experiences, or suggestions for college success, or data regarding what practices are most effective.

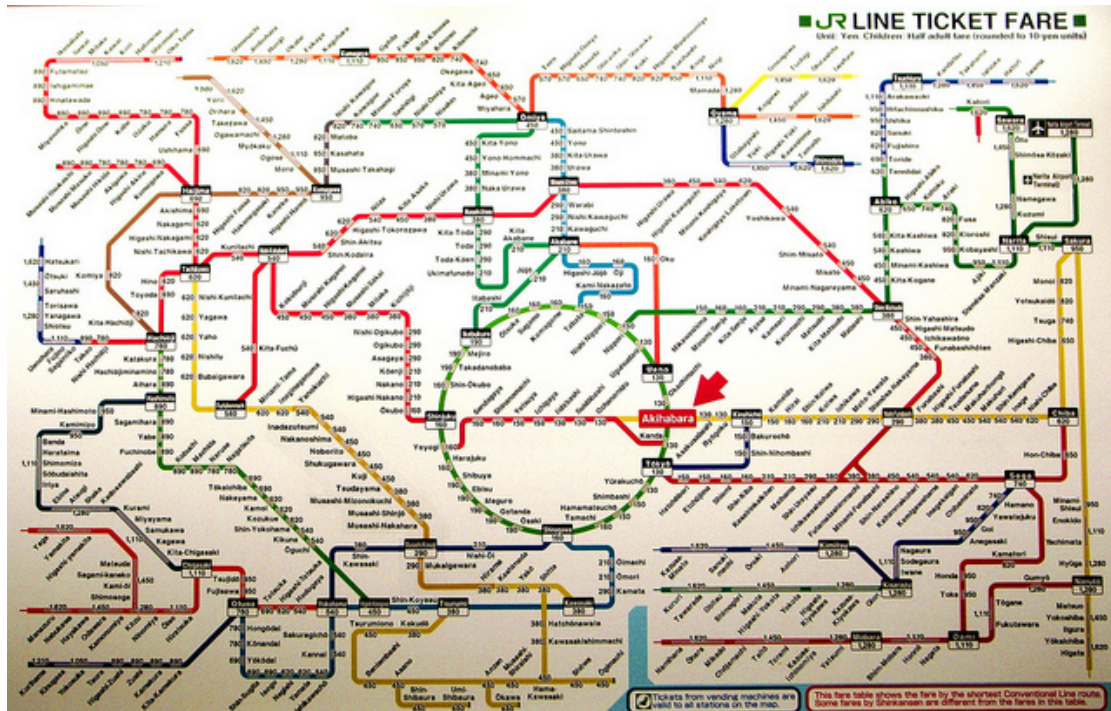
Write two brief paragraphs (3-5 sentences, each) summarizing what you find in your initial research. One paragraph will address each claim and what the research tells you about it.

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OUTCOME: ORGANIZING

Evaluate essay organizational techniques

Destination set, supplies gathered . . . now, how do we get to where we're going?



The organizing stage of the writing process will help us determine this. Some students may have had bad experiences with writing outlines for assignments in the past, or failed to see the need to map out every detail ahead of time. However, the organizing stage encompasses much more than outlining, and is more flexible than it might have seemed while in high school.

The organizing stage is also very profitable in time management, as well. A bit of time invested in organizing, will have huge payoffs later during drafting. If you're pressed for time you might feel tempted to skip this step, but please don't! Skipping the organizing stage will mean you end up spending much more time during drafting and revising than you would have otherwise.

What You Will Learn To Do

- evaluate appropriate rhetorical pattern for the topic and the task
- evaluate components of an effective thesis statement
- evaluate components of an effective logical argument
- evaluate components of an effective paragraph
- evaluate components of an effective essay body
- evaluate components of an effective introduction
- evaluate components of an effective conclusion

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Text: Moving Beyond the Five-Paragraph Theme
- Text: Introduction to Argument
- Text: The Three-Story Thesis
- Text: Organically Structured Arguments
- Video: Logic and Structure
- Text: The Perfect Paragraph
- Text: Introductions and Conclusions
- Self Check: Organizing
- Try It: Organizing



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TEXT: MOVING BEYOND THE FIVE-PARAGRAPH THEME

One of the major transitions between high-school writing and college writing involves a wider set of options of how to organize an essay. Choosing the right structure is up to you, and depends on the application of critical thinking skills to select the best fit for your purpose.

In high school, the SAT and other standardized testing formats value a very formulaic, rigid approach to essay writing. 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. 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.

Figures 3.1 and 3.2 contrast the standard five-paragraph theme and the organic college paper. The five-paragraph theme, outlined in Figure 3.1, 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 3.2, 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 3.1) it hardly matters which of the three reasons you explain first or second. In the more organic structure (Figure 3.2) each paragraph specifically leads to the next.

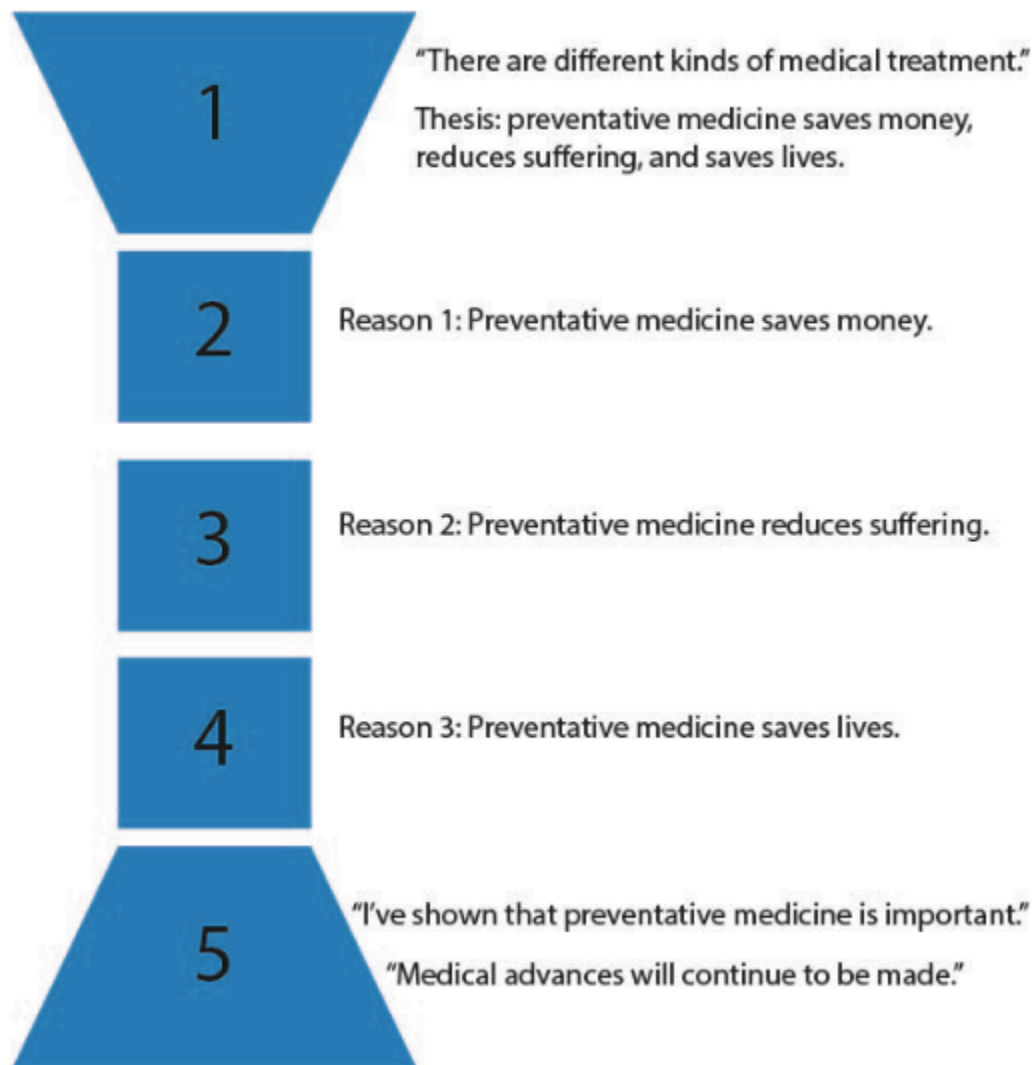


Figure 3.1, The five-paragraph "theme"

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.

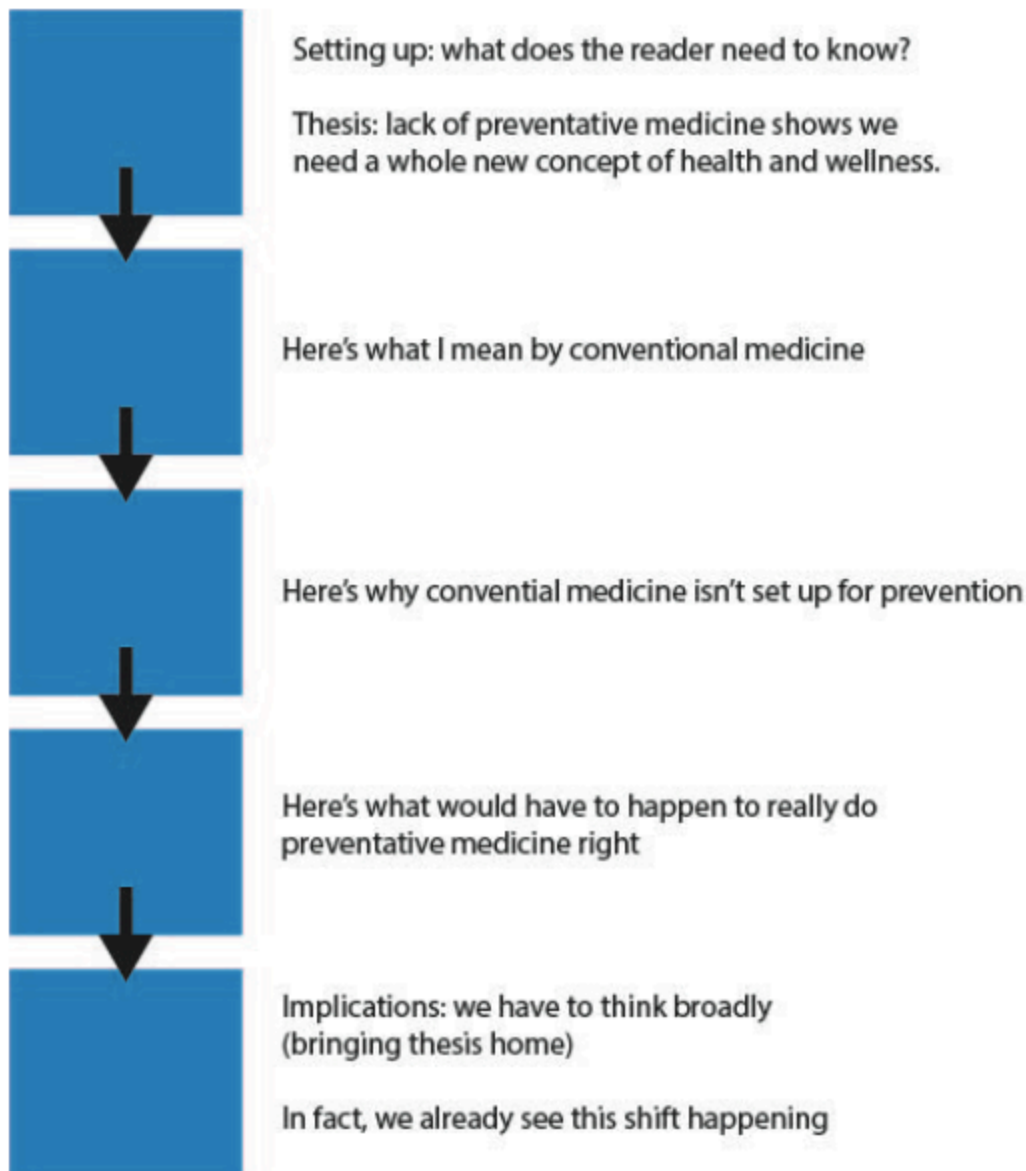


Figure 3.2, *The organic college paper*

The substantial time you spent mastering the five-paragraph form in Figure 3.1 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.

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TEXT: THE THREE-STORY THESIS

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. So, what makes a good thesis in college?

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: 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. ((Note: For more see Fabio Lopez-Lazaro “Linen.” [In Encyclopedia of World Trade from Ancient Times to the Present](#). Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2005.)) 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. ((Note: Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr., *The Poet at the Breakfast Table* (New York: Houghton & Mifflin, 1892))):

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. ((Note: The metaphor is extraordinarily useful even though the passage is annoying. Beyond the sexist language of the time, it displays 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.

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.

Example 1

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 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.

Example 2

Here's another example of a three-story thesis: ((Note: Drawn from Jennifer Haytock, *Edith Wharton and the Conversations of Literary Modernism* (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2008).))

- **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.

Example 3

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.
- **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.

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TEXT: ORGANICALLY STRUCTURED ARGUMENTS

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.

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. ((Note: Anne Lamott, *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life* (New York: Pantheon, 1994), 21.))



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.

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!" "Shakespeare 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.

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VIDEO: LOGIC AND STRUCTURE

Big picture, there are several key components that are required for any effective argumentative essay. This video discusses what they are, and options for what order to present them in.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/tAmgEa1B1vI>

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TEXT: THE PERFECT PARAGRAPH

As Michael Harvey writes, paragraphs are “in essence—a form of punctuation, and like other forms of punctuation they are meant to make written material easy to read.” (Note: Michael Harvey, *The Nuts and Bolts of College Writing*, Second Edition (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2013), 70.) Effective paragraphs are the fundamental units of academic writing; consequently, the thoughtful, multifaceted arguments that your professors expect depend on them. Without good paragraphs, you simply cannot clearly convey sequential points and their relationships to one another.

Many novice writers tend to make a sharp distinction between content and style, thinking that a paper can be strong in one and weak in the other, but focusing on organization shows how content and style converge in deliberative academic writing. Your professors will view even the most elegant prose as rambling and tedious if there isn’t a careful, coherent argument to give the text meaning. Paragraphs are the “stuff” of academic writing and, thus, worth our attention here.

Key Sentences (a.k.a. Topic Sentences)

In academic writing, readers expect each paragraph to have a sentence or two that captures its main point. They’re often called “topic sentences,” though many writing instructors prefer to call them “key sentences.” There are at least two downsides of the phrase “topic sentence.” First, it makes it seem like the paramount job of that sentence is simply to announce the topic of the paragraph. Second, it makes it seem like the topic sentence must always be a single grammatical sentence. Calling it a “key sentence” reminds us that it expresses the central *idea* of the paragraph. And sometimes a question or a two-sentence construction functions as the key.



Key sentences in academic writing do two things. First, they establish the main point that the rest of the paragraph supports. Second, they situate each paragraph within the sequence of the argument, a task that requires transitioning from the prior paragraph. Consider these two examples: (Note: Etiology is the cause of a disease—what’s actually happening in cells and tissues—while epidemiology is the incidence of a disease in a population.)

Version A:

Now we turn to the epidemiological evidence.

Version B:

The epidemiological evidence provides compelling support for the hypothesis emerging from etiological studies.

Both versions convey a topic; it's pretty easy to predict that the paragraph will be about epidemiological evidence, but only the second version establishes an argumentative point and puts it in context. The paragraph doesn't just describe the epidemiological evidence; it shows how epidemiology is telling the same story as etiology. Similarly, while Version A doesn't relate to anything in particular, Version B immediately suggests that the prior paragraph addresses the biological pathway (i.e. etiology) of a disease and that the new paragraph will bolster the emerging hypothesis with a different kind of evidence. As a reader, it's easy to keep track of how the paragraph about cells and chemicals and such relates to the paragraph about populations in different places.

A last thing to note about key sentences is that academic readers expect them to be at the beginning of the paragraph. (The first sentence this paragraph is a good example of this in action!) This placement helps readers comprehend your argument. To see how, try this: find an academic piece (such as a textbook or scholarly article) that strikes you as well written and go through part of it reading just the first sentence of each paragraph. You should be able to easily follow the sequence of logic. When you're writing for professors, it is especially effective to put your key sentences first because they usually convey your own original thinking. It's a very good sign when your paragraphs are typically composed of a telling key sentence followed by evidence and explanation.

Knowing this convention of academic writing can help you both read and write more effectively. When you're reading a complicated academic piece for the first time, you might want to go through reading only the first sentence or two of each paragraph to get the overall outline of the argument. Then you can go back and read all of it with a clearer picture of how each of the details fit in. And when you're writing, you may also find it useful to write the first sentence of each paragraph (instead of a topic-based outline) to map out a thorough argument before getting immersed in sentence-level wordsmithing.

Cohesion and Coherence

With a key sentence established, the next task is to shape the body of your paragraph to be both cohesive and coherent. As Williams and Bizup ((Note: Joseph M. Williams and Joseph Bizup. *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace* 11th edition (New York: Longman, 2014), 68. Joseph M. Williams and Joseph Bizup. *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace* 11th edition (New York: Longman, 2014), 68.)) explain, cohesion is about the "sense of flow" (how each sentence fits with the next), while coherence is about the "sense of the whole." ((Note: Ibid., 71.))

For the most part, a text reads smoothly when it conveys a thoughtful and well organized argument or analysis. Focus first and most on your ideas, on crafting an ambitious analysis. The most useful guides advise you to first focus on getting your ideas on paper and then revising for organization and word choice later, refining the analysis as you go. Thus, consider the advice here as if you already have some rough text written and are in the process of smoothing out your prose to clarify your argument for both your reader and yourself.

Cohesion

Cohesion refers to the flow from sentence to sentence. For example, compare these passages:

Version A:

Granovetter begins by looking at balance theory. If an actor, A, is strongly tied to both B and C, it is extremely likely that B and C are, sooner or later, going to be tied to each other, according to balance theory (1973:1363). ((Note: The quote uses a version of an ASA-style in-text citation for Mark S. Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," *American Journal of Sociology* 78 (1973): 1360-80.)) Bridge ties between cliques are always weak ties, Granovetter argues (1973:1364). Weak ties may not necessarily be bridges, but Granovetter argues that bridges will be weak. If two actors share a strong

tie, they will draw in their other strong relations and will eventually form a clique. Only weak ties that do not have the strength to draw together all the “friends of friends” can connect people in different cliques.

Version B:

Granovetter begins by looking at balance theory. In brief, balance theory tells us that if an actor, A, is strongly tied to both B and C, it is extremely likely that B and C are, sooner or later, going to be tied to each other (1973:1363). Granovetter argues that because of this, bridge ties between cliques are always weak ties (1973:1364). Weak ties may not necessarily be bridges, but Granovetter argues that bridges will be weak. This is because if two actors share a strong tie, they will draw in their other strong relations and will eventually form a clique. The only way, therefore, that people in different cliques can be connected is through weak ties that do not have the strength to draw together all the “friends of friends.” ((Note: Guiffre. *Communities and Networks*, 98.))

Version A has the exact same information as version B, but it is harder to read because it is less cohesive. Each sentence in version B begins with old information and bridges to new information.

The first sentence establishes the key idea of balance theory. The next sentence begins with balance theory and ends with social ties, which is the focus of the third sentence. The concept of weak ties connects the third and fourth sentences and concept of cliques the fifth and sixth sentences. In Version A, in contrast, the first sentence focuses on balance theory, but then the second sentence makes a new point about social ties *before* telling the reader that the point comes from balance theory. The reader has to take in a lot of unfamiliar information before learning how it fits in with familiar concepts. Version A is coherent, but the lack of cohesion makes it tedious to read.



The lesson is this: if you or others perceive a passage you’ve written to be awkward or choppy, even though the topic is consistent, try rewriting it to ensure that each sentence begins with a familiar term or concept. If your points don’t naturally daisy-chain together like the examples given here, consider numbering them. For example, you may choose to write, “Proponents of the legislation point to four major benefits.” Then you could discuss four loosely related ideas without leaving your reader wondering how they relate.

Coherence

While cohesion is about the sense of flow, coherence is about the sense of the whole. For example, here’s a passage that is cohesive (from sentence to sentence) but lacks coherence:

Your social networks and your location within them shape the kinds and amount of information that you have access to. Information is distinct from data, in that makes some kind of generalization about a person, thing, or population. Defensible generalizations about society can be either probabilities (i.e., statistics) or patterns (often from qualitative analysis). Such probabilities and patterns can be temporal, spatial, or simultaneous.

Each sentence in the above passage starts with a familiar idea and progresses to a new one, but it lacks coherence—a sense of being about one thing. Good writers often write passages like that when they're free-writing or using the drafting stage to cast a wide net for ideas. A writer weighing the power and limits of social network analysis may free-write something like that example and, from there, develop a more specific plan for summarizing key insights about social networks and then discussing them with reference to the core tenets of social science. As a draft, an incoherent paragraph often points to a productive line of reasoning; one just has to continue thinking it through in order to identify a clear argumentative purpose for each paragraph. With its purpose defined, each paragraph, then, becomes a lot easier to write. Coherent paragraphs aren't just about style; they are a sign of a thoughtful, well developed analysis.



The Wind-Up

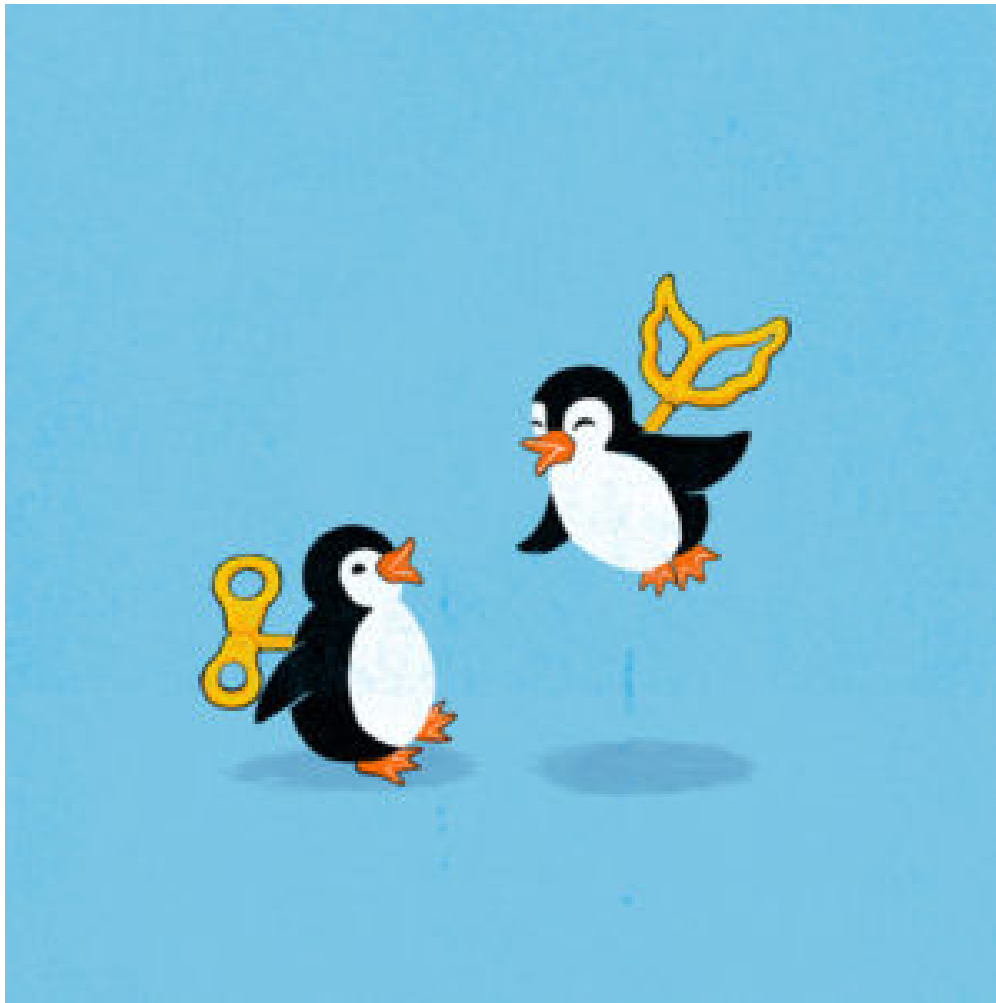
Some guides advise you to end each paragraph with a specific concluding sentence, in a sense, to treat each paragraph as a kind of mini-essay. But that's not a widely held convention. Most well written academic pieces don't adhere to that structure. The last sentence of the paragraph should certainly be in your own words (as in, not a quote), but as long as the paragraph succeeds in carrying out the task that it has been assigned by its key sentence, you don't need to worry about whether that last sentence has an air of conclusiveness. For example, consider these paragraphs about the cold fusion controversy of the 1980s that appeared in a best-selling textbook: ((Note: Harry Collins and Trevor Pinch, *The Golem: What You Should Know About Science* 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Canto, 1998), 58.))

The experiment seemed straightforward and there were plenty of scientists willing to try it. Many did. It was wonderful to have a simple laboratory experiment on fusion to try after the decades of embarrassing attempts to control hot fusion. This effort required multi-billion dollar machines whose every success seemed to be capped with an unanticipated failure. 'Cold fusion' seemed to provide, as Martin Fleischmann said during the course of that famous Utah press conference, 'another route'—the route of little science.

In that example, the first and last sentences in the paragraph are somewhat symmetrical: the authors introduce the idea of accessible science, contrast it with big science, and bring it back to the phrase "little science." Here's an example from the same chapter of the same book that does not have any particular symmetry: ((Note: Ibid., 74.))

The struggle between proponents and critics in a scientific controversy is always a struggle for credibility. When scientists make claims which are literally 'incredible', as in the cold fusion case, they face an uphill struggle. The problem Pons and Fleischmann had to overcome was that they had credibility as electrochemists but not as nuclear physicists. And it was nuclear physics where their work was likely to have its main impact.

The last sentence of the paragraph doesn't mirror the first, but the paragraph still works just fine. In general, every sentence of academic writing should add some unique content. Don't trouble yourself with having the last sentence in every paragraph serve as a mini-conclusion. Instead, worry about developing each point sufficiently and making your logical sequence clear.



Conclusion: Paragraphs as Punctuation

To reiterate the initial point, it is useful to think of paragraphs as punctuation that organize your ideas in a readable way. Each paragraph should be an irreplaceable node within a coherent sequence of logic. Thinking of paragraphs as “building blocks” evokes the “five-paragraph theme” structure explained earlier: if you have identical stone blocks, it hardly matters what order they’re in. In the successful organically structured college paper, the structure and tone of each paragraph reflects its indispensable role within the overall piece. Make every bit count and have each part situated within the whole.

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TEXT: INTRODUCTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

A key piece of advice many writers either do not ever get or don't believe is that **it's not necessary to write introductions first or to write conclusions last**. Just because the introduction appears first and the conclusion appears last doesn't mean they have to be written that way. Here's a really tired metaphor to help explain: just because you walk into a building through the door doesn't mean the door was built first. The foundation went in first, even though you rarely if ever see that part. And lots of imperfections in the foundation and the walls were covered up before you even moved in, so you can't see those either unless you look closely.

Introductions

Even though a nearly infinite number of topics and arrangements is possible in English prose, introductions generally follow one of several patterns. If you're writing a children's story, you'd probably start with "once upon a time" or something similar. If you're writing a research article in biomechanical engineering, you'd probably start with a statement about how previous research has examined the problem of loading soldiers with daypacks on various surfaces, including sand, concrete, and railroad ballast. These examples are poles apart, but their introductions share very similar purposes: they orient their imagined readers to the topic, time, and place.

In working toward the overall goal of orienting readers, introductions may

- Provide background about a topic.
- Locate readers in a specific time and/or place.
- Start with a compelling quotation or statistic—something concrete.
- Include an ethical appeal, with which you (explicitly or implicitly) show that you've done your homework and are credible.
- Articulate a main claim/thesis.
- Lay out the stakes for the piece of writing—that is, why the reader should bother reading on.

The following video addresses how to do several of these things, starting with the very first sentence of your introduction.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/Rkefst9D6n0>

Conclusions

Conclusions usually

- Summarize the argument (especially in longer pieces of writing)
- "Bookend" a story that started in the introduction
- Include an emotional appeal, with which you (explicitly or implicitly) connect the "logic" of the argument to a more passionate reason intended to sway the reader
- Issue a call to action

Ideally, a conclusion will work in tandem with an introduction, having some kind of "call back" element to remind your reader of the powerful opening you provided. Additional advice for conclusions is found in the following video.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/2L7aeO9fBzE>

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SELF CHECK: ORGANIZING

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TRY IT: ORGANIZING

To Do

Revisit your working thesis statement drafted in a previous exercise. Consider it from a “three story thesis” perspective, as discussed in this section.

- Revise your thesis to fit the three story thesis model.

Use this revised thesis to consider what the necessary components of your argument will be.

- List what specific sections will be required to convince your reader to agree with you. Refer to the [Video: Logic and Structure](#) page to guide you.

With your body components defined, do your best to map out key sentences (aka topic sentences) for each of your body paragraphs. Note that these will evolve as you get further into your project, but will serve as a form of an outline right now.

- List key sentences for body paragraphs, in the order you expect them to appear.

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OUTCOME: DRAFTING

Evaluate drafting activities

It's finally time to hit the road, and embark on our journey. Enter the drafting process: getting those stray thoughts and sources down on the page.

This is also a moment of apprehension . . . it's the first time the trip, the essay project, becomes an "official" thing. You might suffer briefly from "blank page anxiety." Don't worry, you're not alone, as this essay by Allan Besselink conveys.

"Fear of the Blank Page"



The blank page. Such simplicity. Clean. Yet so daunting. Scary.

Staring at a blank page, or screen, or canvas, can be one of the most daunting yet exhilarating moments we face. There can be a degree of trepidation and anxiety that forces you to put off the creative process. Maybe a better time or a better frame of mind will come. There are always any number of excuses to walk away from it. Hey, I don't need this right now. You can't make me do it.

Fear of the blank page. I have had my share of moments when I sat looking at this computer screen, thinking that there was simply nothing to say. I think we've all had those moments, not just in creating art, or writing, or pondering the origins of space and time. They come to us in the blank pages of our lives that we are creating moment by moment.

Fear of the blank page. It provides us with another excuse – to not write, to not create, to not go forth and challenge our thinking, to sit back and rest on our laurels. It gives us reason to be mediocre or to take the low road. We like to think that a more opportune moment will strike us serendipitously. It rarely happens that way. Let's face it – the blank page is the lowest common denominator, the great equalizer if you will.

The blank page, however, is really something that we should embrace. It gives us the opportunity to create something wonderful. It is not a time for fear or trepidation, but a time for creativity. It is in the quietest of moments when epiphany strikes us. And epiphany is spectacular at times.

Our lives are a blank slate – awaiting a splash of paint, an experience, a passion. Can we afford to sit with eyes transfixed on the blank page in front of us? Or do we just need to sit down and hammer out a story? Should we keep the paints in the box, or should we pull them out and throw them onto the canvas?

The blank page of our lives can at times be one of angst or emptiness, fear or anxiety. Darkness. But it is always darkest before the dawn. If we brave the elements, that light, that dawn, always arrives. There may be a fear of doing something – but shouldn't the fear of not doing something be even more compelling?

The only way you get better at writing is if you write. Fear not. Throw the words at the blank page.

The only way you get better at painting is if you paint. Fear not. Throw the paints at the blank canvas.

And the only way you get better at living is if you . . . live. Fear not. The blank page awaits.

It's also helpful to remember at this stage that you're NOT actually starting from a blank page, even with your first draft. You've got the fodder of your prewriting, outlining, and source gathering at hand to build from.

What You Will Learn To Do

- evaluate strategies for drafting from an outline
- evaluate considerations unique to early drafts
- evaluate the value of multiple drafts

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Text: From Outlining to Drafting
- Text: Flash Drafts
- Video: Drafting
- Self Check: Drafting
- Try It: Drafting



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TEXT: FROM OUTLINING TO DRAFTING

So far we've presented "organizing" and "drafting" as two separate steps on the writing process continuum. While there are distinct differences between the two stages, the line between these steps is the muddiest of the entire writing process. Ideally, as you're working on an essay project, you won't be able to draw a clear line between when you stop working on organizing and start working on your first essay draft.

Remember from the previous section that there are several different kinds of outlines:

- Roman or Arabic Numeral (highly structured)
- bullet point (loosely structured)
- mind map
- timeline
- PowerPoint

Roman Numeral Outline

Thesis statement: E-mail and internet monitoring, as currently practiced, is an invasion of employees' rights in the workplace.

1. The situation: Over 80% of today's companies monitor their employees.
 1. To prevent fraudulent activities, theft, and other workplace related violations.
 2. To more efficiently monitor employee productivity.
 3. To prevent any legal liabilities due to harassing or offensive communications.
2. What are employees' privacy rights when it comes to electronic monitoring and surveillance in the workplace?
 1. American employees have basically no legal protection from mean and snooping bosses.
 1. There are no federal or State laws protecting employees.
 2. Employees may assert privacy protection for their own personal effects.
 2. Most managers believe that there is no right to privacy in the workplace.
 1. Workplace communications should be about work; anything else is a misuse of company equipment and company time
 2. Employers have a right to prevent misuse by monitoring employee communications

Arabic Numeral Outline

Contents [\[hide\]](#)

- 1 Outline organization
- 2 Types of outlines
 - 2.1 Outline styles
 - 2.1.1 Sentence outline
 - 2.1.2 Topic outline
 - 2.1.3 A sample topic outline application: An outline of human knowledge
 - 2.2 Outlines with prefixes
 - 2.2.1 Bare outlines
 - 2.2.2 Alphanumeric outline
 - 2.2.3 Decimal outline
 - 2.2.4 Integrated Outline
- 3 See also
- 4 Notes
- 5 References

Bullet Point Outline

Set up – introduce the characters, world building, normal life

Event One – the first incident that causes this journey to begin

Reaction – In the beginning, she is always reacting to the events around her.

Event Two – Something else big happens that changes the story

Proactive – This is where she begins to take matters in her own hands. She is no longer reacting. She is making decisions.

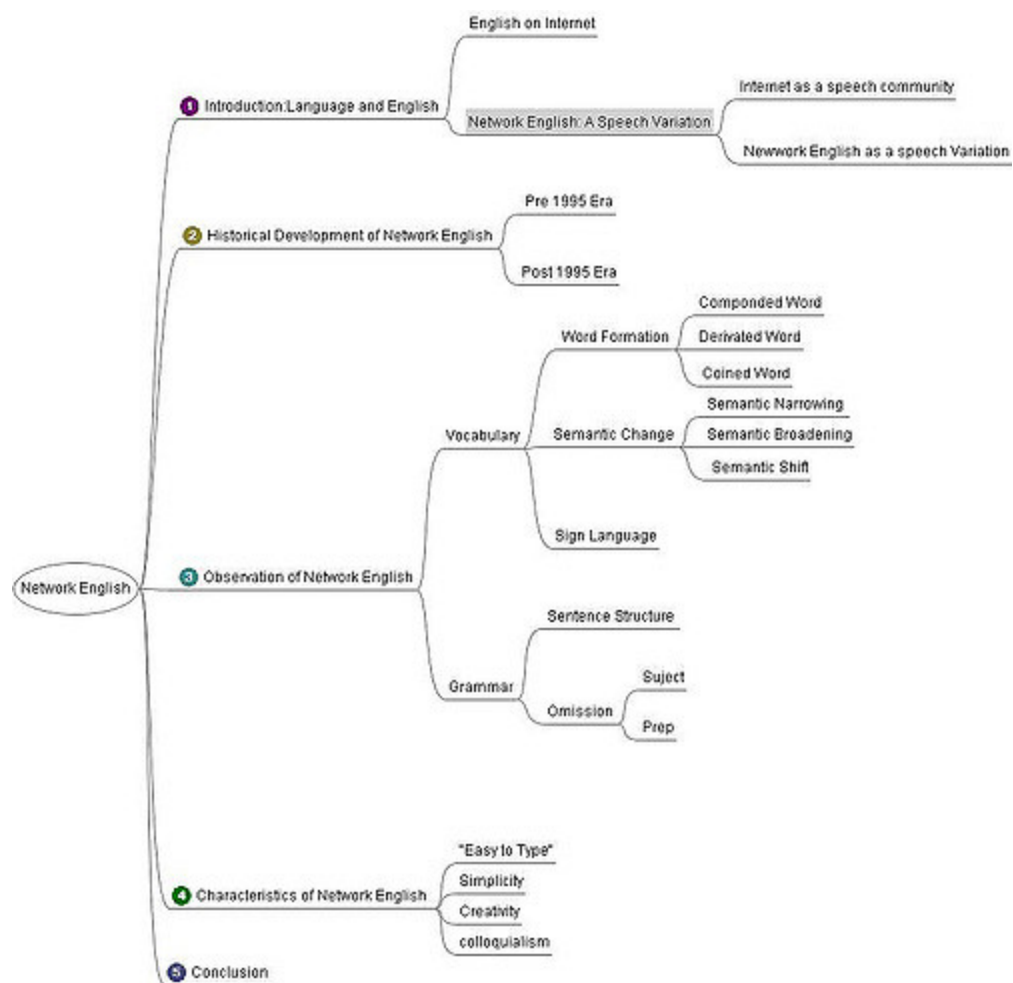
Event Three – Something else happens usually increasing the stakes more and more.

Resolution – She has decided what she'll do and takes steps to make it happen

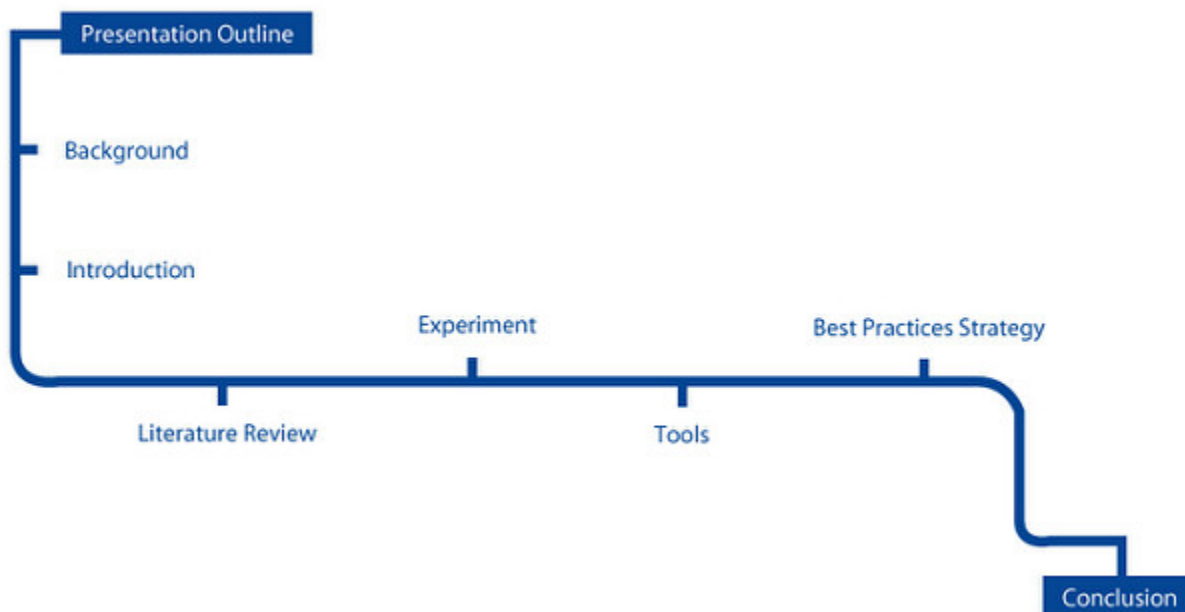
Even Four – The stakes are as high as they'll get now. This is the black moment.

The End – wrap it up quickly. Show how she has changed or not. A glimpse at her new life.

Mind Map Outline



Timeline Outline



Wrap Up

Whichever outline you've started with, it can conveniently morph into an essay draft, simply by picking an area to attack. Start fleshing it out with full sentences, complete thoughts, and relevant sources.

One of the many advantages to working from an outline is that you don't have to begin your draft at the beginning of the paper. Pick a section you feel strongly about, and start there. Hopscotch around your outline in whatever order you choose, in order to keep the momentum going.

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TEXT: FLASH DRAFTS

A typical expectation for an essay draft is that it will take a few days to develop. The longer the final product, the longer that time of initial development (usually).

From that perspective, it's no wonder many students are hesitant to revise later! When you invest a lot of time crafting something, you grow quite attached to it. You don't want to have that feeling of having to "start over" again with serious revision, later.

Enter Flash-Drafting

Flash Drafts

- are completed in one concentrated time period (~ 45 minutes)
- are written “fast and furious” with no time to sweat the small stuff
- contain notes where a writer might need to research or develop further later
- conform to the general structure of the final product



By adding in a timed component to the first, fast draft of an essay, you get several advantages. There’s literally no time for perfection, so concerns about “doing it right” stop being a roadblock to writing anything at all. Flash drafts generate a lot of raw material that can be refined and built upon later. And these drafts boost your confidence as you realize how much you already know about the subject.

Flash drafts are effective for any writer. Proof of this comes from the following essay by Stacey Shubitz, a teacher of writing for both grade school and college students.

“Flash Drafting Leads to Large-Scale Revision”

I’ve been at the June Writing Institute this week. Kelly Boland Hohne has been my section leader for “Raise the Level of Literature-Based and Research-Based Argument Essays.” In the past week, I’ve written two flash drafts, one literary essay and one research-based essay. I have found the process scary and liberating all at once. Here’s why.

Flash-drafting unnerved me because I’m used to taking my time with writing. I tinker with words. I play with punctuation. I type, I cut, I paste, I cut some more, I copy, etc. I do this because I want to make make sure my thoughts are as succinct as they can possibly be. This week, I learned that flash-drafting doesn’t afford a writer with making it perfect. That’s what revision is for!

My flash drafts and my initial revisions of my flash drafts were anything but perfect. Kelly encouraged us to use . . . a Glow and Grow. . . . That is, after we flash-drafted, we looked at what we did well as writers and marked it “glow.” Then, wherever we needed to improve our writing, we marked it “grow.”

Want to take a look at my flash drafts? Here are some links to the original ones, as well as my initial revisions.

- [Flash-draft of my literature-based essay](#) on *Elizabeth, Queen of the Seas* by Lynne Cox and Brian Floca
- [Revising the claim and information](#) to support my claim. (Towards the bottom of this note.)
- [Revised draft of literature-based essay.](#)
- [Glow & grow](#) for my essay.
- [Notes for my information-based essay.](#)
- [Flash-draft of my research-based argument essay](#) about team sports putting too much pressure on children. (You’ll note I didn’t reference from my notes when I was flash-drafting! That’s because I was writing so quickly I didn’t turn back.)
- [Revised draft of my research-based argument essay.](#) (This still needs more facts in it to be research-based. That’s what I’ll be working on next.)

Seeing as I didn’t spend tons of time on my flash-drafts, I’m excited to revise because I know I need to. My flash-drafts weren’t my best work. (Heck, they were all written while I was riding on mass transit balancing my

iPad on my lap!) Now that I've gone through the flash-drafting process *twice* this week, I understand how it can lead to more excitement about making large-scale revisions in response to what one learns next in writing workshop (or in my case, from my session leader, Kelly).

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VIDEO: DRAFTING

Just as the line between “organizing” and “drafting” can be blurry, so to can the line between “first draft,” “second draft,” “final draft.” There’s often no hard stop between multiple versions of an essay, but rather a continual rolling improvement process. That’s why the term **working draft** is much more useful than numbering a specific draft. It gives the sense that it’s always in process, which is true.

The following video demonstrates moving an essay project from outline, to first draft, to a more polished draft.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/cVrscIcq2Rg>

Notice that while this author didn’t make use of a Flash Draft, one could easily be incorporated into his process.

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SELF CHECK: DRAFTING

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TRY IT: DRAFTING

To Do

Step One

Schedule 45 minutes of uninterrupted time, and complete a Flash Draft. You can refer to notes and outlines you've made previously, but don't interrupt your writing to consult any outside sources at this point. Try to capture as much raw essay content as you can during this time, making notes to yourself for where to add more development or research later.

Step Two

Step away from the Flash Draft and the essay project overall for at least a few hours, if not a full day.

When you return, write a brief paragraph evaluating your Flash Draft experience and results. What did you learn from this activity? What changes will you need to make to move this to a more polished essay draft?

Step Three

Complete a full draft of your Persuasive Essay. You can build from the Flash Draft, or start from scratch—whichever seems easier. Write the draft in whatever order you wish, but the finished piece should contain an introduction, body, and conclusion, as well as incorporate citations and a Works Cited page.

Unlike your Flash Draft, the complete essay draft doesn't have to be accomplished in one sitting. Use appropriate time management techniques to set your own deadline and pacing for the task.

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OUTCOME: REVISING

Evaluate revision activities

To revisit our metaphor of the writing process as a journey, turning to the act of revision means a huge accomplishment: we've arrived at our destination! A draft is complete, and we have a solid understanding of our subject matter. The act of revision will allow us to explore what's possible now that we've arrived—how we can shape our own adventure in this location.

A powerful visualization of drafting and editing can be found in this video, which captures a day in a life of a painter. Painting, like writing, is a hugely creative act, and one that undergoes many drafts. You'll see this artist rough out big ideas, and then wipe them out. These false starts are not uncommon, but note how he keeps going after it. After a series of dramatic changes to the canvas in the first few minutes, the final couple of minutes focus the changes to a smaller and smaller scale: it becomes a process of refinement towards the end.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/7SHuq7PGIel>

(This video has no voice-over but does use the song “Over and Over” by Hot Chip as a soundtrack.)

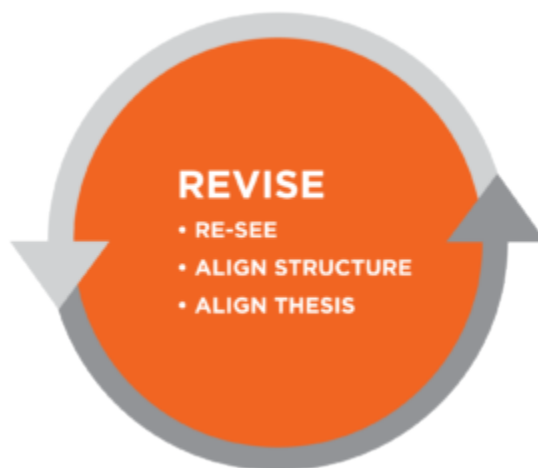
By this stage in your writing process, you likely won’t be wiping your canvas clean and starting from scratch. Instead, it’s time to clarify, refine, and reorganize to make sure the big picture is exactly what you want it to be.

What You Will Learn To Do

- evaluate the process of seeking input on writing from others
- evaluate strategies for incorporating personal and external editorial comments
- evaluate methods for re-seeing a piece of writing
- evaluate higher order concerns for revision

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Text: The Art of Re-Seeing
- Text: Seeking Input from Others
- Text: Responding to Input from Others
- Text: Higher Order Concerns
- Self Check: Revising
- Try It: Revising



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TEXT: THE ART OF RE-SEEING

Revising is the rearrangement and fine tuning of a fully developed—if not totally completed—draft so that the thesis or hypothesis is aligned with the writer’s purpose, the development of the argument and its persuasive conclusion, and the audience’s needs and characteristics.

Often, writers perform the multiple drafting, revising, and editing stages concurrently. Similarities among these writing tasks permit such concurrent task performance.

The Art of Revision

Revising a written document sometimes closely resembles the multiple drafting stage of the writing process. The main difference between drafting and revising probably lies within the completeness of the document itself. Rough drafts are characterized by varying degrees of completeness, which the writer attempts to finish in a less-than-polished manner. The overriding need to write details down on paper or record them in electronic form drives the writer during the rough draft stage. The task during the rough draft stage is to include all the features of the proposed thesis and supporting details. These rough drafts are akin to an unformed block of stone into which the artist is chiseling an image that is not yet fully recognizable to the audience.

Revised drafts are based upon a completed rough draft that now needs to be chiseled into a fully recognizable work of art. During the revising stage, the chiseled image becomes clearer, more developed according to the controlling thesis, and less defined by unnatural, awkward angles. However, the ultimate task of the revising stage is to make that recognizable but still ill-defined image into a beautiful work of art.

The writer considers the succinctness of the thesis (meaning precise and concise wording), the adequateness and relevance of the supporting details, the fluency of development, and the concluding finishing touches during the revising stage. Paragraph structure and transitions are also considered. So too are diction and rhetorical strategies examined for appropriateness to the task. Sometimes, these considerations might lead the writer to rewrite the entire piece, including the thesis or hypothesis, once the writer realizes that the purpose and the audience require a more focused or different written expression. When such rewrites occur, many writers engage in a recursive process of drafting and revising, often simultaneously. Some writers might even begin again with the pre-writing stage as they realize that this rewrite is actually a completely different writing task.

A Critical Step

Revising, for many writers and teachers of writing, is the critical step in any writing process. It is the step that often frustrates many writers because it can be tedious and tiresome to pay such close attention to details that might become lost or unrecognizable in the repeated examination of what one has written.

Many writers at this stage find it beneficial to have someone else read a document that is too close to the writer's controlling thoughts and frayed emotions. The intellectual and emotional investment into one's writing is typically the reason why many emotionally developing students accuse an English teacher of disliking the student when the teacher critiques or grades an assignment.

The need to revise undeniably acknowledges that one's writing is not perfect as presented in the latest draft. One's willingness to revise means that the writer recognizes the dynamic nature of communication, which requires revisions in order to clearly articulate ideas and meet the expectations of the audience. Effective written expression is the result of careful revisions.

A Three-Step Revision Process

The following video recommends writing 3 additional drafts (yes, after your first and working drafts are already done!) to fully revise an essay. The final stage recommended here conforms to the Proofreading stage of the process, so it's a way of completing multiple steps at the same time, as noted above.

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TEXT: SEEKING INPUT FROM OTHERS

College writers have many potential opportunities to seek out feedback on their work, at any stage of the writing process. For instance, your college's Writing Center or Tutoring Center would be happy to work with you on prewriting, early drafts, or nearly finished drafts.

Friends or family members might also be good options for feedback, if you trust that they will be genuine and helpful with their input.

You will likely also have the opportunity to participate in peer review for many courses that require writing assignments.



Peer Review

Instructors teaching a writing-intensive course, or any course that requires students to produce a substantial amount of writing, should consider creating opportunities for students to read and respond to one another's writing. Such opportunities to engage in "peer review," when well planned, can help students improve their reading and writing skills and learn how to collaborate effectively.

More specifically, participating in peer review can help students:

- Learn how to read carefully, with attention to the details of a piece of writing (whether their own or another writer's);
- Learn how to strengthen their writing by taking into account the responses of actual and anticipated readers;
- Make the transition from writing primarily for themselves or for an instructor to writing for a broader audience—a key transition for students as they learn to write university-level papers and as they prepare for post-graduate work;
- Learn how to formulate and communicate constructive feedback on a peer's work;
- Learn how to gather and respond to feedback on their own work.

Challenges in the Peer Review Process

Many instructors who have incorporated peer review into their courses report less than satisfying results. In fact, it is quite common to find that, when asked to participate in peer review, students rush through the peer-review process and offer their peers only vaguely positive comments, such as "I liked your paper," or "Good job," or "Good paper, but a few parts need more work." Furthermore, many students seem to ignore peer-reviewers' comments on their writing.

There are several possible reasons behind such responses:

1. **Many students feel uncomfortable with the task of having to pronounce a judgment on their peers' writing.** This discomfort may be the result of their maturity level, their desire not to hurt a peer's feelings

(perhaps made more acute by the fact that they are anxious about having their peers read and judge their own writing), or simply their inexperience with providing constructive criticism on a peer's work. A vaguely positive response allows them to avoid a socially uncomfortable situation and to create an environment of mutual support (Nilson 2003).

2. **If students are not given clear guidance from their instructors, they may not know how to comment on one another's writing in a specific and constructive way.** In addition, it should be noted that students may not understand how to comment on their peers' writing because over the years they have not received helpful feedback from instructors who have graded their papers. (For suggestions on how to write specific comments that can help students improve their writing, see the handout, "[Commenting on Student Writing](#)").
3. **Some instructors ask their students to evaluate their peers' writing using the same criteria the instructor uses when grading papers (e.g., quality of thesis, adequacy of support, coherence, etc.).** Undergraduate students often have an inadequate understanding of these criteria, and as a result, they either ignore or inappropriately apply such criteria during peer-review sessions (Nilson 2003).
4. **Many students do not perceive feedback from peers as relevant to the process of writing a paper for a course.** Especially at the beginning of their undergraduate work, students are likely to assume that it is only the instructor's feedback that "counts."
5. **Even when they take seriously feedback provided by their peers, students often do not know how to incorporate that feedback when they revise their papers.**

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TEXT: RESPONDING TO INPUT FROM OTHERS

As authors, you may dread receiving reviewer comments asking for major revisions. It's daunting to rework something for which you have already taken great pains. But don't be tempted to give up. Most often, the final outcome is worth the effort. Here are some pointers on how to respond to such comments.

- **Take a break:** Initial irritation is only natural. Take time off and then read the comments again carefully and objectively to ensure that you have clearly understood the reviewers' concerns.
- **Articulate point-by-point responses:** Number the reviewers' points and respond to them sequentially. If you're required to respond to your reviewers, this makes it easier for others to follow what you have done. Even if your reviewers never see your responses, this is an effective way to inventory their advice and make sure that you've evaluated all of it.
- **Create well-reasoned responses to input:** If you do not agree with a reviewer's comment, that's only fair. However, do not simply disagree. Justify this disagreement, to yourself or to the reviewer, by providing as many details as necessary to help any reader understand your line of reasoning. Where possible, cite published studies to support your argument.
- **Pay attention to detail:** Details are important when explaining how you have addressed each concern. For example, if a reviewer has said that you need to include/reinterpret data, you can describe the tests you performed and the results you got and mention where you have added this information.



- **Watch your tone:** Remember, the reviewers are critiquing your work, not you. Do not let their feedback color any future interactions you have with them. If you disagree on some point, say so honestly but respectfully, and support your statement with a rational explanation.
- **Appreciate the reviewers' work:** Peer reviewers invest their own time in reviewing your writing. Their intention is to help you improve your writing, and hopefully earn higher grades as a result. Take advantage of their advice. In fact, a long list of detailed reviewer comments usually means that reviewer has spent considerable time evaluating your work and providing constructive feedback. Be sure to thank reviewers for their consideration and effort.

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TEXT: HIGHER ORDER CONCERNS

Introduction

Regardless of writers' levels of experience or areas of expertise, many struggle with revision, a component of the writing process that encompasses everything from transformative changes in content and argumentation to minor corrections in grammar and punctuation. Perhaps because revision involves so many forms of modification, it is the focus of most scientific writing guides and handbooks. Revision can be daunting; how does one progress from initial drafts (called "rough drafts" for good reason) to a polished piece of scholarly writing?

Developing a process for revision can help writers produce thoughtful, polished texts and grow their written communication skills. Consider, then, a systematic approach to revision, including strategies to employ at every step of the process.

A System for Approaching Revision

Generally, revision should be approached in a top-down manner by addressing **higher-order concerns (HOCs)** before moving on to **lower-order concerns (LOCs)**. In writing studies, the term “higher order” is used to denote major or global issues such as thesis, argumentation, and organization, whereas “lower order” is used to denote minor or local issues such as grammar and mechanics. ((Note: McAndrew DA, Registad TJ. *Tutoring writing: a practical guide for conferences*. Portsmouth (NH): Boynton/Cook; 2001.)) The more analytical work of revising HOCs often has ramifications for the entire piece. Perhaps in refining the argument, a writer will realize that the discussion section does not fully consider the study’s implications. Or, a writer will try a new organizational scheme and find that a paragraph no longer fits and should be cut. Such revisions may have far-reaching implications for the text.

Dedicating time to tweaking wording or correcting grammatical errors is unproductive if the sentence will be changed or deleted. Focusing on HOCs before LOCs allows writers to revise more effectively and efficiently.

Revision Strategies

Bearing in mind the general system of revising from HOCs to LOCs, you can employ several revision strategies.

- **Begin by evaluating how your argument addresses your rhetorical situation**—that is, the specific context surrounding your writing, including the audience, exigence, and constraints. ((Note: Bitzer L. "The rhetorical situation." *Philos Rhetoric* 1968; 1 (1): 1-14.))
 - For example, you may write an article describing a new treatment. If the target journal’s audience comes from a variety of disciplines, you may need to include substantial background explanation, consider the implications for practitioners and scholars in multiple fields, and define technical terms. By contrast, if you are addressing a highly specialized audience, you may be able to dispense with many of the background explanations and definitions because of your shared knowledge base. You may consider the implications only for specialists, as they are your primary audience. Because this sort of revision affects the entire text, beginning by analyzing your rhetorical situation is effective.
- **Analyze your thesis or main argument for clarity.**
- **Evaluate the global organization of your text by writing a reverse outline.** Unlike traditional outlines, which are written before drafting, reverse outlines reflect the content of written drafts.
 - In a separate document or in your text’s margins, record the main idea of each paragraph. Then, consider whether the order of your ideas is logical. This method also will help you identify ideas that are out of place or digressive. You may also evaluate organization by printing the text and cutting it up so that each paragraph appears on a separate piece of paper. You may then easily reorder the paragraphs to test different organizational schemes.

Completing a Post-Draft Outline

The reverse outline mentioned above is also known as a **post-draft outline**. Guidance for how to complete one for an entire essay draft, as well as for an individual problematic paragraph, are found in this presentation.

Visit your course online to view this presentation.

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SELF CHECK: REVISING

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TRY IT: REVISING

To Do

1. Using the guidance in this section, create your own personal Revision Checklist. What steps seem most meaningful to you in revising an essay? In what order should they be done?
2. Apply the checklist to your most current Persuasive Essay draft. Note the items you make changes to as a result of this evaluation of your draft.
3. Consult with a tutor at the Enhancement Center. Bring your checklist and the most current version of your essay draft with you for the discussion.

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OUTCOME: PROOFREADING

Evaluate proofreading activities

Learn these rules, and if you hate them, learn to love them. In college, writing stops being about “how well did you understand fill-in-the-blank” and becomes “how professionally and strongly do you argue your point.” Professionalism, I have found, is the key to the real world, and college is, in part, preparing you for it. If you do not learn how to write in a way that projects professionalism (i.e. these rules), then expect to get, at best, Cs on your papers. — Kaethe Leonard, qtd. in *Writing in College*

Many students assume—or fear—that college writing is judged primarily on its grammatical correctness. Ideas, evidence, and arguments matter more than the mechanics of grammar and punctuation; however, many of the rules of formal writing exist to promote clarity and precision which writers much achieve in order to effectively convey ideas, evidence, and arguments. In addition, texts that observe the rules of formal written English tend to be more persuasive by making the author appear well informed and careful. Writing replete with errors does not make a great impression, and most educators want to help students present themselves well. Correctness, then, isn't *the* most important thing, but it does matter.

Another common assumption among students is that one is either good at grammar or not good at grammar, and that such is one's immutable fate. Not true. Once you master a particular rule or practice, it becomes second nature, and then you can focus your attention on mastering another. Even people who write formally for a living, like your professors, still look things up in a writing handbook from time to time. You can master the practices of formal written English, and college is a great time to use the feedback from your professors to identify your common errors and learn to correct them.

Quick Inspiration for Proofreading

The following video offers a set of starting guidelines for proofreading. (Note: this video has a jazzy soundtrack but no dialogue, so can be viewed without sound.)

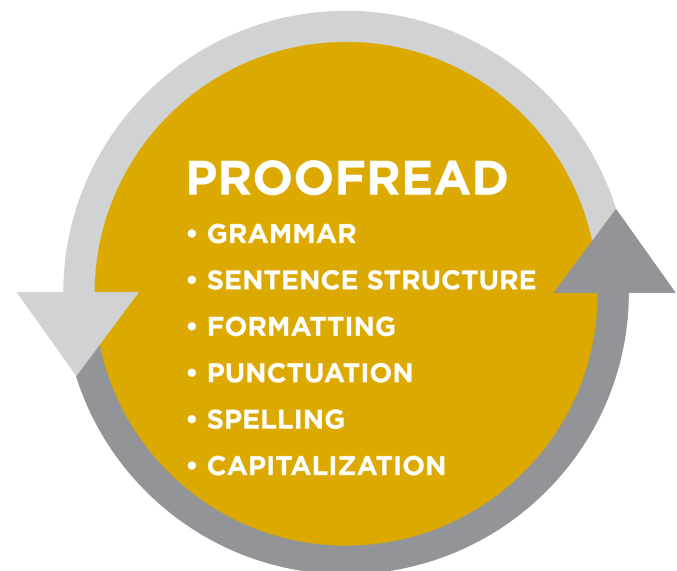
Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/AsGx4-vUpKs>

What You Will Learn to Do

- evaluate lower order concerns for revision
- evaluate strategies for improving sentence clarity
- evaluate strategies for recognizing potential grammatical issues in a draft
- evaluate strategies for recognizing potential spelling issues in a draft
- evaluate strategies for recognizing potential punctuation issues in a draft

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Text: Lower Order Concerns
- Text: Style
- Video: Proofreading Advice
- Text: "Correctness" in Writing
- Text: The Importance of Spelling
- Video: Punctuation Concerns
- Self Check: Proofreading
- Try It: Proofreading



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TEXT: LOWER ORDER CONCERNS

Previously we examined higher order concerns (HOCs) as part of the revision stage of the writing process. Once we move to the proofreading stage, it's time to consider the lower order concerns (LOCs). The difference is

simple: HOCs are global issues, or issues that affect how a reader understands the entire paper; LOCs are issues that don't *necessarily* interrupt understanding of the writing by themselves.

HOCs	LOCs
Audience	Grammar
Thesis statement	Punctuation
Organization	Citation
Focus	Spelling
Development of ideas	Sentence structure

You may find yourself thinking, “Well, it depends,” or, “But what if...?” You’re absolutely right to think so. These lists are just guidelines; every writer will have a different hierarchy of concerns. Always try to think in terms of, “Does this affect my understanding of the writing?”

Are HOCs More Important than LOCs?

No, not necessarily. HOCs tend to interrupt a reader’s understanding of the writing, and that’s why they need to be addressed first. However, if a LOC becomes a major obstacle, then it naturally becomes a higher priority.

Think of an example of how a Lower Order Concern could become a Higher Order Concern.

Here are some other issues you might face. These may be more difficult to categorize, and they may largely depend on the writing. If you think, “It depends,” make notes about the circumstances under which these issues could be a HOC or a LOC.

- Evaluating sources
- citation method
- style
- paragraph structure
- active vs. passive voice
- format

How to Address LOCs

Analyze your use of source material. Check any paraphrases and quotations against the original texts. Quotations should replicate the original author's words, while paraphrases should maintain the original author's meaning but have altered language and sentence structures. For each source, confirm that you have adhered to the preferred style guide for the target journal or other venue.

Consider individual sentences in terms of grammar, mechanics, and punctuation. Many LOCs can be revised by isolating and examining different elements of the text. Read the text sentence by sentence, considering the grammar and sentence structure. Remember, a sentence may be

grammatically correct and still confuse readers. If you notice a pattern—say, a tendency to misplace modifiers or add unnecessary commas—read the paper looking only for that error. Read the document backwards, word for word, looking for spelling errors. Throughout the writing process and especially at this stage of revision, keep a dictionary, a thesaurus, and a writing handbook nearby.

Strategies such as reading aloud and seeking feedback are useful at all points in the revision process. Reading aloud will give you distance from the text and prevent you from skimming over what is actually written on the page. This strategy will help you to identify both HOCs, such as missing concepts, and LOCs, such as typos. Additionally, seeking feedback will allow you to test your ideas and writing on real readers. Seek feedback from readers both inside and outside of your target audience in order to gain different perspectives.



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TEXT: STYLE

The stage of proofreading is often focused solely on “correctness”: making sure that all the details are right, and that language is used according to the rules. Proofreading also offers a great opportunity to address more personal concerns, however. It’s a chance to focus on your **style**, and allows you to craft the final product that best represents your unique perspective.



A writer's style is what sets his or her writing apart. Style is the way writing is dressed up (or down) to fit the specific context, purpose, or audience. Word choice, sentence fluency, and the writer's voice — all contribute to the style of a piece of writing. How a writer chooses words and structures sentences to achieve a certain effect is also an element of style. When Thomas Paine wrote "These are the times that try men's souls," he arranged his words to convey a sense of urgency and desperation. Had he written "These are bad times," it's likely he wouldn't have made such an impact!

Style is usually considered to be the province of literary writers. Novelists such as Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner and poets such as Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman are well known for their distinctive literary styles. But journalists, scientists, historians, and mathematicians also have distinctive styles, and they need to know how to vary their styles to fit different audiences. For example, the first-person narrative style of a popular magazine like *National Geographic* is quite different from the objective, third-person expository style of a research journal like *Scientific American*, even though both are written for informational purposes.

Not just right and wrong

Style is not a matter of right and wrong but of what is appropriate for a particular setting and audience. Consider the following two passages, which were written by the same author on the same topic with the same main idea, yet have very different styles:

"Experiments show that *Heliconius* butterflies are less likely to oviposit on host plants that possess eggs or egg-like structures. These egg mimics are an unambiguous example of a plant trait evolved in response to a host-restricted group of insect herbivores."

"*Heliconius* butterflies lay their eggs on *Passiflora* vines. In defense the vines seem to have evolved fake eggs that make it look to the butterflies as if eggs have already been laid on them." (Example from Myers, G. (1992). *Writing biology: Texts in the social construction of scientific knowledge*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. p. 150.)

What changed was the audience. The first passage was written for a professional journal read by other biologists, so the style is authoritative and impersonal, using technical terminology suited to a professional audience. The second passage, written for a popular science magazine, uses a more dramatic style, setting up a conflict between the butterflies and the vines, and using familiar words to help readers from non-scientific backgrounds visualize the scientific concept being described. Each style is appropriate for the particular audience.

Elements of style

Many elements of writing contribute to an author's style, but three of the most important are word choice, sentence fluency, and voice.

Word Choice

Good writers are concise and precise, weeding out unnecessary words and choosing the exact word to convey meaning. Precise words—active verbs, concrete nouns, specific adjectives—help the reader visualize the sentence. Good writers use adjectives sparingly and adverbs rarely, letting their nouns and verbs do the work.

relationship failure having failed me
in the past but it won't stop
my things I description and I
alking **Inspiration** dico
ther strategies, but it can also
d to be the most exciting prac
world but an individual has
attention to this things and sh

Good writers also choose words that contribute to the flow of a sentence. Polysyllabic words, alliteration, and consonance can be used to create sentences that roll off the tongue. Onomatopoeia and short, staccato words can be used to break up the rhythm of a sentence.

Sentence Fluency

Sentence fluency is the flow and rhythm of phrases and sentences. Good writers use a variety of sentences with different lengths and rhythms to achieve different effects.

They use parallel structures within sentences and

paragraphs to reflect parallel ideas, but also know how to avoid monotony by varying their sentence structures.

Good writers also arrange their ideas within a sentence for greatest effect. They avoid loose sentences, deleting extraneous words and rearranging their ideas for effect. Many students initially write with a looser oral style, adding words on to the end of a sentence in the order they come to mind. This rambling style is often described as a “word dump” where everything in a student’s mind is dumped onto the paper in no particular order. There is nothing wrong with a word dump as a starting point: the advantage of writing over speaking is that writers can return to their words, rethink them, and revise them for effect. Tighter, more readable style results when writers choose their words carefully, delete redundancies, make vague words more specific, and use subordinate clauses and phrases to rearrange their ideas for the greatest effect.

Voice

Because voice is difficult to measure reliably, it is often left out of scoring formulas for writing tests. Yet voice is an essential element of style that reveals the writer’s personality. A writer’s voice can be impersonal or chatty, authoritative or reflective, objective or passionate, serious or funny.

Strategies to Revise for Style

Read an essay draft out loud, preferably to another person. Better yet, have another person read your draft to you. Note how that person interprets your words. Does it come across as you had meant it originally? If not, revise.

Adopt a persona that’s related to your topic. Write from the perspective of this person you create: what language would a young woman who’d just spent two years in the peace corps use, for instance, if the essay were about the value of volunteer work? How would the words on the page of a project about gun control look coming from the perspective of a very conservative gun owner?

Combine (some) short sentences, or break apart (some) long sentences. Sentence length variety is an asset to your readers, as noted above. If you find a stretch of your essay that uses many sentences of approximately the same length close together, focus on combining or breaking apart there.

Punch up the word choice. Not every word in an essay can be a “special” word, nor should they be. But if your writing in an area feels a little flat, the injection of a livelier word can have strong rhetorical and emotional impact on your reader. Think of these words as jewels in the right setting. Often swapping out “to be” verbs (is, was, were, etc.) with more action-packed verbs has immediate, positive impact. Adjectives are also good candidates for updating—look for “things” and “stuff,” or “very” and “many,” to replace with more precise terminology.

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VIDEO: PROOFREADING ADVICE

The following video features two student tutors from the Writing and Reading Center at Fresno City College. In addition to great guidance about proofreading strategies, they also offer insights about what to expect when working with Writing Center tutors.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/STa5W4gm2qY>

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TEXT: "CORRECTNESS" IN WRITING

In thinking about correctness, it's important to recognize that some rules are more important than others.

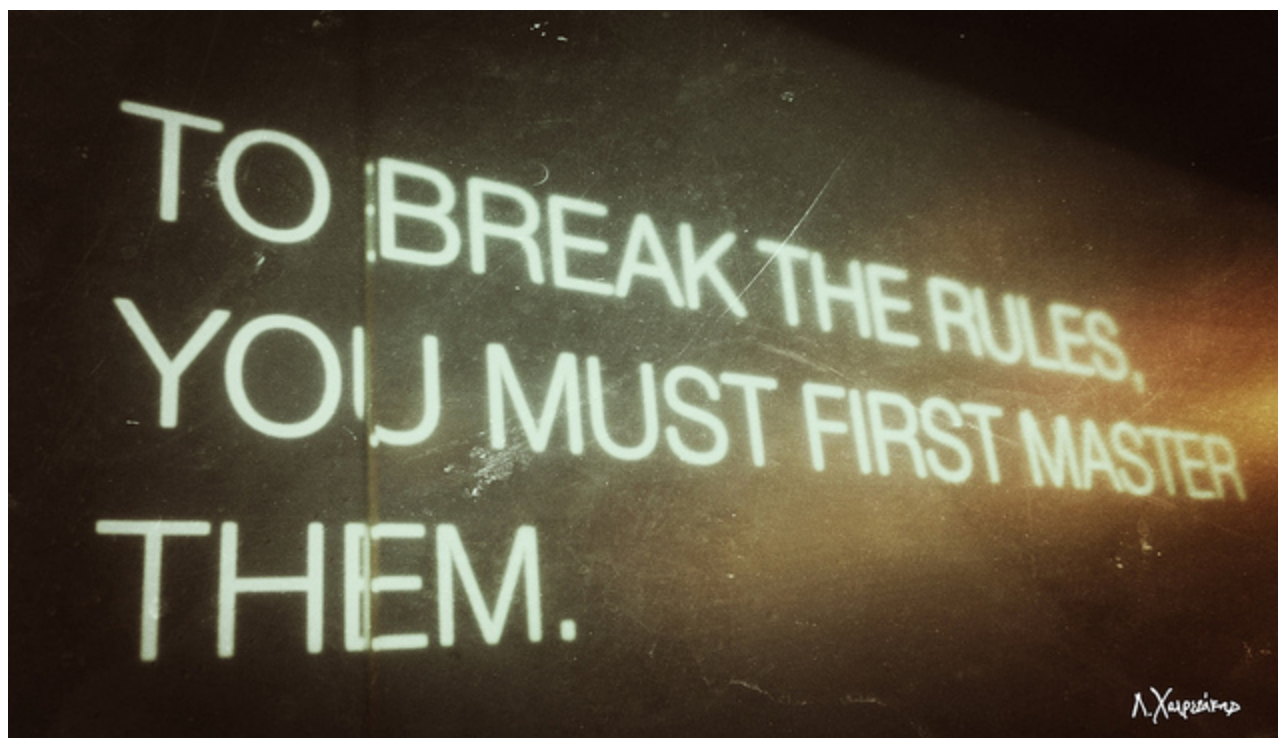
Essential Rules of the English Language

Joseph Williams helpfully distinguishes three kinds of rules in Williams and Bizup's *Style*. ((Note: Williams first described invented rules in J.M. Williams, "A Phenomenology of Error," *College Composition and Communication*, 32, no. 2 (1981): 152-168.)) First, there are rules that are basic to English, such as "the car" not "car the." For example,

INCORRECT: I thought whether true claims not.

CORRECT: I hadn't thought about whether the claims were true.

If you've gotten most of your formal education in English, you probably observe these rules routinely. If your writing has mismatches of number (singular/plural) or tense, it might be due to haste or carelessness rather than unawareness. Similarly, capitalizing the first word of a sentence and ending with appropriate punctuation are basic rules that most people comply with automatically when writing for a professor or in other formal situations.



Rules of Formality

Williams' second category is comprised of rules that distinguish standard written English from the informal variants that people use in their day-to-day lives. Most students with middle-class and non-immigrant backgrounds use informal vernaculars that closely parallel standard written English. Students with working-class or more modest backgrounds or who are members of transnational and multi-lingual communities may use informal variants of English in their everyday lives that are quite different from standard written English. It's an unfortunate reality of social inequality that such students have to expend more effort than their middle-class English-speaking counterparts to master the standard conventions. It's not really fair, but at least the mechanics and rules of formal writing are documented and unambiguous. Learning to communicate effectively in different social contexts is part of becoming an educated person.

Some examples:

INFORMAL: We ain't got no more of them cookies.

FORMAL: We don't have any more of those cookies.

INFORMAL: My coat, my phone, and my keys was all lock in the car.

FORMAL: My coat, my phone, and my keys were all locked in the car.

INFORMAL: u shd go 2 café b4 wrk bc coffee

FORMAL: You should go the café before work to get some coffee.

The informal versions are clearly English, and they're widely understandable to others. The first and second examples contain choices of tense, number, and punctuation that are inappropriate in standard written English even though they don't actually impede communication. Most students already understand that these first two categories of rules (rules fundamental to English and the rules of standard written English) are obligatory for formal writing.

Rules as Folklore

There is a third category of rules that Williams notes and enthusiastically criticizes; he calls them “invented rules” because they usually arise from busybody grammarians rather than enduring patterns of customary language use. Some invented rules Williams calls “options”: those that your reader will notice when you *observe* them and not care if you don’t. Here’s an example of the fabled don’t-end-a-sentence-with-a-preposition rule:

OBSERVING THE RULE: With which concept can we analyze this problem?

IGNORING THE RULE: Which concept can we analyze this problem with?

Some grammarians would claim that only the first version is correct. However, you probably have the (accurate) impression that professional writers are much more likely to choose the second version. This rule does not reflect real-life customary practice, even in standard written English. That’s why Williams calls it an “invented rule.” Most of your professors are fine with the second version above, the one that ends a sentence with a preposition.

Williams calls the second sub-category of invented rules “folklore.” They’re invented rules (like “options”) in that grammarians think writers should observe them, but, in reality, no one does. Williams gleefully lists instances in which the very grammarians who propose these rules go on to unselfconsciously violate them. (Note: J.M. Williams, *Phenomenology of Error*) You may have heard of these rules, but they’re widely considered absurd.

For example, some grammarians are dismayed that people use “that” and “which” interchangeably, and they argue that writers should use “that” to indicate restrictive elements and “which” to indicate non-restrictive elements. A restrictive element is one that makes a necessary specification about something; a non-restrictive element is one that simply adds extra information. Consider these two examples:

Version 1:

The party that Alex went to was shut down by the police.

Version 2:

The party which Alex went to was shut down by the police.

For almost all readers, versions 1 and 2 are saying the exact same thing. For the persnickety grammarian, version 1 is specifying the party that *Alex* went to, and not the party that, say, Jordan went to, while version 2 is simply inserting extra information about Alex’s attendance at the party. According to these grammarians, “that Alex went to” adds critically needed information (restrictive) while “which Alex went to” adds bonus information (non-restrictive).

As Williams and some others explain: it’s bullshit. Professional writers use commas and carefully chosen words to do the job of distinguishing restrictive and non-restrictive elements, and they choose whichever relative pronoun (“that” or “which”) sounds better in context. You could observe the distinction between that and which if you like, but no one would notice. More importantly, observing this invented rule wouldn’t necessarily make your writing any clearer, more concise, or more graceful.

One Particular Folklore Rule to Follow

There is one rule that Williams calls “folklore” that you probably have to observe in college papers nonetheless: that is, the rule that you can’t start sentences with But, And, So, For, or Yet (or other coordinating conjunctions).



Browsing through assigned readings and articles published in major newspapers and magazines will quickly lead you to texts that violate this so-called rule. Here are two examples:

From the front page of the *New York Times* January 7, 2014: ((Note: Peter Eavis, “Steep Penalties Taken in Stride by JPMorgan Chase,” *New York Times*, January 7, 2014, page A1.)) “But since the financial crisis, JPMorgan has become so large and profitable that it has been able to weather the government’s legal blitz, which has touched many parts of the bank’s sprawling operations.” And a little further down we see, “Yet JPMorgan’s shares are up 28 percent over the last 12 months.”

From a news article in *Science*, December 21, 2007: ((Note: Richard A. Kerr,)“Global Warming Coming Home to Roost in the American Midwest,” *Science* 318, no. 5858 (2007): 1859.) “Altered winds blew in more warm air from the subtropics only in models in which mid-latitude oceans warmed as observed; apparently, the warmer oceans altered the circulation. And that ocean warming is widely viewed as being driven by the strengthening greenhouse.”

Whether or not to start sentences with conjunctions will ultimately come down to a matter of your instructors’ preferences. Thus, you shouldn’t start sentences with “And,” “But” or other coordinating conjunctions unless you’ve been specifically invited to.

There are countless other rules beyond the ones discussed here. The point of these examples is to show that you don’t have to observe every little rule you’ve ever heard of. There are some elements of mechanics that you have to master. These practices will gradually become second nature. It’s sometimes hard to know at the outset which rules are standard, which are options, and which are folklore. With the help of a good handbook and your instructors, you’ll learn them over time.

The larger point here is that that observing rules isn’t about traversing a minefield of potential errors; it’s just about learning and adopting the practices appropriate to your audience, which is one of the first rules of writing well.

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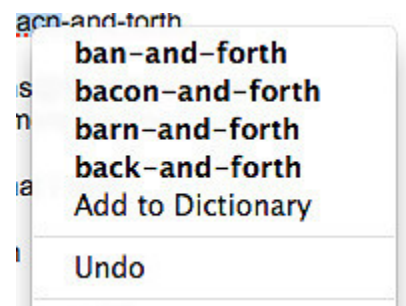
TEXT: THE IMPORTANCE OF SPELLING

Word-processing programs usually have a spell-checker, but you should still carefully check for correct changes in your words. This is because automatic spell-checkers may not always understand the **context** of a word.

Misspelling a word might seem like a minor mistake, but it can reflect very poorly on a writer. It suggests one of two things: either the writer does not care enough about his work to proofread it, or he does not know his topic well enough to properly spell words related to it. Either way, spelling errors will make a reader less likely to trust a writer’s authority.

The best way to ensure that a paper has no spelling errors is to look for them during the proofreading stage of the writing process. Being familiar with the most common errors will help you find (and fix) them during the writing and proofreading stage.

Sometimes, a writer just doesn't know how to spell the word she wants to use. This may be because the word is technical jargon or comes from a language other than her own. Other times, it may be a proper name that she has not encountered before. Anytime you want to use a word but are unsure of how to spell it, do not guess. Instead, check a dictionary or other reference work to find its proper spelling.



Common Spelling Errors

Phonetic Errors

Phonetics is a field that studies the sounds of a language. However, English phonetics can be tricky: In English, the pronunciation of a word does not always relate to the way it is spelled. This can make spelling a challenge. Here are some common phonetic irregularities:

- A word can sound like it could be spelled multiple ways. For example: “concede” and “conceed” are the same phonetically, but only “concede” is the proper spelling.
- A word has silent letters that the writer may forget to include. You cannot hear the “a” in “realize,” but you need it to spell the word correctly.
- A word has double letters that the writer may forget to include. “Accommodate,” for example, is frequently misspelled as “acommodate” or “accomodate.”
- The writer may use double letters when they are not needed. The word “amend” has only one “m,” but it is commonly misspelled with two.

Sometimes, words just aren't spelled the way they sound. “Right,” for example, does not resemble its phonetic spelling whatsoever. Try to become familiar with words that have unusual or non-phonetic spellings so you can be on the lookout for them in your writing. But again, the best way to avoid these misspellings is to consult a dictionary whenever you're unsure of the correct spelling.

Homophones

“Bread” and “bred” sound the same, but they are spelled differently, and they mean completely different things. Two words with different meanings but the same pronunciation are homophones. If you don't know which homophone is the right one to use, look both up in the dictionary to see which meaning (and spelling) you want. Common homophones include:

- right, rite, wright, and write
- read (most tenses of the verb) and reed
- read (past, past participle) and red
- rose (flower) and rose (past tense of rise)
- carat, caret, and carrot
- to, two, and too
- there, their, and they're
- its and it's

Typographical Errors

Some spelling errors are caused by the writer accidentally typing the wrong thing. Common typos include:

- Omitting letters from a word (typing “brthday” instead of “birthday,” for example)
- Adding extra letters (typing “birthdayy”)
- Transposing two letters in a word (typing “brithday”)
- Spacing words improperly (such as “myb irthday” instead of “my birthday”)

Being aware of these common mistakes when writing will help you avoid spelling errors.

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VIDEO: PUNCTUATION CONCERNS

The following videos offer guidance for some of the most common punctuation issues seen in college-level student writing.

Comma Splices

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/-vck6uK-kow>

Two ways to proofread your essay for comma splices

1. To spot-check suspect sentences: rewrite a sentence you think might be a comma splice as a yes/no question. Can you make just one question out of the sentence? If so, it's probably not a comma splice. If it needs 2 or more questions to make sense, then some additional punctuation in the original sentence is needed.
 - Elliot drinks four liters of water a day, he carries his water bottle with him everywhere.
 - If turned into a yes/no question, we would need 2 questions in order for this to make sense: "Does Elliot drink four liters of water a day? Does he carry his water bottle with him everywhere?"
 - Because it needs 2 yes/no questions, the original sentence is a comma splice, and needs to be corrected.
2. To be thorough: skim through your paper, stopping at every comma. Look at what comes before the comma, and then what comes after it. Are both sides complete sentences on their own? (In other words, could you also put a period in that spot?) If so, you've found a comma splice.
 - D'Andre, my science lab partner, is considering running for class president, I think he'd make a wonderful candidate.
 - Stopping at each of the commas, the first two don't contain a full sentence before them. The third one, however, does have a complete thought on both sides, and so indicates we've found a comma splice.

Apostrophes

Correct apostrophe usage is part punctuation, part spelling. The following short videos walk through 3 of the most common sets of apostrophe "trouble words." If you aren't always clear which one goes where, these will serve as handy guides.

Its & It's

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/sq6JkXk4kDg>

There, Their, & They're

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/m-RC-Zf89jo>

Your & You're

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/yPlpE0ZO3NI>

If you suspect you have issues with any of these words, try using the “Find” option on your word processing program. Search out each word, and use the tests in these videos to assess whether you’ve used the correct form in the correct way.

Semicolons and Colons

These two pieces of punctuation often get mixed up. Make sure they’re used correctly in your essay.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/WMKufGCs1Ec>

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/l12qwxQn5_s

Again, the “Find” option in your word processing program (or web browser) to locate semicolons and colons. Do you have a full sentence before each colon? Do you have a full sentence both before and after each semicolon? If so, great. If not, time to revise.

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SELF CHECK: PROOFREADING

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TRY IT: PROOFREADING

To Do

1. Using the guidance in this section, create your own personal Proofreading Checklist. What particular concerns do you need to focus on while proofreading your essay? What patterns in your writing do you most want to work on improving?
2. Apply the checklist to your most current Persuasive Essay draft. Note the items you make changes to as a result of this evaluation of your draft.
3. Consult with a tutor at the Enhancement Center. Bring your proofreading checklist and the most current version of your essay draft with you for the discussion.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER: WRITING PROCESS

THE WRITING PROCESS



As you now know, writing isn't just something you do in a sudden burst of activity when the essay deadline starts to loom. Such a last-minute approach usually produces poorly organized and incoherent essays, because it eliminates the idea of writing as a *process*, and focuses only on the *product*.

Feel empowered by knowing that writing is a process with a number of phases, only the last few of which involve setting pen to paper (or finger to keyboard).

Students typically panic about academic writing because they feel they've nothing to say. This sense of mental blankness (writer's block) is, paradoxically, caused by being aware of too many possible things you *could* say. If you avoid committing yourself to any particular approach, your mind is unable to form a coherent mental picture of the topic, so that it seems impossible to form a connected argument.

You can escape from this mental blankness by defining the problem. Systematically think through what the question is asking you to do and develop writing strategies on the basis of the research you've already done.

Reflect on these key ideas as you face your next writing challenge:

- Process writing is a natural set of steps that writers take to create a finished piece of work.
- It is a process of organizing ideas and creativity through text.
- The focus of process writing is on process, not on the end-product.
- It is useful for all skill levels, from children to published authors, to develop an authentic, creative work.
- It breaks the act of writing into manageable steps that can be taken over a period of time, rather than all at once.
- The above steps do not exist in a linear way. Writers sometimes go back and forth among steps.

You have the authority to shape the writing process as it best fits YOU. It is a tool meant to serve your best interests, after all.

ASSIGNMENT: TOPIC SELECTION

Remember that the goal of the Persuasive Essay is to **select a specific category of college students, define a practice that could lead to enhanced success for that category, and argue for the adoption of that practice.**

Step 1: Brainstorm Categories of College Students

List as many different “types” of college students that come to mind in a 3-minute window. These types might include degree or certification programs, gender, socioeconomic background, race, ethnicity, academic performance, sports, where they go to school, how they pay for it, and more.

Step 2: Reflect

At the end of 3 minutes, stop writing and review the list you generated. Which groups on that list seem most interesting to you? Which would you like to explore further, or learn more about? Which would you find value in helping to achieve success in school?

Circle your 2 or 3 top picks.

Step 3: Focus

Perform some initial research on the student types you circled in Step 2. Use the guide for initial research in this section to help you.

Based on what you learn from the first few articles you read and skim, narrow your selection to one type. You may combine up to two elements into one type of student, if you’d like. For instance, if you’re most interested in “student athletes,” you might further refine that as “female student athletes” or “college soccer players.”

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ASSIGNMENT: PREWRITING

The term “college student” corrals a wide range of types of students in a single term. It stands to reason that different groups of people have different motivations for entering higher education, different goals while they are there, and different definitions of success once they graduate.

For this essay, you will **select a specific category of college students, define a practice that could lead to enhanced success for that category, and argue for the adoption of that practice.**

Starting from the perspective of the student group you previously identified for your topic, concentrate on the types of challenges that seem to face that particular population of students.

1. Create a list, mind-map, or 10-minute free write that explores the challenges specific to your chosen student group, related to higher education.
2. Circle the 2 challenges that jump out to you from this activity, that seem the most relevant or important.
3. Do you have ideas at this point of how either of these challenges might be addressed?

- Write a sentence or two that selects one challenge and proposes a solution for it, specific to this student population.
- What particular benefit will come to your group of students, if they make the change you suggest?
- The answers to these two questions will form your working thesis statement. This can change later, but will give you a focus for the next steps of the writing process.

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ASSIGNMENT: FINDING EVIDENCE

Revisit the working thesis you have for your essay so far. That thesis makes **claims**: it argues that a particular group of students will experience stronger college success outcomes if they adopt a particular practice.

Make a list of evidence that will be required to prove to your reader that each of the following claims is true.

Claim 1: the student population you've identified faces challenges in college success

Claim 2: the behavior or practice you've identified will offer that student population a benefit

Some evidence might come from personal experience; some evidence might come from what you've witnessed others experience; some evidence will come from research you conduct shortly; and some might be guesses or hypotheses of what you assume to be true.

Include 3-5 items of evidence for each claim.

For each item on the list, do some initial research that helps you understand each. See if you can find people who've had similar experiences, or suggestions for college success, or data regarding what practices are most effective.

Write two brief paragraphs (3-5 sentences, each) summarizing what you find in your initial research. One paragraph will address each claim and what the research tells you about it.

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ASSIGNMENT: ORGANIZING

Revisit your working thesis statement drafted in a previous exercise. Consider it from a “three story thesis” perspective, as discussed in this section.

- Revise your thesis to fit the three story thesis model.

Use this revised thesis to consider what the necessary components of your argument will be.

- List what specific sections will be required to convince your reader to agree with you. Refer to the [Video: Logic and Structure](#) page to guide you.

With your body components defined, do your best to map out key sentences (aka topic sentences) for each of your body paragraphs. Note that these will evolve as you get further into your project, but will serve as a form of an outline right now.

- List key sentences for body paragraphs, in the order you expect them to appear.

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ASSIGNMENT: DRAFTING

Step One

Schedule 45 minutes of uninterrupted time, and complete a Flash Draft. You can refer to notes and outlines you've made previously, but don't interrupt your writing to consult any outside sources at this point. Try to capture as much raw essay content as you can during this time, making notes to yourself for where to add more development or research later.

Step Two

Step away from the Flash Draft and the essay project overall for at least a few hours, if not a full day.

When you return, write a brief paragraph evaluating your Flash Draft experience and results. What did you learn from this activity? What changes will you need to make to move this to a more polished essay draft?

Step Three

Complete a full draft of your Persuasive Essay. You can build from the Flash Draft, or start from scratch—whichever seems easier. Write the draft in whatever order you wish, but the finished piece should contain an introduction, body, and conclusion, as well as incorporate citations and a Works Cited page.

Unlike your Flash Draft, the complete essay draft doesn't have to be accomplished in one sitting. Use appropriate time management techniques to set your own deadline and pacing for the task.

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ASSIGNMENT: REVISING

1. Using the guidance in this section, create your own personal Revision Checklist. What steps seem most meaningful to you in revising an essay? In what order should they be done?
2. Apply the checklist to your most current Persuasive Essay draft. Note the items you make changes to as a result of this evaluation of your draft.
3. Consult with a tutor at the Enhancement Center. Bring your checklist and the most current version of your essay draft with you for the discussion.

ASSIGNMENT: PROOFREADING

1. Using the guidance in this section, create your own personal Proofreading Checklist. What particular concerns do **you** need to focus on while proofreading your essay? What patterns in your writing do you most want to work on improving?
2. Apply the checklist to your most current Persuasive Essay draft. Note the items you make changes to as a result of this evaluation of your draft.
3. Consult with a tutor at the Enhancement Center. Bring your proofreading checklist and the most current version of your essay draft with you for the discussion.

ASSIGNMENT: PERSUASIVE ESSAY FINAL DRAFT

Throughout this module you have been working attentively on your persuasive essay. Work with tutors at the Enhancement Center as needed to finalize your essay into the strongest submission possible. Submit the final version here.

Persuasive Essay Overview

The term “college student” corrals a wide range of types of students in a single term. It stands to reason that different groups of people have different motivations for entering higher education, different goals while they are there, and different definitions of success once they graduate.

For this essay, you will **select a specific category of college students, define a practice that could lead to enhanced success for that category, and argue for the adoption of that practice.**

The **thesis** for this essay will persuade readers in the target audience to adopt the practice you’ve identified, in order to help them achieve better outcomes while in college. The thesis will be supported in the body of the essay with **evidence** demonstrating why this practice will increase success and how it can be implemented.

Assignment Details

The final essay will be 750-1000 words long. It will include a thesis statement that is supported by evidence. It will be well-organized, and display evidence of careful application of the writing process.

Rubric

In order to successfully complete this assessment, a submitted essay must reach “Meets or Exceeds Expectations” in all categories.

Criteria		Ratings	
Topic & Thesis Statement	Meets or Exceeds Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> essay topic has been personalized to refine the assignment prompt contains a clearly identifiable persuasive thesis statement that drives the essay content 	Approaching Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> essay topic is a generic answer to the assignment prompt contains a persuasive thesis statement that relates to most essay content 	Does Not Meet Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> essay topic does not match the assignment prompt does not contain a persuasive thesis statement, <i>or</i> thesis statement does not relate to most essay content
Evidence	Meets or Exceeds Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sufficient and varied evidence provided to justify the thesis statement draws on academic and personal sources as needed 	Approaching Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> insufficient evidence provided to justify the thesis statement draws only upon personal sources (personal examples, anecdotes) 	Does Not Meet Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> no evidence provided, <i>or</i> evidence does not justify the thesis statement
Organization	Meets or Exceeds Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> contains a clearly identifiable introduction, body section, and conclusion follows a logical pattern of development applies transitions effectively 	Approaching Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> contains an introduction, and/or body section, and/or conclusion has a pattern of development, but needs further attention to paragraphing insufficient use of transitions 	Does Not Meet Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> missing introduction, body section, or conclusion elements no clear pattern of development little to no use of transitions
Editing and Proofreading	Meets or Exceeds Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> evidence that higher-order editing concerns have been identified and addressed evidence that lower-order proofreading concerns have been identified and addressed, though minor 	Approaching Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> higher-order editing concerns may not have been addressed lower-order editing concerns may not have 	Does Not Meet Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> fundamental issues with higher-order editing concerns present in draft fundamental issues with lower-

	patterns of error might remain	been addressed. Significant patterns of error remain.	order editing concerns present in draft
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RESEARCH PROCESS

WHY IT MATTERS: RESEARCH PROCESS

Have you heard about the dangers of dihydrogen monoxide? Did you know that it is commonly found in many household products, is readily available, but can also cause severe burns, erosion, corrosion, and is the major component in acid rain? Jennifer Abel from *Consumer Affairs* tells us, “search online for information about dihydrogen monoxide, and you’ll find a long list of scary and absolutely true warnings about it: used by the nuclear power industry, vital to the production of everything from pesticides to Styrofoam, present in tumors removed from cancer patients, and guaranteed fatal to humans in large quantities.”

Read more about the dangers at this [DHMO website](#).

Are you starting to feel like something is not quite right about this information? What exactly *is* DHMO? How can it be found so easily, yet pose so many risks? If you haven’t tried it already, do a quick Google search for dihydrogen monoxide. Aside from the dhmo.org website, what other search results do you see?



Source Reliability

You probably found the Wikipedia page titled “[Dihydrogen Monoxide Hoax](#)” or a Snopes.com article debunking the circulating myths. It turns out that dihydrogen monoxide is really just a fancy way of referencing water, or H₂O, and is certainly something we don’t want to ban or protest against. This new context about the real meaning of DHMO certainly provides amusing insight into the “horrors” you read about on the DHMO website: Does it enhance athletic performance? Can it improve your marriage? What are its overdose symptoms?



A funny meme depicting how easy it is to misrepresent information and give people the wrong impression. While Obama did prohibit waterboarding as a torture technique, banning water in schools would have obvious disastrous consequences.

Nowadays, we are surrounded with so much readily available information at our fingertips, that it is sometimes hard to differentiate fact from fiction. Of course, not everything you read on the internet is true, but how do you know what's a good source to rely on for personal information in your life? How about for an academic essay?

In this section, you'll learn about tools you can use and steps you can follow in order to find credible information. You'll learn how to find information, evaluate it, integrate it, and document it correctly for your research paper.

These skills will help you excel in your academic writing, but also pave the way for a more critical eye when hearing or reading about any newfound information.

USING SOURCES IN RESEARCH

Learning Outcomes

- Evaluate and practice preliminary, intermediate, and advanced search techniques
- Evaluate and practice methods of analysis to assess the quality and reliability of a source
- Evaluate issues of plagiarism and academic dishonesty
- Evaluate and practice MLA document formatting and citation practices



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PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT: PERSUASIVE ESSAY REVISION

Persuasive Essay Revision Introduction

In the Writing module, you completed an essay in which you defined a practice that could lead to enhanced success for a particular group of college students and argued for the adoption of that practice.

In this module, you will revisit that essay, **expanding it to include at least 3 outside resources not already part of required reading in course, including at least 2 from the library** to help illustrate and clarify the points your essay makes.

You will work with your tutors at the Enhancement Center to identify what kind of outside sources will be appropriate for your needs, and where to add source material into your essay draft.

Assignment Details



Look for the Try It pages along the way to help you complete the Persuasive Essay Revision. The Try It activities will engage you in each step of the research process.

The revised essay will be 600-850 words long. It will demonstrate a clear, supported thesis statement, strong organizational skills, and attention to proofreading and editing.

Additionally, it will incorporate 1-2 credible outside sources to help support the essay's thesis. These sources will be cited using MLA in-text citations and the essay will include a MLA Works Cited page.

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OUTCOME: FINDING SOURCES

Evaluate preliminary, intermediate, and advanced search techniques

Have you ever heard a song, made a mental note to look it its name, but then forgot all of the words? You remember wanting to hear it again and add it to your workout playlist, but all you remember is a short bit of the tune? How did go about finding the song?

Chances are, you had to:

- **Investigate** to find out the song's melody. Maybe you hummed the tune for a few friends, or remember that it sounded somewhat similar to another song you already heard, and used that song as a reference point.
- **Investigate** to find out the song's title (E.T., The Lazy Song, Born This Way, Latinoamérica).
- **Investigate** to find out who performed the song (Lady Gaga, Bruno Mars, Katy Perry, Maroon 5, Kanye West, Calle 13).
- **Investigate** to find out what CD that song was on (Teenage Dream, Doo-Wops & Hooligans, Born This Way, Entren Los Que Quieran) and if there are other songs you might also enjoy.
- **Investigate** to find out where you can purchase or download the song for the best price.



You can't – and won't – get what you want without **investigating**. And it's really no different with researching. Investigating is essential to your research because the questions you ask and the places you look will give you the results you need to create a convincing and compelling argument. Researching will take time and effort, so it pays off to take the time up front to learn about the best strategies for maximizing your research so you identify and utilize the best sources. The wrong approach can waste your time and effort and result in a weak paper.

So, where do you start investigating? First, you'll want to follow the research process. Once you have a good understanding of your research assignment and goals, you can begin to search for the right sources. In this section, you'll learn how follow the research process in order to carefully use search engines and library databases to find scholarly articles you'll need to write a top notch paper.

What You Will Learn to Do

- evaluate preliminary research strategies (developing a research plan, basic online searching, using Google)
- evaluate intermediate research strategies (advanced online searches, finding scholarly sources and primary and secondary sources, basic library searches, librarian consultation)
- evaluate advanced search strategies (advanced library searches, reading academic texts, using library databases)

The Learning Activities for this Outcome Include

- Text: Preliminary Research Strategies
- Text: The Research Process
- Text: Finding Sources [need transcript]
- Text: What are Scholarly Articles?
- Text: Reading and Using Scholarly Sources
- Text: Finding Scholarly Articles and Using Databases
- Video: Database Searching
- Text: Advanced Search Strategies
- Self Check: Finding Sources
- Try It: Finding Sources

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TEXT: PRELIMINARY RESEARCH STRATEGIES

During this module, we'll examine the research writing process through the example of Marvin, a student at Any University who gets advice from an online professor on writing his research paper. You'll read bits and pieces of their dialogue throughout the module and come to understand how the research writing process can be compared to **walking, talking, cooking, and eating**. In the following dialogue, consider the professor's recommendations to Marvin about how to think more deeply about his assignment and what type of angle to take for his paper. Just like Martin, you should begin your research by thinking about the importance of your topic and what about it you find interesting. It also helps to talk with someone about your paper, whether that be a friend, family member, classmate, teaching assistant, librarian, or professor.

Getting Started

Marvin, a college student at Any University, sits down at his computer. He logs in to the "Online Professor," an interactive advice site for students. After setting up a chat, he begins tapping the keys.

Marvin: Hi. I'm a student in the physician assistant program. The major paper for my health and environment class is due in five weeks, and I need some advice. The professor says the paper has to be 6–8 pages, and I have to cite and document my sources.

O-Prof: Congratulations on getting started early! Tell me a bit about your assignment. What's the purpose? Who's it intended for?

Marvin: Well, the professor said it should talk about a health problem caused by water pollution and suggest ways to solve it. We've read some articles, plus my professor gave us statistics on groundwater contamination in different areas.

O-Prof: What's been most interesting so far?

Marvin: I'm amazed at how much water pollution there is. It seems like it would be healthier to drink bottled water, but the plastic bottles hurt the environment.

O-Prof: Who else might be interested in this?

Marvin: Lots of people are worried about bad water. I might even get questions about it from my clients once I finish my program.

O-Prof: OK. So what information do you need to make a good recommendation?

Marvin thinks for a moment.

Marvin: I don't know much about the health problems caused by contaminated drinking water. Whether the tap water is safe depends on where you live, I guess. The professors talked about arsenic poisoning in Bangladesh, but what about the water in the U.S.? For my paper, maybe I should focus on a particular location? I also need to find out more about what companies do to make sure bottled water is pure.

O-Prof: Good! Now that you know what you need to learn, you can start looking for sources.

Marvin: When my professors talk about sources, they usually mean books or articles about my topic. Is that what you mean?

O-Prof: Books and articles do make good sources, but you might think about sources more generally as "forms of meaning you use to make new meaning." It's like your bottled water. The water exists already in some location but is processed by the company before it goes to the consumer. Similarly, a source provides information and knowledge that you process to produce new meaning, which other people can then use to make their own meaning.

A bit confused, Marvin scratches his head.

Marvin: I thought I knew what a source was, but now I'm not so sure.

O-Prof: Think about it. Sources of meaning are literally everywhere—for example, your own observations or experiences, the content of other people's brains, visuals and graphics, experiment results, TV and radio broadcasts, and written texts. And, there are many ways to make new meaning from sources. You can give an oral presentation, design a web page, paint a picture, or, as in your case, write a paper.

Marvin: I get it. But how do I decide which sources to use for my paper?

O-Prof: It depends on the meaning you want to make, which is why it's so important to figure out the purpose of your paper and who will read it. You might think about using sources as *walking*, *talking*, *cooking*, and *eating*. These aren't the only possible metaphors, but they do capture some important things about using sources.

Marvin: Hey! I thought we were talking about writing!

O-Prof: We are, but these metaphors can shed some light on writing with sources. Let's start with the first one: *walking*. To use sources well, you first have to go where they are. What if you were writing an article on student clubs for the school newspaper? Where would you go for information?

Marvin: I'd probably walk down to the Student Activities office and get some brochures about student clubs. Then I'd attend a few club meetings and maybe interview the club leaders and some members about their club activities.

O-Prof: OK, so you'd *walk* to where you could find relevant information for your article. That's what I mean by *walking*. You have to get to the sources you need.

Marvin: Wait a minute. For the article on student clubs, maybe I could save some walking. Maybe the list of clubs and the club descriptions are on the Student Activities web page. That'd save me a trip.

O-Prof: Yes, the Internet has cut down on the amount of physical walking you need to do to find sources. Before the Internet, you had to either travel to a source's physical location, or bring that source to your location. Think about your project on bottled water. To get information about the quality of a city's tap water in the 1950s, you would have had to figure out who'd have that information, then call or write to request a copy or *walk* to wherever the information was stored. Today, if you type "local water quality" into Google, the Environmental Protection Agency page comes up as one of the first hits. Its home page links to water quality reports for local areas.

Marvin pauses for a second before responding, thinking he's found a good short cut for his paper.

To be continued. . .

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TEXT: THE RESEARCH PROCESS

THE RESEARCH PROCESS



The research process is not a linear process in which you must complete step one before moving on to step two or three. You don't need to put off writing your paper until you've gathered all of your sources, in fact, you may want to start writing as soon as possible and adjust your search, thesis statement, and writing as you continue to work through the research process. For that reason, consider the following research process as a guideline to follow as you work through your paper. You can (and should!) revisit the steps as many times as needed to create a finished product.

1. **Decide on the topic**, or carefully consider the topic that has been assigned.
2. **Narrow the topic** in order to narrow search parameters. When you go to a professional sports event, concert, or event at a large venue, your ticket has three items on it: the section, the row, and the seat number. You go in that specific order to pinpoint where you are supposed to sit. Similarly, when you decide on a topic, you often start large and must narrow the focus; you move from general subject, to a more limited topic, to a specific focus or issue. The reader does not want a cursory look at the topic; she wants to walk away with some newfound knowledge and deeper understanding of the issue. For that, details are essential. For example, suppose you want to explore the topic of autism. You might move from:
 - **General topic**: special needs in a classroom
 - **Limited topic**: autistic students in a classroom setting
 - **Specific focus**: how technology can enhance learning for autistic students
3. **Do background research**, or pre-research. Begin by figuring out what you know about the topic, and then fill in any gaps you may have on the basics by looking at more general sources. This is a place where general Google searches, Wikipedia, or another encyclopedia-style source will be most useful. Once you know the basics of the topic, start investigating that basic information for potential sources of conflict. Does there seem to be disagreement about particular aspects of the topic? For instance, if you're looking at a Civil War battle, are there any parts of the battle that historians seem to argue about? Perhaps some point to one figure's failing as a reason for a loss, and some point instead to another figure's spectacular success as a reason his side won?
4. **Create a research question**. Once you have narrowed your topic so that is manageable, it is time to generate research questions about your topic. Create thought-provoking, open-ended questions, ones that encourage debate. Decide which question addresses the issue that concerns you—that will be your

main research question. Secondary questions will address the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the issue. As an example:

- **Main question:** Does the media stereotype women in such a way that women do not believe they can be leaders?
 - **Secondary questions:** How can more women get involved in politics? Why aren't more women involved in politics? What role do media play in discouraging women from being involved? How many women are involved in politics at a state or national level? How long do they typically stay in politics, and for what reasons do they leave?
5. Next, "answer" the main research question to create a **working thesis statement**. The thesis statement is a single sentence that identifies the topic and shows the direction of the paper while simultaneously allowing the reader to glean the writer's stance on that topic. A working thesis performs four main functions:
1. Narrows the subject to the single point that readers should understand
 2. Names the topic and makes a significant assertion about that topic
 3. Conveys the purpose
 4. Provides a preview of how the essay will be arranged (usually).
6. **Determine what kind of sources are best** for your argument.
- How many sources will you need? How long should your paper be? Will you need primary or secondary sources? Where will you find the best information?
7. **Create a bibliography** as you gather and reference sources. Make sure you are using credible and relevant sources. It's always a good idea to utilize reference management programs like Zotero, Mendeley, or EndNote so you can keep track of your research and citations while you are working and searching, instead of waiting until the end.
8. **Write and edit your paper!** Lastly, you'll incorporate the research into your own writing and properly cite your sources.

Practice: Research Questions and Working Thesis Statements

1. Which of the following is the better research question?

- a. How does trash pollute the environment?
- b. What is the environmental impact of plastic water bottles?
- c. What is the impact of bottled water on the environment?

Show Answer

2. Decide whether or not the following working thesis statements are **good** or **bad**:

- a. Man has had a major impact on the environment.
- b. Marijuana use in Mishawaka, Indiana has been a problem for law enforcement since the 1970s.
- c. Miley Cyrus is a horrible singer.
- d. Profilers have played a necessary role in catching serial killers.

Show Answer

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- Steps 2-4 in the Research Process come from Chapter 1: Writing and Research in the Academic Sphere and Chapter 2: Research Proposals and Thesis Statements. **Authored by:** Denise Snee, Kristin Houlton, and Nancy Heckel. Edited by Kimberly Jacobs. **Project:** Research, Analysis, and Writing. **License:** [CC BY-NC-SA: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike](#)
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TEXT: FINDING SOURCES

Beginning your research with Google or another search engine is an easy way to quickly get an overview on your topic. Even more effective than Google Search is [Google Advanced Search](#) , and even better than that for academic resources is [Google Scholar](#). Let's consider Marvin's experience.

Finding Sources

Marvin: So can I just use Google or Bing to find sources?

O-Prof: Internet search engines can help you find sources, but they aren't always the best route to getting to a good source. Try entering the search term "bottled water quality" into Google, without quotation marks around the term. How many hits do you get?

Marvin types it in.

Marvin: 1,180,000. That's pretty much what I get whenever I do an Internet search. Too many results.

O-Prof: Which is one of the drawbacks of using only Internet search engines. The Internet may have cut down on the physical *walking* needed to find good sources, but it's made up for the time savings by pointing you to more places than you could possibly go! But there are some ways you can narrow your search to get fewer, more focused results.

Marvin: Yeah, I know. Sometimes I add extra words in and it helps weed down the hits.

O-Prof: By combining search terms with certain words or symbols, you can control what the search engine looks for. If you put more than one term into a Google search box, the search engine will only give you sites that include both terms, since it uses the Boolean operator AND as the default for its searches. If you put OR between two search terms, you'll end up getting even more results, because Google will look for all websites containing either of the terms. Using a minus sign in front of a term eliminates things you're not interested in. It's the Google equivalent of the Boolean operator NOT. Try entering bottled water quality health -teeth.

Marvin types in the words, remembering suddenly that he has to make an appointment with the dentist.

Marvin: 784,000 hits.

O-Prof: Still a lot. You can also put quotation marks around groups of words and the search engine will look only for sites that contain all of those words in the exact order you've given. And you can combine this strategy with the other ways of limiting your search. Try "bottled water quality" (in quotation marks) health -teeth.

Marvin: 225,000. That's a little better.

O-Prof: Now try adding what type of website you are looking for, maybe a .gov or an .edu. Try typing "bottled water quality" heath -teeth site:.edu

Marvin: Wow, under 6,000 results now.

O-Prof: Yes, a definite improvement. Sometimes you want to be careful though not to narrow it so far that you miss useful sources. You have to play around with your search terms to get to what you need. A bigger problem with Internet search engines, though, is that they won't necessarily lead you to the sources considered most valuable for college writing.

Marvin: My professor said something about using peer-reviewed articles in scholarly journals.

O-Prof: Professors will often want you to use such sources. Articles in scholarly journals are written by experts; and if a journal's peer-reviewed, its articles have been screened by other experts (the authors' peers) before being published.

Marvin: So that would make peer-reviewed articles pretty reliable. Where do I find them?

O-Prof: Google's got a specialized search engine, Google Scholar, that will search for scholarly articles that might be useful. But often the best place is the college library's bibliographic databases.

To be continued. . .

Google Scholar

Google Scholar is Google’s academic search engine that searches across scholarly literature. It has extensive coverage, retrieving information from academic publishers, professional organizations, university repositories, professional websites, and government websites.

The benefits of searching within Google Scholar are numerous, but a search solely using Google Scholar will be insufficient for your research. Consider the following benefits of Google Scholar and library databases.

Google Scholar benefits	Library Databases benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Find content not available in library databasesFind more government resources than available in library databasesFind case law instead of or in addition to other contentLimit searches to papers written in a specific language (13 options) and display Google tips in a larger variety of languagesShow library access links for up to five libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Find content not available in Google ScholarLimit results to full text contentSpecify more information fields (subject headings,abstract, author, etc.) where you want your search terms foundLimit search results by subject headings suggested on the search results pagesLimit results to peer-reviewed, scholarly, or academic journal articles

Like other Google search products, Google Scholar starts with a basic search blank. Because researchers are more likely to need the results of more specific searches, the Advanced Search link is accessed via a down-arrow in the search blank.

Find articles

with all of the words

with the exact phrase

with at least one of the words

without the words

where my words occur

caffeine health

coffee "green tea" "black tea"

anywhere in the article

Return articles authored by

Return articles published in

Return articles dated between

e.g., "PJ Hayes" or McCarthy

e.g., J Biol Chem or Nature

—

e.g., 1996

Google Scholar Advanced Search.

Keep in mind that Google is not transparent about the journals or time ranges it indexes, and publishers occasionally request that Google Scholar not index their publications. Non-scholarly and/or non-peer reviewed material may also appear in Google Scholar, so it is best used in conjunction with other search tools. One of the greatest features of Google Scholar is the “Cited by” link found below each search result. If you find one article you like, you can click on the link to find other articles that reference that same work.

While the following video is specific to the University of West Florida, the same tips and principles still apply to most institutions. Contact your library to ensure you can set up your library account through Google Scholar so you have greater access to articles housed behind paywalls.

Watch this video online: <https://player.vimeo.com/video/87788472>

18 – Google Scholar from Joshua Vossler on Vimeo.

Google Scholar Search Results

Click on the links below to see how search results vary when using different search parameters.

- [caffeine health](#): A simple Google Scholar search for caffeine and health.
- [caffeine health coffee OR "green tea" OR "black tea"](#): Results of the search listed above, where the search specifies articles covering caffeine and health, and noting coffee, black tea, or green tea.
- [caffeine health author:"RR McCusker"](#): A search for articles on a topic by a specific author, Rachel R. McCusker.
- [caffeine health \[2012-2016\]](#): These results have been limited to those published from 2012-2016.

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TEXT: WHAT ARE SCHOLARLY ARTICLES?

FIND

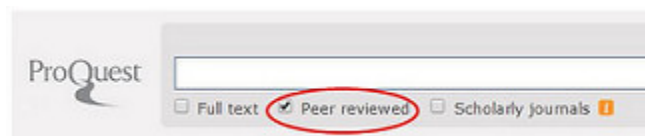
- **Begin with background research**
- **Narrow the search terms**
- **Look for scholarly information**
- **Search libraries and databases**

The first step in finding good resources is to know what to look for. Sites like Google, Yahoo, and Wikipedia may be good for general searches, but if you want something you can cite in a scholarly paper, you need to find academic sources.

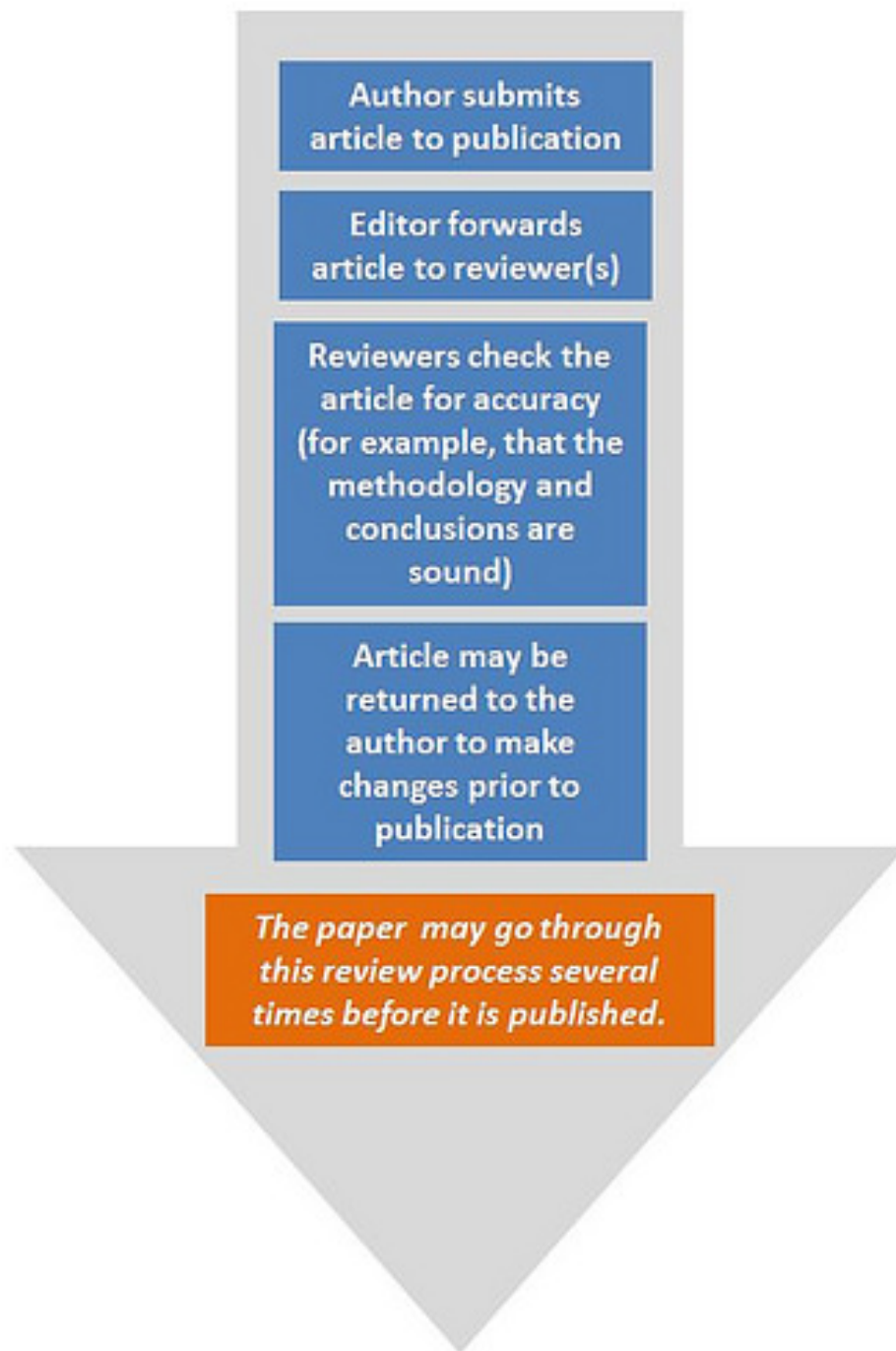
Scholarly and Peer-Reviewed Articles

A scholarly source is an article or book that was written by an expert in the academic field. Most are written by professors or doctoral students for publication in peer-reviewed academic journals. The terms “scholarly article” and “peer-reviewed” articles are often used interchangeably, but there is a distinction.

Scholarly articles are written by subject-matter experts, often appear in journals, and include bibliographies, but may be passed off by a review board instead of undergoing the same amount of scrutiny as peer-reviewed articles. Databases typically have a checkbox you can click to search only for peer-reviewed content.



Major search databases like ProQuest, have checkboxes to narrow search results to only peer-reviewed articles.



Steps involved in the peer-review process.

Understanding the peer-review process gives insight as to why your instructors want you to focus on these resources. First, hopeful authors send their article manuscript to the journal editor, a role filled by some prominent scholar in the field. The editor reads over the manuscript and decides whether it seems worthy of peer-review. If it's not rejected and looks appropriate and of sufficiently high quality, the editor will recruit a few other experts in the field to act as anonymous peer reviewers. The editor will send the manuscript (scrubbed of identifying information) to the reviewers who will read it closely and provide a thorough critique. Reviewers send their comments to the editor who then decides whether to (1) reject the manuscript, (2) ask the author(s) to revise and resubmit the manuscript or (3) accept it for publication. Editors send the reviewers' comments to authors along with their decisions. A manuscript that has been revised and resubmitted usually goes out for peer-review again; editors often try to get reviews from one or two first-round reviewers as well as a new reviewer. The whole process, from start to finish, can easily take a year, and it is often another year before the paper appears in print.

Finding Scholarly Sources

Let's revisit Marvin's situation and see what the online professor has to say about finding peer-reviewed articles.

Marvin: My professor said something about using peer-reviewed articles in scholarly journals.

O-Prof: Professors will often want you to use such sources. Articles in scholarly journals are written by experts; and if a journal's peer-reviewed, its articles have been screened by other experts (the authors' peers) before being published.

Marvin: So that would make peer-reviewed articles pretty reliable. Where do I find them?

O-Prof: Google's got a specialized search engine, Google Scholar, that will search for scholarly articles that might be useful (www.google.com/scholar). But often the best place is the college library's bibliographic databases. A database is a collection of related data, usually electronic, set up for easy access to items in the collection. Library bibliographic databases contain articles from newspapers, magazines, scholarly journals, and other publications. They can be very large, but they're a lot smaller than the whole Internet, and they generally contain reliable information. The Internet, on the other hand, contains both good and bad information.

Marvin looks down at his feet.

Marvin: Sounds sort of like looking for shoes. When I was buying my running shoes, I went to a specialty running shop instead of a regular shoe store. The specialty shop had all the brands I was looking for, and I didn't have to weed through sandals and dress shoes. Is that kind of like a library's bibliographic database?

O-Prof: Exactly. But remember, a database search engine can only find what's actually in the database. If you're looking for information on drinking water, you won't find much in a database full of art history publications. The library has some subject guides that can tell you the best databases to use for your topic.

Marvin: What about books? I did check out the library catalog and found a couple of good books on my topic.

O-Prof: Yes, don't forget about books. You generally have to walk physically to get information that's only in print form, or have someone else bring it to you. Even though Google has now scanned many of the world's books into its database, they won't give you access to the entire book if the book is still under copyright.

Marvin: So I'm back to real walking again.

O-Prof: Yes. Don't forget to ask for help when you're looking around for sources. Reference librarians make very good guides; it's their job to keep up on where various kinds of knowledge are located and help people find that knowledge. Professors also make good guides, but they're most familiar with where to find knowledge in their own fields.

Marvin: I could ask my health and environment professor for help, of course, and maybe my geology and chemistry professors. I'm guessing my music teacher would be less helpful.

O-Prof: One last hint about finding sources. If you find an article or book that's helpful for your paper, look at its reference list. There might be some useful sources listed there.

Primary and Secondary Sources

While most scholarly sources are secondary sources, you will sometimes be asked to find primary sources in your research. For this reason, you should understand the differences between primary, secondary, and tertiary sources.

- **Primary sources** allow researchers to get as close as possible to original ideas, events, and empirical research as possible. Such sources may include creative works, first hand or contemporary accounts of events, and the publication of the results of empirical observations or research. These include diaries, interviews, speeches, photographs, etc.
- **Secondary sources** analyze, review, or summarize information in primary resources or other secondary resources. Even sources presenting facts or descriptions about events are secondary unless they are based on direct participation or observation. These include biographies, journal articles, books, and dissertations.
- **Tertiary sources** provide overviews of topics by synthesizing information gathered from other resources. Tertiary resources often provide data in a convenient form or provide information with context by which to interpret it. These are often grouped together with secondary sources. They include encyclopedias and dictionaries.

Types of Sources in Various Disciplines

Subject	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Art	Painting	Critical review of the painting	Encyclopedia article on the artist
History	Civil War diary	Book on a Civil War battle	List of battle sites
Literature	Novel or poem	Essay about themes in the work	Biography of the author
Political science	Geneva Convention	Article about prisoners of war	Chronology of treaties
Agriculture	Conference paper on tobacco genetics	Review article on the current state of tobacco research	Encyclopedia article on tobacco
Chemistry	Chemical patent	Book on chemical reactions	Table of related reactions
Physics	Einstein's diary	Biography on Einstein	Dictionary of relativity

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- Walk, Talk, Cook, Eat: A Guide to Using Sources. **Authored by:** Cynthia R. Haller. **Located at:** <http://www.saylor.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/writing-spaces-readings-on-writing-vol-2.pdf>. **Project:** Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing Vol. 2. **License:** CC BY-NC-SA: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike

TEXT: READING AND USING SCHOLARLY SOURCES

How to Read Scholarly Articles

Academic papers are essentially reports that scholars write to their peers—present and future—about what they've done in their research, what they've found, and why they think it's important. Thus, in a lot of fields they often have a structure reminiscent of the lab reports you've written for science classes:

1. **Abstract:** A one-paragraph summary of the article: its purpose, methods, findings, and significance.
2. **Introduction:** An overview of the key question or problem that the paper addresses, why it is important, and the key conclusion(s) (i.e., thesis or theses) of the paper.
3. **Literature review:** A synthesis of all the relevant prior research (the so-called “academic literature” on the subject) that explains why the paper makes an original and important contribution to the body of knowledge.
4. **Data and methods:** An explanation of what data or information the author(s) used and what they did with it.
5. **Results:** A full explanation of the key findings of the study.
6. **Conclusion/discussion:** Puts the key findings or insights from the paper into their broader context; explains why they matter.

Example

Visit [this webpage](#) from North Carolina State University to see an example of the main components in a scholarly article.

Not all papers are so “sciencey.” For example, a historical or literary analysis doesn’t necessarily have a “data and methods” section; but they do explain and justify the research question, describe how the authors’ own points relate to those made in other relevant articles and books, develop the key insights yielded by the analysis, and conclude by explaining their significance. Some academic papers are review articles, in which the “data” are published papers and the “findings” are key insights, enduring lines of debate, and/or remaining unanswered questions.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/c3tV8g70YuU>

As shown in the video above, understanding the structure of scholarly articles tells you a lot about how to find, read and use these sources:

1. **Find them quickly.** Instead of paging through mountains of dubious web content, go right to the relevant scholarly article databases in order to quickly find the highest quality sources.
2. **Use the abstracts.** Abstracts tell you immediately whether or not the article you’re holding is relevant or useful to the paper you’re assigned to write. You shouldn’t ever have the experience of reading the whole paper just to discover it’s not useful.
3. **Read strategically.** Knowing the anatomy of a scholarly article tells you what you should be reading for in each section. For example, you don’t necessarily need to understand every nuance of the literature review. You can just focus on why the authors claim that their own study is distinct from the ones that came before.
4. **Don’t sweat the technical stuff.** Not every social scientist understands the intricacies of log-linear modeling of quantitative survey data; just focus on the passages that explain the findings and their significance in plainer language.
5. **Use one article to find others.** If you have one really good article that’s a few years old, you can use article databases to find newer articles that cited it in their own literature reviews. That immediately tells you which ones are on the same topic and offer newer findings. On the other hand, if your first source is very recent, the literature review section will describe the other papers in the same line of research. You can look them up directly.

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TEXT: FINDING SCHOLARLY ARTICLES AND USING DATABASES

Finding Books

Scholarly articles are often found in journals, which compile several peer-reviewed articles on similar topics in the same place. You will often find these articles in online databases or in the periodicals section of your library, but it is still valuable to find pertinent information in actual, physical, books. Books cover virtually any topic, fact or fiction. For research purposes, you will probably be looking for books that synthesize all the information on one

topic to support a particular argument or thesis. They will be especially beneficial if you want lots of information on a topic or want to put your topic in context with other important issues.

To find books, you should look in the library catalog, which is typically the main search bar located on the library homepage. The catalog includes books, reference books, media, maps, and titles of periodicals (like magazines, journals, and newspapers). Note that the catalog **does not** search for articles within periodicals and journals, and you'll need to utilize a separate article search to find those.

There are 3 important things you need to know:

Add	Ambiguity in "Star Wars" and "Harry Potter" : a (post)structuralist reading of two popular myths				Request
Author:	Flotmann, Christina.				
Format:	Book				
Published:	Bielefeld : Transcript, [2013]				
Library	Location	Call Number	Status		
Lilly Library	Stacks	PN1995.9.S695 F56 2013	Available.		
	Click for map				

1. Location of the book within the library*
2. Call number (the book's "address")
3. Whether or not the book is available

*Many libraries will have something similar to the "click for map" link to pull up a map of the exact location

Search result from a library catalog search.

You can locate the book by finding the call number. Call numbers are arranged in alphanumeric order. The call number is based on the book's subject, author's last name, and publication date (so once you find a book on your topic, you may find something even better by browsing the shelves around it!). Call numbers are designated based on the library's classification system, which determines how books are organized. Many academic libraries use the Library of Congress Classification, while others use the Dewey Decimal System.

Let's say you are looking for the book called Cyberspace romance: the psychology of online relationships by Monica Whitty and Adrian Carr. You searched in the library catalog and found the call number: *HQ 801.82 .W55 2006*. Here's what that means:

- HQ: Subclass HQ refers to The Family, Marriage, Women
- 801.82 refers to Man-Woman relationships, Courtship, Dating
- W refers to the first author's last name, "Whitty"
- 2006 is the year the book was published

Finding Articles in Databases

So far you have learned how to locate a book you want on the library shelves. What if your project also requires scholarly articles?

To find scholarly articles, you need to look in a database. A research database lets you search across the text of millions of articles published in thousands of academic journals. General databases have a little bit of everything (like a big retail store). Examples of general databases include Google Scholar, the library articles search, or JSTOR. These are good starting points when you're starting out and shopping around for articles on a wide range of topics, but you may find there are too many search results to sift through. If you're getting too much irrelevant stuff, try a specialized database.

Specialized databases (like a boutique) contain lots of relevant research on a particular subject/discipline (ex. psychology), or format (ex. streaming video). When you're getting too many irrelevant results in a general database, it can help to try your search in a more specialized database closely aligned to your topic. The number of results you get will be smaller, but the content will be more relevant. Examples include Psycinfo, Political Science Complete, or Pubmed.

Using Databases

Take a look at Marvin's success in finding information within a specialized database.

O-Prof: Let's go back to your initial Google search for a minute. Did any Wikipedia articles come up for bottled water?

Marvin: Yeah, and I took a quick look at one of them. But some of my professors say I shouldn't use Wikipedia.

O-Prof: That's because the quality of information in Wikipedia varies. It's monitored by volunteer writers and editors rather than experts, so you should double-check information you find in Wikipedia with other sources. But Wikipedia articles are often good places to get background info and good places to connect with more reliable sources. Did anything in the Wikipedia article seem useful for finding sources on bottled water?

Marvin clicks back to the Wikipedia site.

Marvin: It does mention that the National Resources Defense Council and the Drinking Water Research Foundation have done some studies on the health effects of bottled water ("Bottled Water").

O-Prof: So, you could go to the websites for these organizations to find out more about the studies. They might even have links to the full reports of these studies, as well as other resources on your topic. Who else might have something to say about the healthfulness of bottled and tap water?

Marvin: Maybe doctors and other health professionals? But I don't know any I could ask.

O-Prof: You can look in the **library's subject guides or ask the librarian about databases for health professionals**. The Cumulative Index to Nursing & Allied Health Literature (CINAHL) database is a good one. Are you logged in to the library? Can you try that one?

Marvin logs in, finds the database, and types in "bottled water AND health."

Marvin: Here's an article called "Health Risks and Benefits of Bottled Water." It's in the journal *Primary Care Clinical Office Practice* (Napier and Kodner).

O-Prof: If that's a peer-reviewed journal, it might be a good source for your paper.

Marvin: Here's another one: "Socio-Demographic Features and Fluoride Technologies Contributing to Higher Fluorosis Scores in Permanent Teeth of Canadian Children" (Maupome et al.). That one sounds pretty technical.

O-Prof: And pretty narrow, too. When you start using sources written by experts, you move beyond the huge porch of public discourse, where everyone *talks* about all questions on a general level, into some smaller conversational parlors, where groups of specialists *talk* about more narrow questions in greater depth. You generally find more detailed and trustworthy knowledge in these smaller parlors. But sometimes the conversation may be too narrow for your needs and difficult to understand because it's experts *talking* to experts.

Way ahead of the professor, Marvin's already started reading about the health risks and benefits of bottled water.

Marvin: Here's something confusing. The summary of this article on risks and benefits of bottled water says tap water is fine if you're in a location where there's good water. Then it says that you should use bottled water if the purity of your water source is in question. So which is better, tap or bottled?

O-Prof: As you read more sources, you begin to realize there's not always a simple answer to questions. As the CINAHL article points out, the answer depends on whether your tap water is pure enough to drink. Not everyone agrees on the answers, either. When you're advising your future clients (or in this case, writing your paper), you'll need to "listen" to what different people who *talk* about the healthfulness of bottled and tap water have to say. Then you'll be equipped to make your own recommendation.

Your library will probably have an "article search" or "database search" link to begin your search. When you search article databases, your results list contains citations to a variety of information sources. Depending on the database, you might also find citations to book chapters or to books. Below is an excerpt of search results in **PsycINFO**. Note the different types of information sources that appear.

7



Dissertation

[Internet versus face-to-face dating: A study of relationship satisfaction, commitment, and sustainability.](#)

[Preview](#)

Diss.

Gutkin, Mikhail. 2011. ProQuest Information & Learning, 2011. AAI3417180.

...IPIP). The relationships formed online were found to be more satisfying
 ...Internet users who formed relationships online were found to be as committed to
 ...due to the fact that online dating is a relatively new phenomenon and

[Citation/Abstract](#) [FINDTEXT](#)

8



Scholarly Article

[What do older adults seek in their potential romantic partners? Evidence from online personal ads.](#)

[Preview](#)

McIntosh, William D.; Locker, Lawrence; Briley, Katherine; Ryan, Rebecca; Scott, Allison J.. The International Journal of Aging & Human Development 72. 1 (2011): 67-82.

...may have to relax their dating standards to find a dating partner, perhaps
 ...hand, have a large pool of potential dating partners and do not face the same

References (32)

[Citation/Abstract](#) [FINDTEXT](#)

9



Book

[Close relationships.](#)

[Preview](#)

Regan, Pamela. New York, NY, US: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2011.

...homosexual) and relationship types (dating, cohabiting, marriage, friendships,
 ...research on "cyber-flirting" and online relationship formation; the biochemical

References (1288)

[Citation/Abstract](#) [FINDTEXT](#)

10



Book Chapter

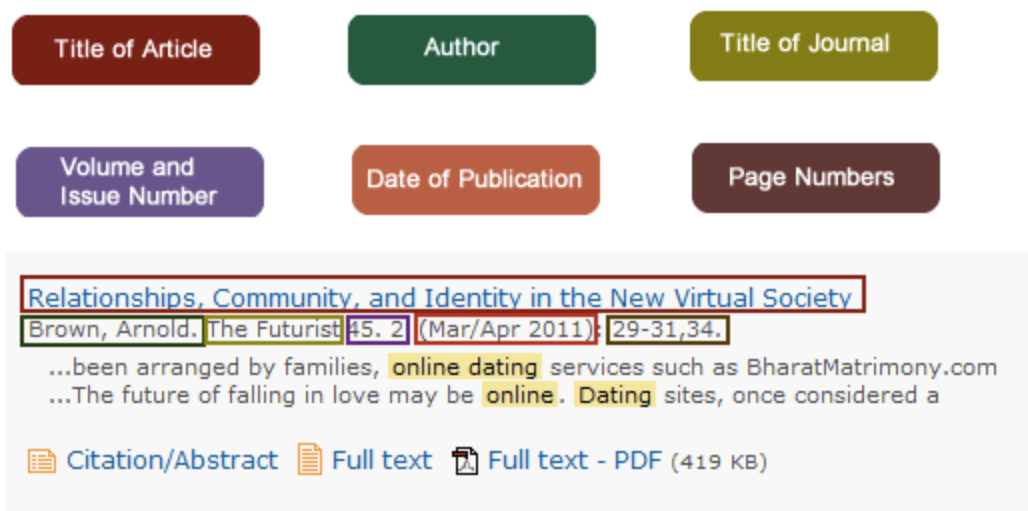
[Internet matching services: The good, the bad, and the ugly \(disguised as attractive\).](#)

[Preview](#)

Sprecher, Susan. In *The dark side of close relationships II*, edited by Cupach, William R., Spitzberg, Brian H., 119-143. New York, NY, US: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2011.

[Citation/Abstract](#) [FINDTEXT](#)

Everything you need to locate your article is in the citation: the title of the article, the author, the title of the journal, the volume and issue number, the date of publication, and page numbers.



You can typically click on the links below the citation to view the text of the article, or your library may direct you to the location of the article.

Why Use Databases?

You are already comfortable with using Google and other search engines, so why take the time to learn about library databases? Well, while it may take some getting used to initially, library databases are far superior for academic research and can provide lots of pertinent results in a fraction of the time you'd need to find the material in a search engine. Here are some other reasons that databases are so valuable:

- You can access tons of scholarly journal articles, but also find books, reference book articles, popular magazine articles, and newspaper articles
- Databases don't have sponsors, pop-ups, or advertisements
- All material in database is evaluated for accuracy and credibility by subject experts and publishers.
- Databases are reviewed and updated regularly.
- Library database subscriptions are paid for through your library so you shouldn't have to pay for articles
- The search capabilities enable you to search for focused results.
- Published content from journals, magazines, newspapers and books does not change.
- Most material remains in database for a significant length of time and can be easily retrieved again.
- Many databases include a citation tool that will automatically generate an APA or MLA style references for the article you select. You may still need to "tweak" this citation but these tools serve as a good starting point for citing your articles in a particular format.

Putting It Together

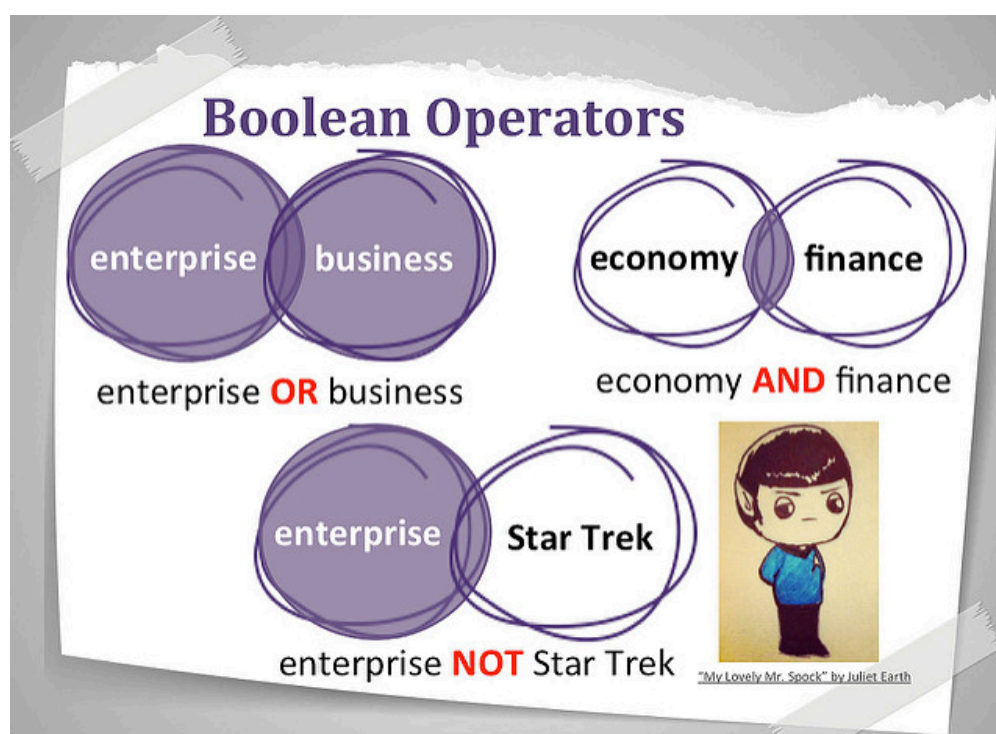
Watch this video to review the distinctions of a scholarly article and to see why library databases are so valuable to your academic research.

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/qUd_gf2ypk4

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VIDEO: DATABASE SEARCHING

Research databases don't search like Google. One major difference is that not all databases let you search with everyday or "natural language" terms. Learning a few tricks and search strategies will help you find more relevant results. You'll want to begin by boiling your topic idea down into a few key concepts and terms. For example, if your paper is about the mental health of immigrants in school settings, you would search for key words like mental health, immigrants, and school. Next, you'll want to think of synonyms for those words and more precise terms so that you can try different approaches to your research. For example, mental health might also be well-being, psychology, or mental state, or it could be a specific mental disorder such as depression, anxiety, PTSD, or drug or alcohol abuse. Immigrants could also be refugees, or migrant workers, or you could focus on a specific group of immigrants. Similarly, school could also be written as education, academics, or more precisely as elementary school, high school, or college.



Database searches enable you to use Boolean operators to specify what you are searching for. You could type in *mental health AND refugees* into the search bar to narrow your results to things that only contain both of those concepts. You can use the operator OR to broaden your results to search for *mental health AND refugees OR immigrants*. You can also add in quotation marks to search for exact words or phrases.

Databases also have options to revise your search by using limiters, such as searching for only peer-reviewed articles, within a specific date, a specific type of source, or by subject. Watch the following video to learn more about tips and shortcuts for effective database searching. Some of the tips include:

- Use the advanced search within a database
- Use the Boolean operators AND or NOT to combine your keywords in a single search
- If you know you want the entire article, check the box for the full text
- Don't do a search that is too broad or too narrow
- Use quotation marks around a compound term
- Add other keywords to narrow your search, and use search limiters like source type, publication year, source type, etc.
- Using the subject terms index or the thesaurus in the database to find the best search terms
- Remember that you can also use databases to search within a certain publication
- Utilize the cite feature in databases to help you create citations

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/KKlbnNLCh8g>

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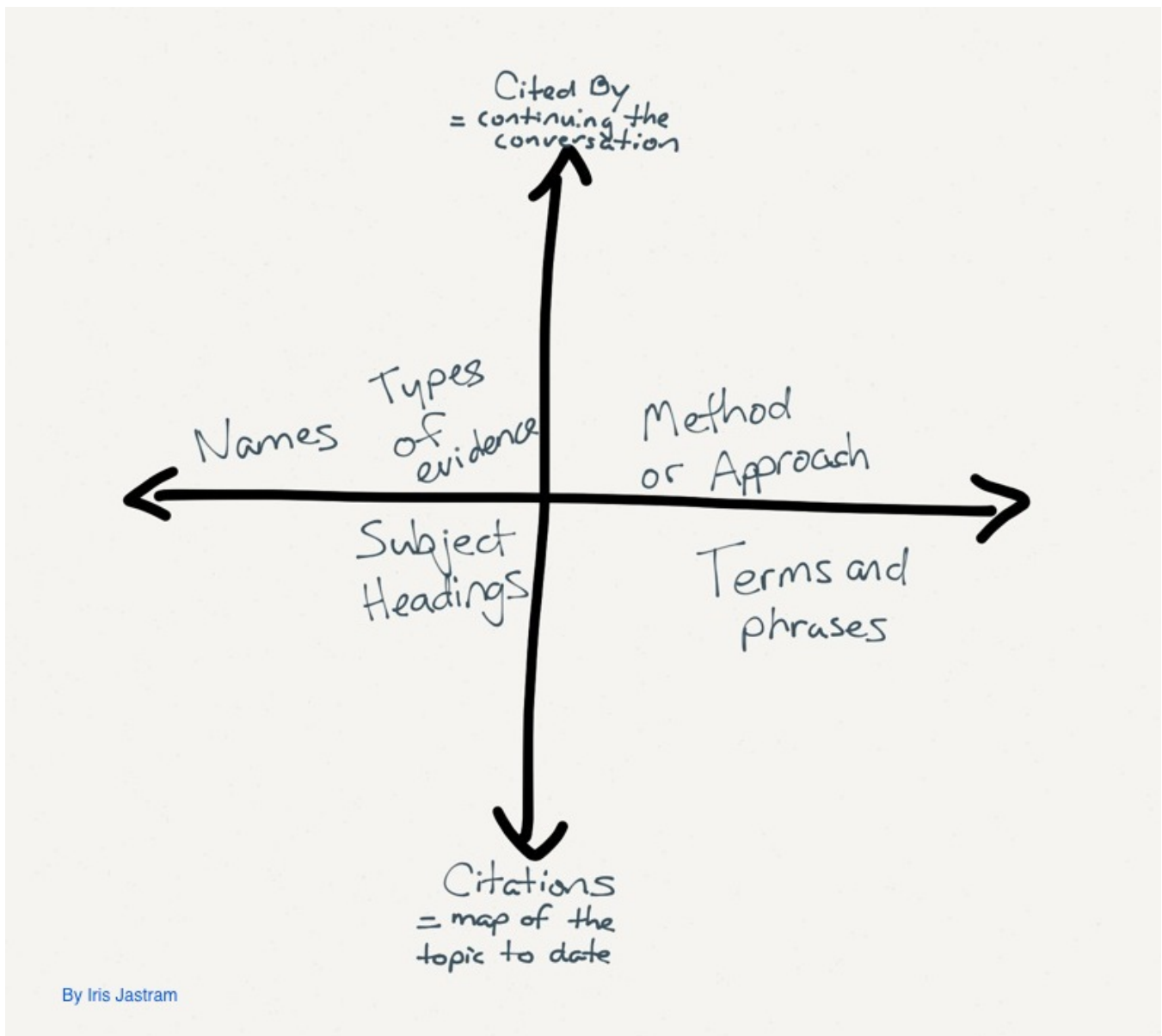
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- Image of Boolean Operators. **Authored by:** M Cheung. **Located at:** <https://flic.kr/p/oNgVEn>. **License:** [CC BY-NC: Attribution-NonCommercial](#)

TEXT: ADVANCED SEARCH STRATEGIES

Finding Sources from Sources

Every source contains rich clues to other useful sources. It's a treasure map that can lead you to sources you would never find by pure searching. This skill can help you discern a conversation occurring among a set of scholars or writers about your topic. Think of each good source as giving clues along two axes:

- **Forward and backward** in time. If you look at a source and see in its bibliography that there are fifty references, you can do a quick scan of the titles and authors to look for other sources you might investigate. These previously cited sources give you a rough map of how the topic has been researched to that point. Similarly, you can look at the "cited by" feature within a database (or Google Scholar) to look for other sources who are continuing the conversation and cited your source.
- **Side to side** across the scholarly conversation. When looking at a source you like, collect key terms, phrases, and names to find other sources that are similar. These other keywords can lead to other types of evidence and examples that offer more coverage of your topic.



Each source is part of a larger conversation on a subject. Looking closely at a source's keywords, headings, methods, and terms can help find other sources on similar topics. A source's citations also give clues into past and future research.

Using Keywords and Similar Subjects

If you're reading a scholarly article in a library database, you can make use of both the keywords (selected by the author) and the subject-terms (usually determined by the database).

JFK and the future of global leadership.

Authors: [SACHS, JEFFREY D.](#)¹

Source: [International Affairs](#). Nov2013, Vol. 89 Issue 6, p1379-1387. 9p. 4 Black and White Photographs.

Document Type: Article

Subject Terms: [*POLITICAL leadership](#)
[*HISTORY](#)
[*COLD War, 1945-1989](#)
[*INTERNATIONAL relations -- History -- 20th century](#)
[*NUCLEAR weapons -- History](#)
[UNITED States](#)
[SOCIAL aspects](#)
[CUBA -- Foreign relations -- United States](#)
[SOVIET Union -- Foreign relations -- United States](#)
[20TH century](#)

NAICS/Industry Codes: [911410 Foreign affairs](#)
[928120 International Affairs](#)


People: [KENNEDY, John F. \(John Fitzgerald\), 1917-1963](#)
[KHRUSHCHEV, Nikita Sergeevich, 1894-1971](#)

Abstract: On 10 June 1963 President John F. Kennedy gave a speech that changed the world. His commencement speech at American University helped to spur the signing of a world-changing agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States-the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. This episode of peacemaking is remarkable for two reasons. First, it arguably helped to save the world, since the nuclear confrontation at that stage of the Cold War was not a 'stable balance of terror', as sometimes described, but rather a highly unstable situation that was prone to accidents, misjudgements and potential disasters. Second, this was an episode of statesmanship in which presidential leadership played a crucial role. Following the Cuban Missile Crisis, Kennedy understood that he bore sole responsibility on the US side to find a way back from the brink of nuclear war. He used the 'peace speech' to create a novel kind of peace diplomacy, and worked together with his counterpart, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, to pull the superpowers back from this precarious brink.
[ABSTRACT FROM AUTHOR]

Look at the subject terms in your search results to find articles on similar topics.

If you're reading a book, you have two options. First, using the book's call number (generally found on the side or spine of the book), find the book in the stacks. Nearby books should be on a similar subject. You can also go back to the book's record in the library catalog. Each book is assigned at least one library subject. Click the subject to find other books with the same subject.

More information



Call numbers [Location and Call Number](#)

Author > [Knight, Louise W.](#)

Title > [Jane Addams : spirit in action](#) / Louise W. Knight.

Variant title > [Spirit in action](#)

Edition 1st ed.

Publisher New York : W.W. Norton, c2010.


Description xv, 334 p. : ill., ports. ; 25 cm.

Notes Includes bibliographical references (p. [275]-279) and index.
"Jane Addams's books": p. [281].

Summary [Jane Addams](#) (1860-1935) was one of the leading figures of the Progressive era. This "pragmatic visionary," as creator of Hull House, a model settlement house offering training, shelter, and culture for Chicago's poor. [Addams](#) Progressive campaigns. Her rhetorical skills as both speaker and writer made her internationally recognized as a and labor reform.

Subjects > [Addams, Jane, 1860-1935.](#)

Subjects > [Women social reformers -- United States -- Biography.](#)
> [Social reformers -- United States -- Biography.](#)
> [Women social workers -- United States -- Biography.](#)
> [Social workers -- United States -- Biography.](#)

Call number [Hunter Silberman Building](#) 

Format Book

A database search result can take you to other books on the same subject.

Read the Bibliography

When you have finished the article, you can give the Works Cited page a once-over in order to identify any interesting readings that look useful.

Practice

Check out [this tutorial from Hunter College Libraries](#) to learn how to read information in a bibliography or works cited page (look in the left-column of the screen for instructions).

Search by Author

Academic writers often write on the same topic and publish several books or articles about the topic. Put the author's name into a database or Google Scholar search and see what else s/he has published about the topic. The authors may have even published an update to the current study you are reading.

Things to Consider

One last tip for your research is to keep an open mind. If you are not finding good sources, don't get discouraged. Try a different combination of keywords, synonyms, or ask your librarian or professor for help. Keep in mind that you don't need a perfect source that aligns with your paper. You can take small bits of information from multiple sources and combine them into your own argument.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/X2VR5adTjeM>

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- One Perfect Source?. **Authored by:** libncsu. **Provided by:** North Carolina State University. **Located at:** <https://youtu.be/X2VR5adTjeM>. **License:** [CC BY-NC-SA: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike](#)

SELF CHECK: FINDING SOURCES

Visit this page in your course online to check your understanding.

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TRY IT: FINDING SOURCES

To Do

You've already completed an essay describing the challenges facing a specific category of students as they attempt to complete college. In this next step, we will find potential sources to help back up and support the claims in your essay.

The first step of research is to identify a question you hope to answer in your essay. Work with your tutor at the Enhancement Center to formulate a research question. Next, answer the following questions.

1. What is your **research question**?
2. What is your **working thesis statement**, based off of your research question?
3. What **keywords** can you use for your search?
4. Looking at a list of your [library's research databases by subject](#), identify a subject area that might be appropriate for finding articles for your research. Which subject area or areas will you search?
5. Now imagine that you want to find a newspaper article in order to get a sense of the most recent news on your topic (perhaps a local story or interview). Searching your library's databases by format, name a database that would be helpful for this research task.
6. Go to the Cerritos College [Library Database Tutorial](#). Watch the videos about basic and advanced searching in the database. Use the library database and EBSCO Search to **find two resources** that apply to your research question. Write a paragraph about each result describing what you found and how relevant it is to your search topic. (Be sure to write down the bibliographic information or use a program like Zotero to help keep track of your sources!).
7. **Use the bibliography or works cited section** from one of the two sources above to find *another* source related to your topic. Write a paragraph about this result as well, describing the source and its relevance to your research.



Worked Example

Video or text model of this step.

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OUTCOME: SOURCE ANALYSIS

Evaluate methods of analysis to assess the quality and reliability of sources



Imagine that you have been asked to write an article for your university newspaper about what we've learned in the 30 years since the Chernobyl Disaster (when an explosion in 1986 at nuclear power plant in the Soviet Union released radioactive particles into the air over much of the USSR and western Europe). You've already done some basic research on Wikipedia, then used Google scholar to investigate some more of the health effects. Finally, you searched in your university health, science, and medicine databases to learn specifics about the impact of the disaster.

How do you know which sources are worth using in your article? How will you know if the sources are even good? Journalists famously cover the 5 W's (who, what, where, when, why...and how) in their articles, and these similar questions can be used to evaluate your search results:

- **Who:** Who is the author and what are his/her credentials in this topic?
- **What:** Is the material primary or secondary in nature?
- **Where:** Is the publisher or organization behind the source considered reputable? Does the website appear legitimate?
- **When:** Is the source current or does it cover the right time period for your topic?
- **Why:** Is the opinion or bias of the author apparent and can it be taken into account?
- **How:** Is the source written at the right level for your needs? Is the research well-documented?

If you can answer all of these questions, you'll understand more about the quality and usefulness of a source for your article.



In this section, you'll learn more about tools like this that help you examine the usefulness and appropriateness of information for your research. You'll use the C.R.A.A.P. test to evaluate a source and consider techniques to help you synthesize pieces from multiple sources in your writing.

What You Will Learn to Do

- evaluate strategies for evaluating the rhetorical context (author, purpose, audience) of a source
- evaluate strategies for evaluating the authority, reliability, and effectiveness of a source
- evaluate relationship between a potential source and the writing task
- evaluate strategies for comparison and synthesis between multiple sources

The Learning Activities for this Outcome Include

- Text: Evaluating Sources
- Reading: CRAAP Analysis
- Text: Evaluating Websites
- Text: Synthesizing Sources
- Self Check: Source Analysis
- Try It: Source Analysis

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- Research strategy guide for finding quality, credible sources. **Provided by:** Journalist's Resource . **Located at:** <http://journalistsresource.org/tip-sheets/research/research-strategy-guide>. **Project:** Project of the Harvard Kennedy School's Shorenstein Center and the Carnegie-Knight Initiative. **License:** [CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike](#)

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TEXT: EVALUATING SOURCES

Critical thinking is interwoven in all steps of the research process, and one of the earliest places you will use it is when you collect and evaluate your sources. You have already begun collecting sources for your project, and perhaps you even have a sense of which sources are going to be the most useful. The credibility of your research paper is a function of your sources. If you consult scholarly sources in your field, you will have a better understanding of your issue and provide a well-supported, respectable position. If, on the other hand, you consult only “soft” source material (magazines, for example), your research is going to lack the depth it needs to be convincing.

The two main questions you should ask yourself when evaluating sources are:

- Is this source suitable?
- Is this source trustworthy?

Not every suitable source is trustworthy, and not every trustworthy source is suitable. In Marvin's example that follows, you'll see that the online professor encourages Marvin to *talk* to the right sources. Remember that Marvin already learned about the importance of *walking* to the right places to find good sources. Now, Marvin needs to talk with his sources in order to become a part of the conversation on his topic. To do this, he needs to find authors who are trustworthy *and* knowledgeable.

Finding Trustworthy Sources

Marvin: If I used a university or government website on bottled water quality, readers would trust me more than if I just used a bottled water company website?

O-Prof: Yes. But to dig deeper into the question of trust, let's move on to a second metaphor: *talking*. Although the metaphor of *walking* is useful for understanding how to find and document sources, it can give the impression that sources are separate, inert, and neutral things, waiting to be snatched up like gold nuggets and plugged into your writing. In reality, sources are parts of overlapping knowledge networks that connect meanings and the people that make and use them. Knowledge networks are always in flux, since people are always making new meaning. Let's go back to your health and environment project. Refresh my memory. What kinds of questions do you need answers to before you can write your paper?

Marvin: Well, I need to know if bottled water is truly healthier, like the beverage companies claim. Or would I be just as well off drinking tap water?

O-Prof: To answer this question, you'll want to find out who's *talking* about these issues. As Kenneth Burke put it, you can think of sources as voices in an ongoing conversation about the world:

Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending upon the quality of your ally's assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress. (110–111)

The authors of texts aren't speaking aloud, of course, but they're making written statements that others can “listen” and “respond” to. Knowing which texts you can trust means understanding which authors you can trust.

Marvin: How do I figure that out?

O-Prof: It helps to know who the authors are. What they're saying. Where, when, and to whom they're saying it. And what their purposes are. Imagine the world as divided into many parlors like the one Kenneth Burke described. You'd want to go to the parlors where people who really know something are *talking* about the topics you're interested in.

Determining Suitability

Your task as a researcher is to determine the appropriateness of the information your source contains, for your particular research project. It is a simple question, really: will this source help me answer the research questions that I am posing in my project? Will it help me learn as much as I can about my topic? Will it help me write an interesting, convincing essay for my readers?

Here are some reasons to include information:

- contains facts/opinions that you need
- contains illustrations or data you need
- contains an overview to establish the context of your paper
- was written by a well known authority or expert
- contains a point of view that illustrates something you are trying to establish
- exemplifies something
- may have a clear explanation of something

Reasons to exclude information:

- it may not be from a scholarly journal
- it may be from a scholarly journal but be too difficult for you to understand
- it may be out of date
- it may not have the point of view you are researching
- it may not contain any new information.
- it may be too narrow (or too broad) in coverage

Determining Trustworthiness

To determine the trustworthiness of a source, you want to ensure that a source is current, written by an expert, accurate, and unbiased. You'll want to consider the rhetorical context of a source, including its purpose, audience, and focus.

One excellent tool to examine both the reliability and trustworthiness of a source is the C.R.A.A.P method, which stands for:

- **Currency:** The timeliness of the information
- **Relevance:** The importance of the information for your needs
- **Authority:** The source of the information
- **Accuracy:** The reliability, truthfulness, and correctness of the information
- **Purpose:** The reason the information exists

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TEXT: CRAAP ANALYSIS

Let's take a closer look at how analyzing the C.R.A.A.P. in a source can serve as a valuable source evaluation tool.

Currency: The timeliness of the information

Key Question: When was the item of information published or produced?

Determining when an item of information was published or produced is an aspect of evaluating information. The date information was published or produced tells you how current it is or how contemporaneous it is with the topic you are researching. There are two facets to the issue of currency.

- Is the information the most recent version?
- Is the information the original research, description, or account?

The question of most recent version of information versus an original or primary version can be a critical one. For example: If you were doing a project on the survival of passengers in car crashes, you would need the most recent information on automobile crash tests, structural strength of materials, car wreck mortality statistics, etc. If, on the other hand, you were doing a project on the feelings of college students about the VietNam War during the 1960s, you would need information written in the 1960s by college students (primary sources) as well as materials written since then about college students in the 1960s (secondary sources). Key indicators of the currency of the information are:

- date of copyright
- date of publication
- date of revision or edition
- dates of sources cited
- date of patent or trademark

Relevance: The importance of the information for your needs

Key Question: How does this source contribute to my research paper?

The discussion of suitability above is essentially the same thing as relevance. When you read through your source, consider how the source will effectively support your argument and how you can utilize the source in your paper. You should also consider whether the source provides sufficient coverage of the topic. Information sources with broad, shallow coverage mean that you need to find other sources of information to obtain adequate details about your topic. Information sources with a very narrow focus or a distinct bias mean that you need to find additional sources to obtain the information on other aspects of your topic. Some questions to consider are:

- Does the information relate to my topic or answer my question?
- Who is the intended audience?
- Is the information at an appropriate level (i.e. not too simple or advanced) for my needs?
- Did I look at a variety of sources before deciding to use this one?
- Would I be comfortable using this source for my college research paper?

Authority: The source of the information

Key Question: Is the person, organization, or institution responsible for the intellectual content of the information knowledgeable in that subject?

Determining the knowledge and expertise of the author of information is an important aspect of evaluating the reliability of information. Anyone can make an assertion or a statement about some thing, event, or idea, but only someone who knows or understands what that thing, event, or idea is can make a reasonably reliable statement or assertion about it. Some external indications of knowledge of or expertise are:

- a formal academic degree in a subject area

- professional or work-related experience—businessmen, government agency personnel, sports figures, etc. have expertise on their area of work
- active involvement in a subject or organization by serious amateurs who spend substantial amounts of personal time researching and studying that subject area.
- organizations, agencies, institutions, corporations with active involvement or work in a particular subject area.

HINT: Be careful of opinions stated by professionals outside of their area of work expertise.

Accuracy: The reliability, truthfulness, and correctness of the information

Key Question: How free from error is this piece of information?

Establishing the accuracy, or relative accuracy, of information is an important part of evaluating the reliability of information. It is easier to establish the accuracy of facts than it is opinions, interpretations, or ideas. The more an idea, opinion, or other piece of information varies from the accepted point of view on a particular topic the harder it is to establish its accuracy. It may be completely accurate but corroborating it is both more necessary and more difficult. An important aspect of accuracy is the intellectual integrity of the item.

- Are the sources appropriately cited in the text and listed in the references?
- Are quotations cited correctly and in context? Out of context quotations can be misleading and sometimes completely erroneous.
- Are there exaggerations, omissions, or errors? These are difficult to identify if you use only one source of information. Always use several different sources of information on your topic. Analyzing what different sources say about a topic is one way to understand that topic.

In addition to errors of fact and integrity, you need to watch for errors of logic. Errors of logic occur primarily in the presentation of conclusions, opinions, interpretations, editorials, ideas, etc. Some indications that information is accurate are:

- the same information can be found in other reliable sources
- the experiment can be replicated and returns the same results
- the documentation provided in support of the information is substantive
- the sources used for documentation are known to be generally reliable
- the author of the information is known to have expertise on that subject
- the presentation is free from logical fallacies or errors
- quotations are “in context”—the meaning of the original work is kept in the work which quotes the original
- quotations are correctly cited
- acronyms are clearly defined at the beginning

Some indications that information may **not** be accurate are:

- facts cannot be verified or are contradicted in other sources
- sources used are known to be unreliable or highly biased
- bibliography of sources used is inadequate or non-existent
- quotations are taken out of context and given a different meaning
- acronyms are not defined and the intended audience is a general one
- presence of one or more logical fallacies
- authority cited is another part of the same organization

Purpose: The reason the information exists

Key Question: Who is this information written for or this product developed for?

Identifying the intended audience of the information or product is another aspect of evaluating information. The intended audience of an item generally determines the style of presentation, the level of technical detail, and the depth of coverage. You should also consider the author's objectivity. Are they trying to persuade? Do they present any bias? While it is unlikely that anything humans do is ever absolutely objective, it is important to establish that the information you intend to use is reasonably objective, or if it is not, to establish exactly what the point of view or bias is. There are times when information expressing a particular point of view or bias is useful, but you must use it consciously. You must know what the point of view is and why that point of view is important to your project. **For example**, books on food sanitation written for children, for restaurant workers, or for research microbiologists will be very different even though they all cover the same topic.

Determining the intended audience of a particular piece of information will help you decide whether or not the information will be too basic, too technical, too general, or just right for your needs. The intended audience can also indicate the potential reliability of the item because some audiences require more documentation than others.

For example, items produced for scholarly or professional audiences are generally produced by experts and go through a peer evaluation process. Items produced for the mass market frequently are not produced by experts and generally do not go through an evaluation process. Some indications of the intended audience are:

- highly technical language, complex analysis, very sophisticated/technical tools can indicate a technical, professional, or scholarly audience
- how-to information or current practices in "X" are frequently written by experts for practitioners in that field
- substantive and serious presentations of a topic with not too much technical language are generally written for the educated lay audience
- popular language, fairly simple presentations of a topic, little or no analysis, inexpensive tools can indicate a general or popular audience
- bibliographies, especially long bibliographies, are generally compiled by and for those doing research on that topic

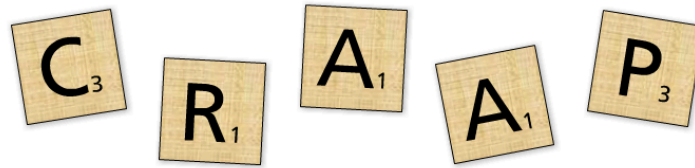
The CRAAP Test

Review the steps of the C.R.A.A.P method and practice evaluating sources in [this tutorial](#) from Eastern Michigan University.

RELIABILITY OF SOURCES

THE CRAAP TEST

While there is no single, definitive tool that can be used to gauge the reliability of all information, there are a number of memory devices that will help you remember key factors to consider. One such device is the CRAAP test, developed by the Meriam Library at California State University, Chico.

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[FORWARD](#)[GLOSSARY](#)

Be sure to [complete the practice exercises](#) at the end of the tutorial.

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TEXT: EVALUATING WEBSITES

When looking at any source, you should ask yourself: 1. who is writing this, and 2. why?

When looking for sources—particularly websites—think about whether or not they are reliable. You want your paper to contain sources written by unbiased and professional experts, not businessmen with commercial interests. While C.R.A.A.P method is one fabulous tool for assessing the credibility and reliability of sources, there are some other things you may want to consider when investigating a website:

Author

- Who is providing the information?
- What do you know about him/her and his/her credentials?
- Is he/she an expert?
- Can you find out more and contact him/her?
- Search for author or publisher in search engine. Has the author written several publications on the topic?
- Does the author support the information with works cited or links to other sources?

Publisher

- Is there a sponsor or affiliation?
- Who is linking to the page?
- Do they take responsibility for the content?

Bias

- Does the organization or author indicate there will be bias?
- Is the purpose of the website to inform or to spread an agenda?
- Is there an *About* link?
- Is the site personal, commercial, governmental, organizational, or educational? (.com, .gov, .org, .edu)
- Are there ads? Are they trying to make money?
- Why did they write the article?
- Is the site a content farm? A content farm is a site whose content has been generated by teams of low-paid freelancers who write large amounts of text to raise the site's search engine rankings.

Citations

- Copy and paste a sentence into Google to see if the text can be found elsewhere.
- Are there links to related sites? Are they organized?
- Are there citations or a bibliography provided?

Currency

- When was the source last updated?
- Does the source even have a date?

Design

- Is the source professional?
- Does it seem like current design?



- Is the website user-friendly?
- What kinds of images are used?
- Is the navigation menu well-labeled?
- Are there spelling or grammar errors?
- Do the pages appear uncluttered?
- Are there ads or pop-ups on the page?
- Are links working?

Reproduced

- Was it reproduced? If so, from where? Type a sentence in Google to verify.
- If it was reproduced, was it done so with permission? Copyright/disclaimer included?

Keep in mind that everything is written from a particular social, cultural, and political perspective. Realize that some publications tend to be ‘slanted’ towards a certain viewpoint. For example, the CATO Institute is known for being libertarian, while The Nation is known to lean left. Keep these slants in mind when you are researching.

Practice

Try evaluating some of your favorite websites using this [Website Evaluator tool from Imagine Easy Academy](#).

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TEXT: SYNTHESIZING SOURCES

Synthesizing Sources

Once you have analyzed the texts involved in your research and taken notes, you must turn to the task of writing your essay. The goal is here is not simply to summarize your findings. *Critical writing requires that you communicate your analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of those findings to your audience.*

You analyze and synthesize even before you compose your first draft. In an article called, “Teaching Conventions of Academic Discourse,” Teresa Thonney outlines six standard features of academic writing. Use the list to help frame your purpose and to ensure that you are adopting the characteristics of a strong academic writer as you synthesize from various sources:

1. Writers respond to what others have said about their topic.
2. Writers state the value of their work and announce their plan for their papers.
3. Writers acknowledge that others might disagree with the position they have taken.
4. Writers adopt a voice of authority.
5. Writers use academic and discipline-specific vocabulary.
6. Writers emphasize evidence, often in tables, graphs, and images. (348)

Let’s return to the example of Marvin, who is working on his research assignment. Marvin already learned from the online professor that he should spend time *walking* (knowing where to find them) and *talking* (knowing who is

conversing about them and what they are saying) with sources. Now Marvin will learn the importance of *cooking* with his sources, or creating the right recipe for an excellent paper.

Cooking With Your Sources

O-Prof: Let's take a look at the third metaphor: *cooking*. When you *cook* with sources, you process them in new ways. Cooking, like writing, involves a lot of decisions. For instance, you might decide to combine ingredients in a way that keeps the full flavor and character of each ingredient.

Marvin: Kind of like chili cheese fries? I can taste the flavor of the chili, the cheese, and the fries separately.

O-Prof: Yes. But other food preparation processes can change the character of the various ingredients. You probably wouldn't enjoy gobbling down a stick of butter, two raw eggs, a cup of flour, or a cup of sugar (well, maybe the sugar!). But if you mix these ingredients and expose them to a 375-degree temperature, chemical reactions transform them into something good to eat, like a cake.

Marvin reaches into his backpack and pulls out a snack.

Marvin: You're making me hungry. But what do chili cheese fries and cakes have to do with writing?

O-Prof: Sometimes, you might use verbatim quotations from your sources, as if you were throwing walnuts whole into a salad. The reader will definitely "taste" your original source. Other times, you might paraphrase ideas and combine them into an intricate argument. The flavor of the original source might be more subtle in the latter case, with only your source documentation indicating where your ideas came from. In some ways, the writing assignments your professors give you are like recipes. As an apprentice writing *cook*, you should analyze your assignments to determine what "ingredients" (sources) to use, what "cooking processes" to follow, and what the final "dish" (paper) should look like. Let's try a few sample assignments. Here's one:

Assignment 1: Critique (given in a human development course)

We've read and studied Freud's theory of how the human psyche develops; now it's time to evaluate the theory. Read at least two articles that critique Freud's theory, chosen from the list I provided in class.

Then, write an essay discussing the strengths and weaknesses of Freud's theory.

Assume you're a student in this course. Given this assignment, how would you describe the required ingredients, processes, and product?

Marvin thinks for a minute, while chewing and swallowing a mouthful of apple.

Marvin: Let's see if I can break it down:

Ingredients

- everything we've read about Freud's theory
- our class discussions about the theory
- two articles of my choice taken from the list provided by the instructor

Processes: I have to read those two articles to see their criticisms of Freud's theory. I can also review my notes from class, since we discussed various critiques. I have to think about what aspects of Freud's theory explain human development well, and where the theory falls short—like in class, we discussed how Freud's theory reduces human development to sexuality alone.

Product: The final essay needs to include both strengths and weaknesses of Freud's theory. The professor didn't specifically say this, but it's also clear I need to incorporate some ideas from the two articles I read—otherwise why would she have assigned those articles?

O-Prof: Good. How about this one?

Assignment 3: Research Paper (given in a health and environment course)

Write a 6–8-page paper in which you explain a health problem related to water pollution (e.g., arsenic poisoning, gastrointestinal illness, skin disease, etc.). Recommend a potential way or ways this health problem might be addressed. Be sure to cite and document the sources you use for your paper.

Marvin: Oho, trick question! That one sounds familiar.

Ingredients: No specific guidance here, except that sources have to relate to water pollution and health. I've already decided I'm interested in how bottled water might help with health where there's water pollution. I'll have to pick a health problem and find sources about how water pollution can cause that problem.

Gastrointestinal illness sounds promising. I'll ask the reference librarian where I'd be likely to find good articles about water pollution, bottled water, and gastrointestinal illness.

Process: There's not very specific information here about what process to use, but our conversation's given me some ideas. I'll use scholarly articles to find the connection between water pollution and gastrointestinal problems, and whether bottled water could prevent those problems.

Product: Obviously, my paper will explain the connection between water and gastrointestinal health. It'll evaluate whether bottled water provides a good option in places where the water's polluted, then give a recommendation about what people should do. The professor did say I should address any objections readers might raise—for instance, bottled water may turn out to be a good option, but it's a lot more expensive than tap water. Finally, I'll need to provide in-text citations and document my sources in a reference list.

O-Prof: You're on your way. Think for a minute about these assignments. Did you notice that the "recipes" varied in their specificity?

Marvin: Yeah. The first assignment gave me very specific information about exactly what source "ingredients" to use. But in the second assignments, I had to figure it out on my own. And the processes varied, too. In the second assignment—my own assignment—I'll have to use content from my sources to support my recommendation.

O-Prof: Different professors provide different levels of specificity in their writing assignments. If you have trouble figuring out the "recipe," ask the professor for more information. Keep in mind that when it comes to "cooking with sources," no one expects you to be an executive chef the first day you get to college. Over time, you'll become more expert at writing with sources, more able to choose and use sources on your own. You'll probably need less guidance for writing in your senior year than in your freshman year.

Integrating Material from Sources

Integrating materials from sources into your own text can be tricky; if we consider the metaphor that writing a paper and including sources is a way of facilitating a conversation about a topic, it helps us to think about how this will best work. When you're discussing a topic in person with one or more people, you will find yourself referencing outside sources: "When I was watching the news, I heard them say that . . . I read in the newspaper that . . . John told me that . . ." These kinds of phrases show instances of using a source in conversation, and ways that we automatically shape our sentences to work references to the sources into the flow of conversation. Think about this next time you try to work a source into a piece of writing: if you were speaking this aloud in conversation, how would you introduce the material to your listeners? What information would you give them in order to help them understand who the author was, and why their view is worth referencing? After giving the information, how would you then link it back to the point you were trying to make? Just as you would do this in a conversation if you found it necessary to reference a newspaper article or television show you saw, you also need to do this in your essays.



Correctly utilizing and synthesizing your sources is much like fitting together the pieces of a puzzle.

Synthesis

Watch this video to learn more about the synthesis process.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/vyKAYyYbjy0>

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SELF CHECK: SOURCE ANALYSIS

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TRY IT: SOURCE ANALYSIS

To Do

In this section, you learned about analyzing sources to verify that they are current, relevant, authoritative, accurate, and purposeful. In this exercise, you'll apply what you've learned to assess the usefulness of some articles.



1. Focusing on the "Authority" aspect of the C.R.A.A.P. test, take a few minutes to read the following two articles and consider the authors and their credentials.

- [Facebook Use Predicts Declines in Subjective Well-Being in Young Adults](#)
- [Facebook is Bad For You – Get a Life!](#)

After you have read each article, write a paragraph providing your opinion of the authority of each article using the established guidelines. Remember, you are not stating your opinion of the article but rather your justification of why or why not the article meets the authority test.

2. Now you are ready to apply your analysis skills to examine the sources you found in your previous database searching. Pick one of the search results you found through EBSCO and use the C.R.A.A.P. method to evaluate the resource. Write a short paragraph addressing each of the following sections:

- Currency
- Relevance
- Authority
- Accuracy
- Purpose

Refer back to the content pages about for a list of questions and topics to consider with each C.R.A.A.P. section. Finally, write a summary statement indicating if and why you think the resource is worth utilizing for your research.

Worked Example

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OUTCOME: WRITING ETHICALLY

Parts of Melania Trump's speech at the Republican National Convention in July 2016 were strikingly similar to Michelle Obama's speech from eight years ago. How does this happen? Plagiarism at this level is typically the result of sloppiness, not outright theft, but it's still just as egregious a result no matter the underlying cause. If you don't want this to happen to you, then you need to be aware of plagiarism and how to avoid it.

In 2008, here's what Michelle Obama said, in part (most of the highlights in these passages, which show the similar parts, are from [a Wall Street Journal article](#) about the plagiarism).



Melania Trump

Like my family, they scrimped and saved so that he could have opportunities they never had themselves. And Barack and I were raised with so many of the same values: that **you work hard for what you want in life; that your word is your bond and you do what you say you're going to do; that you treat people with dignity and respect**, even if you don't know them, and even if you don't agree with them. And Barack and I set out to build lives guided by these values, and pass them on to the next generation. Because **we want our children—and all children in this nation—to know that the only limit to the height of your achievements is the reach of your dreams and your willingness to work for them.**

And here's the similar passage from Melania Trump's speech:

From a young age, my parents impressed on me the values that **you work hard for what you want in life, that your word is your bond and you do what you say and keep your promise, that you treat people with respect.** They taught and showed me values and morals in their daily lives. That is a lesson that I continue to pass along to our son. And we need to pass those lessons on to the many generations to

follow. Because we want our children in this nation to know that the only limit to your achievements is the strength of your dreams and your willingness to work for them.

You can watch a video of the similar snippets from their speeches [here](#).

How plagiarism really happens

According to author Josh Bernoff, Melania's Trump plagiarism is probably not the obvious kind of cut-and-paste theft you might associate with cheating on a research paper, but it's still clearly plagiarism. He imagines that Melania Trump and her speechwriters talked about what she wanted to communicate and what's important to her. They probably discussed ideas, developed a theme, and researched it. They also researched past, successful speeches from prospective first ladies. The result of that research was a bunch of fragments from all over the place. One of those fragments was the piece of Michelle Obama's speech. As the fragments coalesced into a speech, that one got included, because the writers lost track of its provenance, or Melania Trump did.

You may want to believe the more evil explanation here, but carelessness is far more likely. For example, the famous primatologist Jane Goodall [blamed "chaotic note taking"](#) for plagiarized passages in her book, *Seeds of Hope*. This stuff happens all the time.

How you can avoid this mistake

How do you gather your notes? Do you bookmark Web passages, use Evernote or Zotero, or create index cards or sticky notes? No matter your method, you should have a consistent and clear method to keep track of your sources. You wouldn't walk around without clothes on; notes shouldn't get around unless they're clothed in source attributions. And you should make those attributions habitually and consistently, using the same format every time. Your mind can run free, your text can flow, but your attributions must be as fastidious as an accountant's.

While this is a pain, it's not nearly as painful as what Melania Trump and others suffer after plagiarism is discovered. You *will* get caught. Do you really want to explain whether you were dishonest or just sloppy? You'll learn how to avoid plagiarism in this section.

What You Will Learn to Do

- evaluate the definition of academic dishonesty
- evaluate the definition of intentional and unintentional plagiarism
- evaluate reasons for concerns about plagiarism and academic dishonesty in academic settings
- evaluate strategies to avoid intentional and unintentional plagiarism and academic dishonesty, including summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting

The Learning Activities for this Outcome Include

- Text: Academic Integrity
- Text: Defining Plagiarism
- Text: Avoiding Plagiarism
- Text: Using Sources in Your Writing
- Self Check: Writing Ethically
- Try It: Writing Ethically

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- Melania Trump image. Located at: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Melania_Trump_2016.jpg. License: [CC BY: Attribution](#)

TEXT: ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

What is Academic Integrity?

Academic Integrity is defined as the honest and responsible pursuit of scholarship. Academic integrity is characterized by

- completing exams and other academic assignments in an honest way
- presenting truthful and accurate data and research information in academic assignments
- avoiding plagiarism by properly incorporating and acknowledging sources

Practice

Which of the following is NOT a vital characteristic of academic integrity?

- a. doing your own work on assignments
- b. correctly citing sources in a research paper
- c. completing all work without assistance or help from a TA
- d. presenting accurate and truthful data
- e. following assignment and exam instructions

Show Answer

Academic Dishonesty

In all academic work, students are expected to submit materials that are their own and are to include attribution for any ideas or language that are not their own. Examples of dishonest conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Cheating including **giving and receiving information in examinations**.
- Falsification of data, results or sources.
- **Collusion**, such as working with another person when independent work is assigned.
- Plagiarism.
- **Submitting the same paper** or report for assignments in more than one course without permission (self-plagiarism).

Cheating

Cheating is the most well-known academically dishonest behavior. Cheating includes more than just copying a neighbor's answers on an exam or peeking at a cheat sheet or storing answers on your phone. Giving or offering information in examinations is also dishonest. Turning in someone else's work as your own is also considered cheating.

Collusion

Collusion, such as working with another person or persons when independent work is assigned, is considered academic dishonesty. While it is fine to work in a team if your professor specifically requires or allows it, be sure to communicate about guidelines on permissible collaboration if you are unsure (including how to attribute the contributions of others).

True Story: In 2012, [125 Harvard students](#) were investigated for working together on a take-home final exam. The only rule on the exam was not to work together. Almost half of those students were determined to have cheated, and forced to withdraw from school for a year.

Falsifying Results and Misrepresentation

Falsifying results in studies or experiments is a serious breach of academic honesty. Students are sometimes tempted to make up results if their study or experiment does not produce the results they hoped for. But getting caught has major consequences.

Misrepresenting yourself or your research is, by definition, dishonest. Misrepresentation might include inflating credentials, claiming that a study proves something that it does not, or leaving out inconvenient and/or contradictory results.

True Story: An undergraduate at the University of Kansas claimed to be a researcher and promoted his (unfortunately incorrect) research on how much a Big Mac would cost if the U.S. raised minimum wage. His study was picked up by the Huffington Post, NY Times, and other major news outlets, who then had to publish retractions.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when you present another person's ideas, intentionally or unintentionally, as your own. In the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, Joseph Gibaldi likens plagiarism to "intellectual theft," because it "gives the impression that you wrote or thought something that you in fact borrowed from someone, and to do so is a violation of professional ethics" (165). It is your responsibility as the student to avoid plagiarizing. As a scholar you are expected to credit the sources of the ideas that you use in your own work.

How Can You Avoid Academic Dishonesty?

- Start your assignments early and stay on track with due dates.
- Ask for help from your professor.
- Join a study group.
- Take careful notes as you do your research and organize your sources.
- Work with a Librarian or the Writing Center to integrate and cite your sources and avoid plagiarism.
- Prioritize your integrity!

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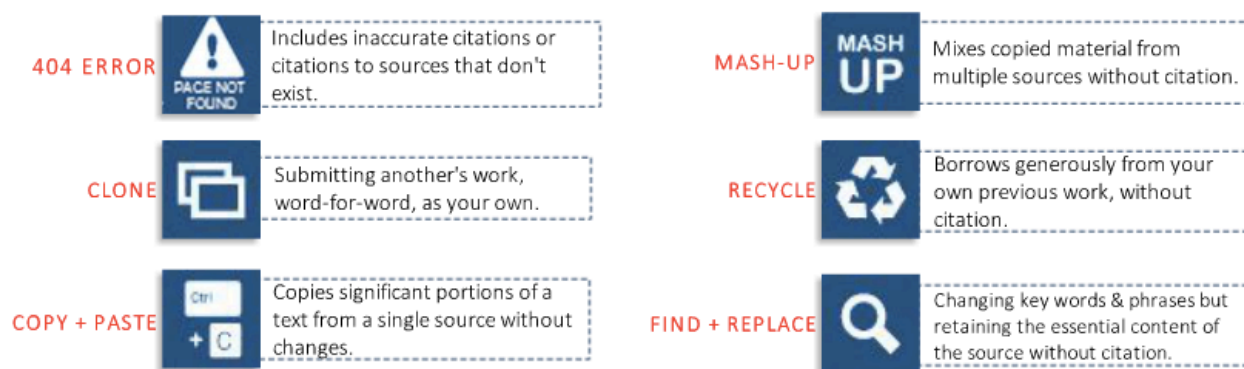
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TEXT: DEFINING PLAGIARISM

What Counts as Plagiarism?

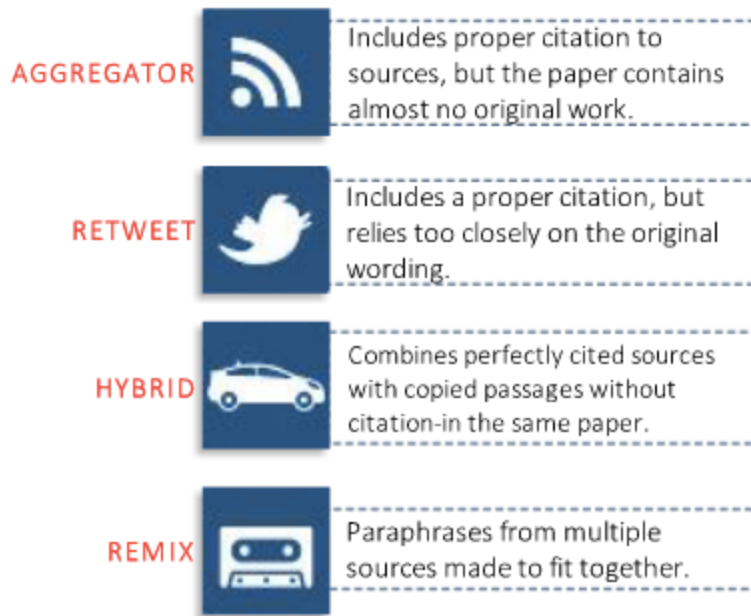
Plagiarism can be **intentional** or **unintentional**. It often occurs because the process of citation can be confusing, technology makes copy + paste so easy, and knowing exactly what to cite is not always easy! You can avoid unintentional plagiarism by learning how to cite material and keeping track of sources in your notes. Give yourself plenty of time to process sources so you don't plagiarize by mistake. Here are some examples of plagiarism:

- Submitting a paper written by someone else.
- Using words and phrases from the source text and patching them together in new sentences.
- Failing to acknowledge the sources of words or information.
- Not providing quotation marks around a direct quotation. This leads to the false assumption that the words are your own.
- Borrowing the idea or opinion of someone else without giving the person credit
- Restating or paraphrasing a passage without citing the original author
- Borrowing facts or statistics that are not common knowledge without proper acknowledgement



The plagiarism spectrum. There are many different ways to plagiarize. It is your responsibility to know what constitutes plagiarism so you can avoid it in your assignments.

Obvious Plagiarism	Less Obvious Plagiarism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turning in someone else's paper as one's own. • Turning in a paper that was bought from a service on the Internet. • Reusing a paper previously turned in for one class and then submitting the same paper or portions of it for subsequent classes without permission of the instructor (self-plagiarism). • Cutting and pasting entire sections from other authors' works into one's own paper. • Using another author's exact words but not putting quotation marks around the quote and citing the work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failing to differentiate between common knowledge and something that needs to be cited. • Failing to include complete and correct citations. • Sticking too closely to another author's words by only changing a few words around when paraphrasing. • Using another author's exact words but not putting quotation marks around the quote even if one cites the work.



More ways to plagiarize.

Why Should You Care?

Being honest and maintaining integrity in your academic work is a sign of character and professionalism. In addition to maximizing your own learning and taking ownership of your academic success, not plagiarizing is important because

- Your professors assign research projects to help you learn. You cheat yourself when you substitute someone else's work for your own.
- You don't like it when someone else takes credit for your ideas, so don't do it to someone else.
- Plagiarizing comes with consequences. Depending on the offense and the institution, you may be asked to rewrite plagiarized work, receive a failing grade on the assignment, fail the entire course, or be suspended from the university.
- Professors use search engines, databases, and specialized software to check suspicious work, so you will eventually get caught.

Is it Plagiarism?

1. Last semester you wrote an essay on Emily Dickinson for Professor Belin's "American Literature 101" course. This semester you are taking a course called "Interrogating Gender in American Culture," and Professor Arecco has assigned a paper topic that references Dickinson's life and work. It would be very easy for you to re-tool whole sections of your first essay to satisfy the requirements of the second. It is acceptable practice to re-submit this paper – without checking with either professor – because you are writing a paper for a different professor and a different course.

- a. This is plagiarism
- b. This is not plagiarism

Show Answer

2. Plagiarism is not limited to taking something from a book; it also includes stealing ideas from a movie, a professor's lecture, or from an interview on a radio news program.

- a. True, this is plagiarism
- b. False, this is not plagiarism

Show Answer

3. You have cut and pasted a lot of information from articles you found on web sites and databases into a Word file on your computer. While writing your essay, you find yourself patching together pieces from different sources, and you have occasionally lost track of which ideas were your own and which were from various articles and websites. You consider going back to the original sources but the prospect is daunting. In any case, you figure that if your professor queries your sources, you can say that you didn't intentionally plagiarize, and this will result in a lesser punishment.

- a. Agree
- b. Disagree

Show Answer

4. Your professor has recommended a particular text as a secondary source for an assigned essay on Kant's ideas about war and peace. You find a quotation that seems to speak directly to Kant's idea of perpetual peace and you plug it in your essay, but it doesn't quite relate to what goes before and you don't know how to discuss it. You realize that you don't really understand what the quotation means, or how you might discuss it within the larger context of your essay. You think of approaching your professor to ask for help, but decide that she will think less of you for not grasping the import of this text. Instead you find a website that discusses this very idea, and you summarize its explanation in your paper without citing it. Is this plagiarism?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Show Answer

5. I have found something posted on the Internet that I am going to include in a paper that I am writing. It is covered by a "Creative Commons" copyright. Since it is, can I consider it "common knowledge" and not cite it in my paper or included it in my references?

- a. Agree
- b. Disagree

Show Answer

6. You are writing a biology report and you have included information that you read in your biology textbook. You aren't sure if this information can be considered common knowledge, or whether you need to cite it. You

- a. Decide not cite the information. Information in the textbook is common knowledge for the biology class.
- b. Determine to cite your text book in the instances where you quoted from it directly; otherwise the summarized ideas in this text are considered common knowledge.
- c. Cite all the information you've gleaned from the textbook, whether quoted verbatim or summarized.

Show Answer

7. Is this use of information from a website plagiarism?



including Bigfoot, Loch Ness Monsters, Yeti, Myakka Skunk Ape, and hundreds of other cryptids

CONTACT the cryptozoologist 

[▶ HOME](#)
[▶ EXPLORE CZ](#)
[▶ LOREN COLEMAN](#)
[▶ CZ MUSEUM](#)
[▶ CZ BOOKS](#)

The Myakka "Skunk Ape" Photographs

By Loren Coleman

Two remarkable new photographs of what may be a Florida Skunk Ape have been discovered through an interesting chain of events by Sarasota resident and animal welfare specialist David Barkasy. **Bigfoot! The True Story of Apes in America** overviews how these photographs were taken, how this find surfaced, the first reactions and analyses, and some tentative conclusions. For the time being, certain supportive notes will remain, here, available and online

Skunk Ape Paper/3

In 2000, two remarkable new photographs of a Florida Skunk Ape were discovered through an interesting chain of events by Sarasota resident and animal welfare specialist David Barkasy. Details about how these photographs were taken, how they surfaced, and the first reactions and analyses of them can be found in *Bigfoot! The True Story of Apes in America*.

- Yes, it is plagiarism. The writer of the paper just rearranged some of the words from the website and does not acknowledge the source.
- No, it is not plagiarism. The paragraph written in the research paper is different than the website so the author didn't need to cite the original.

Show Answer

8. Is this plagiarism?

Also, according to a new Gallup Mirror of America survey, a majority of Americans are unaware of the New Age movement, and those who are aware have a more negative than positive view of its impact on American religion and society.

The poll of 1,236 adults conducted in June 1990 reveals that:

- One of every four Americans believe in ghosts.
- One of every four Americans believe they have had a telepathic experience in which they communicated with another person without using the traditional five senses.

Source

Student Paper

Skunk Ape 5

It isn't surprising that the Skunk Ape and Bigfoot have captured the American public's imagination. Americans have shown a great predilection toward belief in fantastical things. A Gallup poll conducted in 1990 found that one in four Americans surveyed believed in ghosts and felt that they had had at least one telepathic experience with another person (Gallup, 137).

Works Cited

Gallup, George H., Jr., and Newport, Frank. "Belief in Paranormal Phenomena Among Adult Americans." *The Skeptical Inquirer*, 1 Jan. 1991: 137-46. Print.

- Yes, it is plagiarism. The student did not use quotation marks.
- No, it is not plagiarism. The student gave credit to the source in the text of the paper and in the list of references

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- Section on Unintentional Plagiarism. **Authored by:** Community College of Vermont. **Located at:** <http://tutorials.libraries.vsc.edu/plagiarism/unintentional/after>. **Project:** Understanding Plagiarism Tutorial. **License:** [CC BY-NC-SA: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike](#)
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- Pot of Gold: Information Literacy Tutorial, Why Should You Care?. **Provided by:** University of Notre Dame. **Located at:** <http://library.nd.edu/instruction/potofgold/utilizing/?page=8>. **License:** [CC BY-NC-SA: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike](#)
- Plagiarism Self-Test. **Provided by:** Colorado State University Tilt Academic Integrity Program. **Located at:** <http://tilt.colostate.edu/integrity/resources/quiz/>. **Project:** A collaborative project funded by the Center for Educational Technology and developed by Colby College, Bates College and Bowdoin College.. **License:** [CC BY-NC-SA: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike](#)
- Quiz questions 7 and 8, from the Search for the Skunk Ape. **Provided by:** Florida Gulf Coast University. **Located at:** <https://www.softchalkcloud.com/lesson/serve/cYCsWVM09zDh8B/html>. **Project:** Research Using FGCU Library. **License:** [CC BY: Attribution](#)
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TEXT: AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

You can take steps to avoid plagiarism in your writing by carefully managing your time, keeping a good record of your sources, and by knowing when and how to appropriately cite your sources.

Manage Your Time

Plagiarism is often the result of procrastination. Doing research, writing your paper, and incorporating sources correctly takes time. Cobbling your paper together the night before it is due leaves you susceptible to unintentional plagiarism. In your rush, you may use your sources improperly or forget to cite.

Waiting until the last minute to do your paper also increases the appeal of buying a paper online or trying to turn in a paper you wrote previously for a different class. If you are caught doing those things, there can be very serious consequences.

Develop a Note-Taking System

When you are in the middle of doing research, make sure that you use a note-taking system that clearly differentiates the following things: your own personal thoughts on the sources, quotes taken directly from the sources (with a page number), and summaries or paraphrases of the source.

One strategy you could apply during your note taking is the use of different colors to differentiate what text was copied directly from the source, from what you wrote using your own words. Here's an example:

Notes for FYS Paper

Source Citation #1

QUOTE (page number)

MY THOUGHTS

QUOTE (page number)

PARAPHRASE

MY THOUGHTS

SUMMARY OF SOURCE

Source Citation #2

QUOTE (page number)

MY THOUGHTS

QUOTE (page number)

PARAPHRASE

MY THOUGHTS

SUMMARY OF SOURCE

Reference management websites and applications are excellent tools to help you keep track of your sources. Most of these websites are free and will even create the works cited page for you! Some of the most popular citation tools are:

- [Zotero](#)
- [RefME](#) (which works with [Evernote](#))
- [BibMe](#)
- [Mendeley](#)

Pick one of these helpful tools at the beginning of your research and use it during your initial searches to ensure you always keep track of your materials.

Know What Needs a Citation

The key to avoiding plagiarism is to make sure you give credit where credit is due. This may be credit for something somebody said, wrote, emailed, drew, or implied. You need to give credit to:

- Words or ideas presented in a magazine, book, newspaper, song, TV program, movie, web page, computer program, letter, advertisement, or any other medium
- Information you gain through interviewing or conversing with another person face-to-face, over the phone, or in writing
- Exact words or a unique phrase that you copy
- Diagrams, illustrations, charts, pictures, or other visual materials that you reprint
- Any electronically available media, including images, audio, video, or other media, that you reuse or repost.

Ultimately, you must cite any source of information you use in your paper that doesn't originate with you. You do **NOT** need to cite:

- your own ideas and opinions
- your own words
- common knowledge

Examples of common knowledge include:

- Basic facts: there are 365 days in a year, the earth orbits the sun, the molecular structure of water (H₂O), etc.
- Very well-known quotes: "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet" or "ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." You still have to use quotation marks and indicate who said the quote (Romeo in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, and John F. Kennedy, respectively), but you do not need to include the source in your bibliography.
- Subject-specific common knowledge: There is information in specific disciplines or branches of knowledge that is considered common knowledge. A good indicator of what constitutes common knowledge is if you see the information in 4 or 5 articles or books and it does not need a citation. Until you become familiar with what is considered common knowledge in your major area of study, it is best to play it safe and cite your sources or ask your professor.

Practice

What needs a citation?

1. 86% of internet users have taken steps online to remove or mask their digital footprints.
2. The Supreme Court ruling for *Brown v. the Board of Education* states, "Racial discrimination in public education is unconstitutional."
3. Paris is the Capital of France.
4. Abraham Lincoln was the 16th president of the United States of America.
5. Water freezes at 32 degrees Fahrenheit.
6. 52, 950 unaccompanied homeless youth were supported through school based programs in 2008-09.

Show Answer

Know How to Incorporate Sources



Checklist for integrating sources into your research paper.

You can incorporate other sources into your writing by paraphrasing, summarizing, or using direct quotes. With each of these techniques, you must always cite the original work.

Paraphrasing is using another author's idea, but expressing it in your own words and without quotation marks, since it is no longer a word-for-word quotation. A proper paraphrase is substantially different from the original text.

Summarizing condenses the main idea of a whole text, or of several texts, into a substantially shorter form while capturing the most important elements.

A **direct quotation** uses exactly the same words as the text you are taking it from, and it puts the exact words in quotation marks. Always include the page number, when possible, when citing a direct quotation: (Smith 116).

Cite Your Sources

Knowing how to cite your sources properly is one of the most important skills to have in order to avoid plagiarism. Anytime you paraphrase, summarize, or use a direct quote in your research assignment, you must provide a citation in the text and list the source in your bibliography. We'll cover exactly how to do that in the next section.

Let's return to Marvin's research. He's already learned from the online professor about *walking*, *talking*, and *cooking* with his sources. Now the professor reminds Marvin about one more important step for utilizing sources in his research.

Know How to Accurately

Documenting Sources

O-Prof: In college writing, if you use a source in a paper, you're expected to let the reader know exactly how to find that source as well. Providing this "source address" information for your sources is known as *documenting your sources*.

Marvin: What do you mean by a "source address"?

O-Prof: It's directions for finding the source. A mailing address tells you how to find a person: the house number, street, city, state, and zip code. To help your readers find your sources, it's customary to give them the name of the author; the title of the book or article or website; and other information such as date, location of publication, publisher, even the database in which a source is located. Or, if it's a website, you might give the name of the site and/or the date on which you accessed it. Source documentation can be complicated, because the necessary source address information differs for different types of sources (e.g., books vs. journal articles, electronic vs. print). Additionally, different disciplines (e.g., history, philosophy, psychology, literature, etc.) use different "address" formats. Eventually, you'll become familiar with the documentation conventions for your own academic major, but source documentation takes a lot of practice. In the meantime, your teachers and various writing handbooks can provide instructions on what information you'll need.

Marvin: Do I really need to include all that information? A lot of times, the sources I use are readings my teachers have assigned, so they already know where to find them.

O-Prof: Your teachers don't always know where all your sources are from, and they also want you to get into the habit of source documentation. And what about your other readers? If they're deeply interested in your topic, they may want to find more information than you've included in your paper. Your source documentation allows them to find the original source. And there are other reasons for documenting sources. It can help readers understand your own position on a topic, because they can see which authors you agree with and which you don't. It also shows readers you've taken time to investigate your topic and aren't just writing off the top of your head. If readers see that your ideas are based on trustworthy sources, they're more likely to trust what you say.

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TEXT: USING SOURCES IN YOUR WRITING

Using Sources Creatively

When writing papers that require the use of outside source material, it is often tempting to cite only direct quotations from your sources. If, however, this is the only method of citation you choose, your paper will become nothing more than a series of quotations linked together by a few connecting words. Your paper will seem to be a collection of others' thoughts and will contain little thinking on your part.

To avoid falling into this trap, follow a few simple pointers:

- **Avoid using long quotations merely as space-fillers.** While this is an attractive option when faced with a ten-page paper, the overuse of long quotations gives the reader the impression you cannot think for yourself.
- **Don't use only direct quotations.** Try using paraphrases in addition to your direct quotations. To the reader, the effective use of paraphrases indicates that you took the time to think about the meaning behind the quote's words. (For further assistance see our materials on "[Using Paraphrases](#).")
- When introducing direct quotations, try to **use a variety of verbs in your signal phrases**. Don't always rely on stock verbs such as "states" or "says." Think for a little while about the purpose of your quotation and then choose a context-appropriate verb.

Also, when using direct quotations try qualifying them in a novel or interesting manner. Depending on the system of documentation you're using, the signal phrases don't always have to introduce the quotation.

For example, instead of saying:

"None of them knew the color of the sky" is the opening line of Stephen Crane's short story, "The Open Boat" (339). This implies the idea that "all sense of certainty" in the lives of these men is gone (Wolford 18).

Try saying:

"None of them knew the color of the sky," the opening line of Stephen Crane's, "The Open Boat," implies that "all sense of certainty" in the lives of these men is gone (Crane 339; Wolford 18).

The combination of these two sentences into one is something different. It shows thought on the writer's part in how to combine direct quotations in an interesting manner.

Summarizing

Summarizing involves condensing the main idea of a source into a much shorter overview. A summary outlines a source's most important points and general position. When summarizing a source, it is still necessary to use a citation to give credit to the original author.

How to Construct a Summary

- Decide what part of the source is most relevant to your argument.
- Pick out the most important sentences in that part of the source. In most cases, you'll focus on the main points.
- *Paraphrase* those sentences. If they include any important or memorable phrases, quote those in your paraphrases. List the paraphrased sentences in the order they occur in the original.
- Add any other information that readers might need to understand how your paraphrased sentences connect to one another.
- Revise the list so that it reads not like a list but like a paragraph.

How to Mix Quotation With Summary

A long summary can make readers feel that you and they are too distant from an important source. So when you write a summary as long as half a page, look for memorable phrases that you can quote within your summary.

Colomb and Williams emphasize that drafting is "an act of discovery" that can fuel a writer's creative thinking. They acknowledge that some writers have to draft carefully and stick closely to their outlines, but they advise writers to draft as freely and as openly as they can. They encourage even slow and careful drafters to be open to new ideas and surprises and not to be limited by what they do before drafting. They still stress the value of steady work that follows a plan: for example, writing a little bit every day rather than all at once "in a fit of desperate inspiration." But they show writers how to make the best of a plan while hoping that you will "discover what your storyboard has missed." (Note: Kate L. Turabian. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, Seventh Edition : Chicago Style for Students and Researchers. Revised by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, and University of Chicago Press Editorial Staff. (University of Chicago Press, 2007), 83-7.))

When you add a few quotations to your summary, you seem a more lively writer. You give readers an idea of your source without quoting so much that your paper seems a cut-and-paste job. If you have pages that are mostly summary and paraphrase, add a few notable quotations that will liven up your writing.

Quoting

Quoting is when one uses the **EXACT wording** of the source material. Direct quotations should be **used sparingly**, and should be used to strengthen your own arguments and ideas.

When Should One Quote? One should use quotes infrequently and only with good reason! Some valid reasons for quoting include:

- When not using the author's exact wording would change the original meaning
- To lend authority to the point you are trying to make
- When the language of the quote is significant

Quotations should always be introduced and incorporated into your argument, rather than dropped into your paper without context. Consider this first **BAD** example:

There are many positive effects for advertising prescription drugs on television. “African-American physicians regard direct-to-consumer advertising of prescription medicines as one way to educate minority patients about needed treatment and healthcare options” (Wechsler).

This is a potentially good piece of information to support a research writer’s claim, but the researcher hasn’t done any of the necessary work to explain where this quote comes from or to explain why it is important for supporting her point. Rather, she has simply “dropped in” the quote, leaving the interpretation of its significance up to the reader. Now consider this revised **GOOD** example of how this quote might be better introduced into the essay:

In her Pharmaceutical Executive article available through the Wilson Select Internet database, Jill Wechsler writes about one of the positive effects of advertising prescription drugs on television. “African-American physicians regard direct-to-consumer advertising of prescription medicines as one way to educate minority patients about needed treatment and healthcare options.”

In this revision, it’s much more clear what point the writer is trying to make with this evidence and where this evidence comes from.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is when you create your own wording of essential information and ideas expressed by someone else without directly quoting. Paraphrasing is similar to summarizing, however summaries only include the essential ideas of a work, while paraphrasing includes more details. Since your paper should only use direct quotations sparingly, you’ll probably be paraphrasing frequently. Just remember that you still need to express plenty of your own ideas. Use paraphrasing to support those ideas, and **be mindful that you still need to cite paraphrased portions of your paper.**

Paraphrasing Practice

Paraphrasing is a skill that takes time to develop. One way of becoming familiar with paraphrasing is by examining successful and unsuccessful attempts at paraphrasing. Read the quote below from page 179 of Howard Gardner’s book titled *Multiple Intelligences* and then examine the two attempts at paraphrasing that follow ((Note: Gardner, Howard. *Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons in Theory and Practice*. BasicBooks, 2006.)).

“America today has veered too far in the direction of formal testing without adequate consideration of the costs and limitations of an exclusive emphasis on that approach.”

Paraphrasing Attempt 1: America has now gone too far toward formal testing, without realizing the costs and limitations of exclusively emphasizing that approach (Gardner 179).

Show Answer

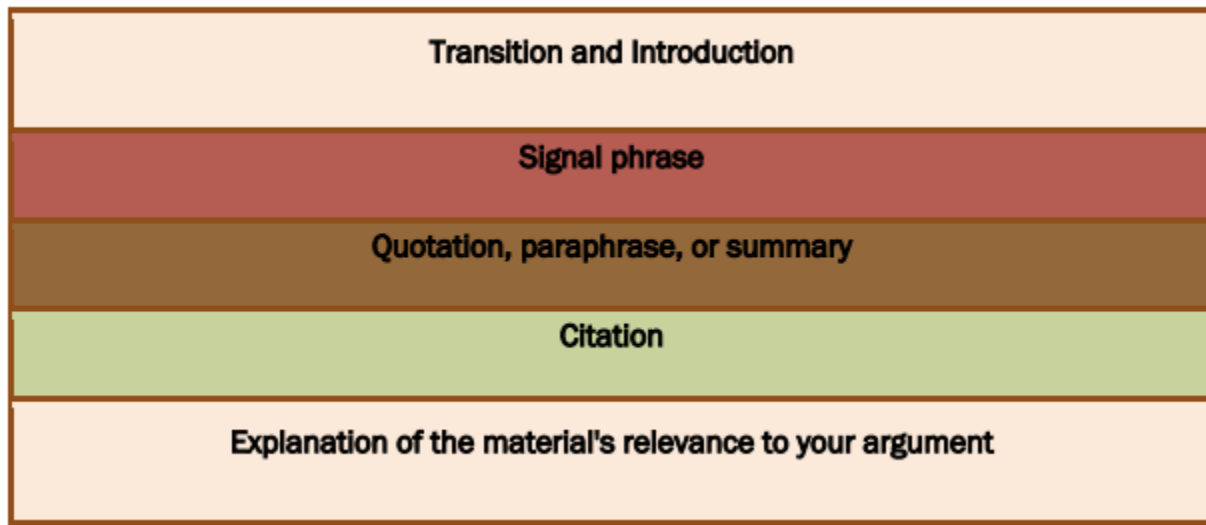
Paraphrasing Attempt 2: In the United States, the education system places too much emphasis on formal testing, overlooking the limitations and expenses imposed when that assessment strategy is employed exclusively (Gardner 179).

Show Answer

Providing Context for Your Sources

Whether you use a direct quotation, a summary, or a paraphrase, it is important to distinguish the original source from your ideas, and to explain how the cited source fits into your argument. You can think of the context for your quote, paraphrase, or summary as a sandwich with multiple parts. You’ll want to: transition into and introduce the source, use a signal phrase to actually move into the material from the source, provide a citation that can be easily connected to the full citation material in your bibliography or works cited list, and explain how this material

fits into your argument. Many writing textbooks refer to this as a quotation sandwich, but it can and should also be used to integrate paraphrases and summaries. All material from sources that you use in your own work must be integrated in this way, or you risk readers becoming confused about its importance and purpose.



The Source Material Sandwich.

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SELF CHECK: WRITING ETHICALLY

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TRY IT: WRITING ETHICALLY

To do

1. Using the passage below, select a portion of the text that you think would support your argument if you were writing a paper about how rabies can be cured. Following the “quote sandwich” method explained in this section, write a short paragraph introducing and utilizing the quote. Remember that a quote sandwich begins with an introduction, then a signal phrase (like “according to...” or “[the author] states that...” or “In the passage from . . .”), then the quote, and an explanation of the paraphrase in your own words.
2. Next, construct a paraphrase of a portion of the text that answers the question, “why are more people not treated for rabies?” Use the quote sandwich method to introduce the text, include the paraphrase, and an explanation in your own words.
3. Next, choose a quote or passage from an article you discovered earlier in your EBSCO database search and construct a successful quote OR paraphrase sandwich from your article.



From the article, “Human Rabies Survivors in India: An Emerging Paradox?” by [Reeta Subramaniam \(Mani\)](#)

Rabies, a fatal disease, yet almost 100% preventable by timely and appropriate postexposure prophylaxis (PEP), continues to kill about 20,000 people every year in India, accounting for almost a third of the 61,000 global human deaths due to rabies. This figure may be an underestimate because rabies is not a notifiable disease in India, and systematic surveillance for animal and human rabies is not done.

These tragic deaths continue to happen primarily because a majority of victims do not receive rabies vaccination, and a few of those who do do not complete the full course. Moreover, the use of rabies immunoglobulins (RIG) is abysmally low. This serious lapse in PEP can be attributed to the lack of awareness about the potential seriousness of animal bites and the need for prompt PEP in the community as well as among medical professionals and an irregular supply of antirabies vaccines and RIG, particularly in primary health care facilities. In addition, some dog bite victims cannot afford the cost of PEP or may resort to indigenous treatment practices.

At the other end of the dismal spectrum of the rabies scenario in India, an incredibly paradoxical finding has emerged in the recent past. Survival from human rabies (albeit with severe residual deficits) has been reported in 6 patients in the last 6 years from India, almost unheard of until 2010 except for a single case of partial recovery from rabies reported in 2002. It is a well-known fact that survival from rabies is extremely rare, and only about 15 human survivors from rabies have been reported globally. In fact, we imbibed the tenets of rabies diagnosis as students of medicine decades ago: “If a patient has rabies, he will die in the next few days; if he does not die, he does not have rabies!”

The Neurovirology laboratory at NIMHANS, Bangalore, a WHO Collaborating Centre for Reference and Research on rabies, receives samples from clinically suspected human rabies cases all over India for diagnostic confirmation. In addition to the 6 reported survivors since 2010, over a period of 3 years (2012–2014), 6 patients have been reported to have had prolonged survival of 2 weeks to 3 months after onset of illness, unusual in victims of rabies, for whom the average interval from clinical disease onset to death has been reported to be 5.7 days in furious rabies and 11 days in paralytic rabies. At least a few more, if not many such cases, may be unreported from various hospitals in India, probably for want of a laboratory confirmation of rabies, which remains a challenge.

What could possibly explain the recent unusual surge of human rabies survivors in India?

While public health facilities—the only choice for the socioeconomically underprivileged population in India—may be found wanting, especially in rural areas, in a stark contradiction, several private and some public medical institutes offering world-class medical care have been recognized in India in the last decade or so. Besides being a hub for medical tourism, these advanced medical facilities are accessible to a considerable segment of the Indian population who are economically secure and are covered by health

insurance. Access to excellent intensive care facilities and an aggressive approach of management with supportive care may be one of the most important factors contributing to prolonged survival of human rabies cases in India in the recent past. Some of these patients had atypical clinical manifestations, and availability of antemortem diagnostic facilities and the treating physicians' efforts to obtain an intravital laboratory confirmation could also have played a critical role. It is likely that the well-publicized survival and almost complete recovery of a teenager in the United States using the "Milwaukee protocol" in 2004 after she developed rabies may have provided an impetus for physicians to attempt aggressive management of human rabies.

Sadly, "survival" has not always been synonymous with "recovery," and all except one of the reported human survivors in India are left with poor functional outcomes—a tragic occurrence with serious long-term repercussions for family members. Physicians and caregivers are therefore faced with the agonizing dilemma of whether "to treat or not to treat" patients with a diagnosis of rabies. Most public hospitals cannot justify expenditure from already limited resources on a patient with rabies who has statistically negligible chances of complete recovery, leading to several medical, ethical, legal, social, and economic challenges.

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OUTCOME: MLA DOCUMENTATION

Evaluate MLA document formatting and practices



If you drive a car in America, you (and most every preschooler in the nation) know that green means "go" and red means "stop." Why is that? Could a city suddenly decide to switch up the colors—blue means "go" and orange means "stop"? The answer is "no," because changing the colors would cause mass confusion and pose a serious risk to drivers and pedestrians. In order to prevent such mishaps, there is a standardized protocol for traffic

signals and lights. The U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration publishes the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices to ensure that traffic rules are consistent and uniform across the nation.

Similarly, the Modern Language Association (MLA) is a professional organization for language and literature experts that publishes a handbook to standardize the process for writing academic papers. The handbook explains how to format papers and specifically explains procedures for appropriately citing sources so that other people can easily navigate the research trail. If you follow the MLA guidelines, your paper will not only look nice, but it will include proper in-text citations and a works cited page that appropriately give credit to the authors who inspired your work.

What You Will Learn to Do

- evaluate reasons for the use of MLA formatting and documentation
- evaluate MLA document formatting, including page layout
- evaluate the components of MLA Works Cited citations
- evaluate the components of MLA in-text citations

The Learning Activities for this Outcome Include

- Text: Introduction to MLA Documentation
- Text: MLA Document Formatting
- Text: MLA Works Cited
- Text: Creating MLA Citations
- Text: MLA In-Text Citations
- Self Check: MLA Documentation
- Try It: MLA Documentation



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TEXT: INTRODUCTION TO MLA DOCUMENTATION

Why Cite?

You will recall from the previous section that citing is important because:

- citations help others find the information you used in your research paper
- citing your sources accurately helps establish the credibility of your research
- citations connect your work to the work of other scholars

- citations are one way that scholars enter into a dialogue with one another
- citations are a way to honor and acknowledge the work of others who have made your own research possible

The following video demonstrates the practical importance of always giving credit where credit is due.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/R6T2IZ51iFI>

MLA Documentation

MLA style is one of the most common citation and formatting styles you will encounter in your academic career. The MLA, which stands for Modern Language Association, is an organization of language scholars and experts that aims to present a straightforward process to standardize the format and presentation of academic writing. MLA format is widely used by in many high school and introductory college English classes, as well as scholarly books and professional journals. If you are writing a paper for a literature or media studies class, it is likely your professor will ask you to write in MLA style.

The 8th Edition

The newest edition of the MLA Handbook, the 8th Edition, was released in April 2016. We will focus on the newest changes, but you should be aware that some institutions or instructors may still utilize the previous 7th edition of the handbook. While the overall principles of creating a works cited page and using in-text citations remains the same, there are a few key changes and updates that make the citation process easier for our modern uses. For example, the guidelines now state that you should always include a URL of an internet source, you can use alternative author names, such as Twitter handles, and you no longer need to include the publisher (in some instances), and you don't need to include the city where a source was published. These new changes are less nit-picky and allow for a more streamlined citation process that will work with the wide variety of source locations (i.e., YouTube videos, songs, clips from TV episodes, websites, periodicals, books, academic journals, poems, interviews, etc.).

Citation Resources

There are many fantastic resources out there that can make the formatting and citation process easier. Some common style guides include the following:

- [The Purdue Online Writing Lab](#): this is a popular resource that concisely explains how to properly format and cite in various academic styles.
- [EasyBib](#): in addition to having a style guide, this website allows you to paste in information from your research and will create and save citations for you.

Reference management websites and applications can also assist you in tracking and recording your research. Most of these websites will even create the works cited page for you! Some of the most popular citation tools include the following:

- [Zotero](#)
- [RefME](#)
- [BibMe](#)

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TEXT: MLA DOCUMENT FORMATTING

Overall Structure of an MLA Paper

One purpose of using MLA format is to streamline the writing process and establish a consistent and uniform way of presenting material. For this reason, there are specific guidelines you'll need to follow when formatting your paper. The general idea is to use a 12-point font, have 1-inch margins, double-space the paper, include page numbers, and to include your personal information in the upper-left hand corner. Your paper should look like this:

Freeman 1

Brandon Freeman

Professor Lee

English 101

25 February 2017

Problems with Assisted Reproductive Technology and the Definition of the Family

It is not unusual for people to think of a family in its basic form as a mother and a father and the child or children they conceive together. But a genetic connection between parents and children is not necessary for a family to exist. New families are often created by remarriage after a divorce or the death of a spouse, so that only one parent is genetically related to the child or children. Also, the practice of adoption is long-standing and creates families where neither parent is genetically related to the child or children. There are many single-parent families in the United States, and some of these may be families where the parents live together but are not married (Coontz 147). Couples that consist of two men or two women are also increasingly common, and

This sample paper shows how the first page of a paper written in MLA is formatted. Note the header information in the upper-left corner, the last name and page numbers in the upper-right corner, the double spaced text, and indentations that begin each paragraph.

General MLA Formatting Rules

- **Font:** Your paper should be written in 12-point text. Whichever font you choose, MLA requires that regular and italicized text be easily distinguishable from each other. Times and Times New Roman are often recommended.
- **Line Spacing:** All text in your paper should be double-spaced.
- **Margins:** All page margins (top, bottom, left, and right) should be 1 inch. All text should be left-justified.
- **Indentation:** The first line of every paragraph should be indented 0.5 inches.
- **Page Numbers:** Create a right-justified header 0.5 inches from the top edge of every page. This header should include your last name, followed by a space and the page number. Your pages should be numbered with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3...) and should start with the number 1 on your title page. Most word-processing programs have the ability to automatically add the correct page number to each page so you don't have to do this by hand.
- **Use of Italics:** In MLA style, you should italicize (rather than underline) the titles of books, plays, or other standalone works. You should also italicize (rather than underline) words or phrases you want to lend particular emphasis—though you should do this rarely.
- **Sentence Spacing:** Include just one single space after a period before the next sentence: “Mary went to the store. She bought some milk. Then she went home.”
- **The first page:** Like the rest of your paper, everything on your first page, even the headers, should be double-spaced. The following information should be left-justified in regular font at the top of the first page (in the main part of the page, not the header):
 - on the first line, your first and last name
 - on the second line, your instructor's name
 - on the third line, the name of the class
 - on the fourth line, the date
- **The title:** After the header, the next double-spaced line should include the title of your paper. This should be centered and in title case, and it should not be bolded, underlined, or italicized (unless it includes the name of a book, in which case just the book title should be italicized).
- **The Oxford Comma:** The Oxford comma (also called the serial comma) is the comma that comes after the second-to-last item in a series or list. For example: *The UK includes the countries of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.* In the previous sentence, the comma immediately after “Wales” is the Oxford comma. In general writing conventions, whether the Oxford comma should be used is actually a point of fervent debate among passionate grammarians. However, it's a requirement in MLA style, so double-check all your lists and series to make sure you include it!

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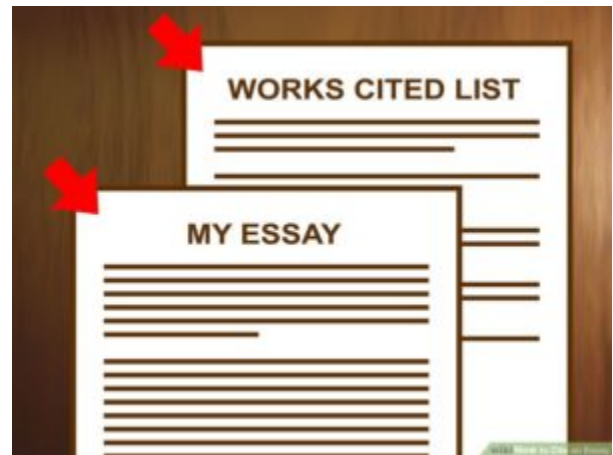
TEXT: MLA WORKS CITED

In MLA style, all the sources you cite throughout the text of your paper are listed together in full in the Works Cited section, which comes after the main text of your paper.

Formatting the Works Cited Section

In MLA style, all the sources you cite throughout the text of your paper are listed together in full in the Works Cited section, which comes after the main text of your paper.

- **Page numbers:** Just as the rest of your paper, the top of the page should retain the right-justified header with your last name and the page number.
- **Title:** On the first line, the title of the page—"Works Cited"—should appear centered, and not italicized or bolded.
- **Spacing:** Like the rest of your paper, this page should be double-spaced and have 1-inch margins (don't skip an extra line between citations).
- **Alphabetical order:** Starting on the next line after the page title, your references should be listed in alphabetical order by author. Multiple sources by the same author should be listed chronologically by year within the same group.
- **Hanging indents:** Each reference should be formatted with what is called a hanging indent. This means the first line of each reference should be flush with the left margin (i.e., not indented), but the rest of that reference should be indented 0.5 inches further. Any word-processing program will let you format this automatically so you don't have to do it by hand. (In Microsoft Word, for example, you simply highlight your citations, click on the small arrow right next to the word "Paragraph" on the home tab, and in the popup box choose "hanging indent" under the "Special" section. Click OK, and you're done.)



When citing an essay, you include information in two places: in the body of your paper and in the Works Cited that comes after it. The Works Cited is just a bibliography: you list all the sources you used to write the paper. The citation information you include in the body of the paper itself is called the "in-text citation."

Works Cited

- Buchanan, Wyatt. "More Same-Sex Couples Want Kids: Survey Looks at Trends among Homosexuals." *SF Gate*, Hearst Communications, 25 Apr. 2006, www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/NATION-More-same-sex-couples-want-kids-Survey-2499131.php.
- Coontz, Stephanie. "Not Much Sense in Those Census Numbers." *Uncommon Threads: Reading and Writing about Contemporary America*, edited by Robert D. Newman et al., Longman, 2003, pp. 146-48.
- "Developments in the Law: The Law of Marriage and Family." *Harvard Law Review*, vol. 116, no. 7, 2003, pp. 1996-2122. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/1342754.
- Hymowitz, Kay S. "The Incredible Shrinking Father." *City Journal*, Spring 2007, www.city-journal.org/html/17_2_artificial_insemination.html.
- Marcotty, Josephine, and Chen May Yee. "New World of Fertility Medicine Is a Big-Money Marketplace." *Seacoastonline.com*, Local Media Group, 30 Oct. 2007, www.seacoastonline.com/article/20071030/PARENTS/71029007.

A correctly formatted Works Cited page, according to the MLA handbook.

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VIDEO: CREATING MLA CITATIONS

Because of the wide variety of source formats, MLA 8 now requires that researchers follow a simple set of guidelines to create appropriate citations (instead of looking up one of the fifty-nine types of sources inside the previous handbook and following the instructions). Although there are still distinct rules you need to follow to create a citation, the rules are less rigid and allow for you to look for the main components of a citation and construct it yourself. This means you will need to think about the source and its information, select the appropriate components, and organize it in a logical and useful manner.

Regardless of the source type, you are now asked to locate the same “core elements” from your sources and place them in a standard order in order to create citations. These core elements are explained in detail below. **Note that you do not need to memorize every step of this process**, but should take this opportunity to understand how citations are created. You can always return to this page, to the MLA handbook, the [MLA Style Center](#), or to other online resources to help you create the citations you need for your paper. Click through the following slides to learn more about each component and to see examples of MLA citations. Visit your course online to view this presentation.

You can also [download the presentation here](#).

Watch this video to see examples of how to identify the core elements needed in a citation:

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/ISekgYAdQcU>

Practice

Practice your mastery of MLA documentation by correctly ordering the following citations from the [Santa Fe College library](#):

- Book – [Desktop Version](#) | [Touchscreen Version](#)
- Chapter in an Edited Book – [Desktop Version](#) | [Touchscreen Version](#)
- Article from a Print Journal – [Desktop Version](#) | [Touchscreen Version](#)
- Journal Article from a Library Database – [Desktop Version](#) | [Touchscreen Version](#)
- Web Page – [Desktop Version](#) | [Touchscreen Version](#)
- Video – [Desktop Version](#) | [Touchscreen Version](#)

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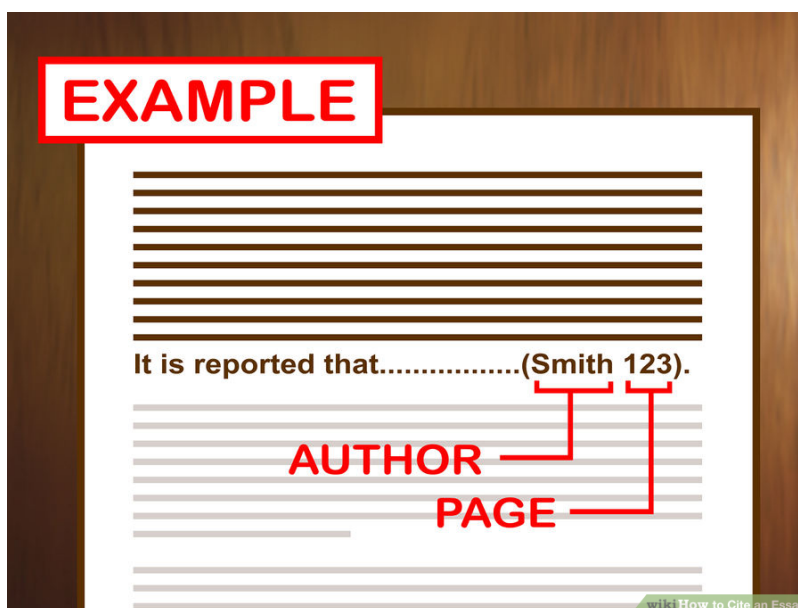
TEXT: MLA IN-TEXT CITATIONS

Because the use of in-text citations will be so integral to your writing processes, being able to instantly craft correct citations and identify incorrect citations will save you time during writing and will help you avoid having unnecessary points taken off for citation errors.

Here is the standard correct in-text citation style according to MLA guidelines:

“Quotation” (Author’s Last Name Page Number).

Take a moment to carefully consider the placement of the parts and punctuation of this in-text citation. Note that there is no punctuation indicating the end of a sentence inside of the quotation marks—closing punctuation should instead follow the parentheses. There is also no punctuation between the author’s last name and the page number inside of the parentheses. The misplacement of these simple punctuation marks is one of the most common errors students make when crafting in-text citations.



Include the right information in the in-text citation. Every time you reference material in your paper, you must tell the reader the name of the author whose information you are citing. You must include a page number that tells the reader where, in the source, they can find this information. The most basic structure for an in-text citation looks like this: (Smith 123).

So, let's say we have the following quote, which comes from page 100 of Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*: "Margaret had never spoken of Helstone since she left it." ((Note: Gaskell, Elizabeth. *North and South*. Oxford UP, 1973.))

The following examples show **incorrect** MLA formatting:

"Margaret had never spoken of Helstone since she left it." (Gaskell 100)	<i>Incorrect because the period falls within the quotation marks</i>
"Margaret had never spoken of Helstone since she left it" (Gaskell, 100).	<i>Incorrect because of the comma separating the author's last name and the page number</i>
"Margaret had never spoken of Helstone since she left it" (Elizabeth Gaskell 100).	<i>Incorrect because the author's full name is used instead of just her last name</i>
"Margaret had never spoken of Helstone since she left it" (<i>North and South</i> 100).	<i>Incorrect because the title of the work appears, rather than the author's last name; the title should only be used if no author name is provided</i>

The following example shows **correct** MLA formatting:

"Margaret had never spoken of Helstone since she left it" (Gaskell 100).
--

However, there are exceptions to the above citation guideline. Consider the following format of an in-text citation, which is also formed correctly.

Elizabeth Gaskell's narrator makes it clear that "Margaret had never spoken of Helstone since she left it" (100).

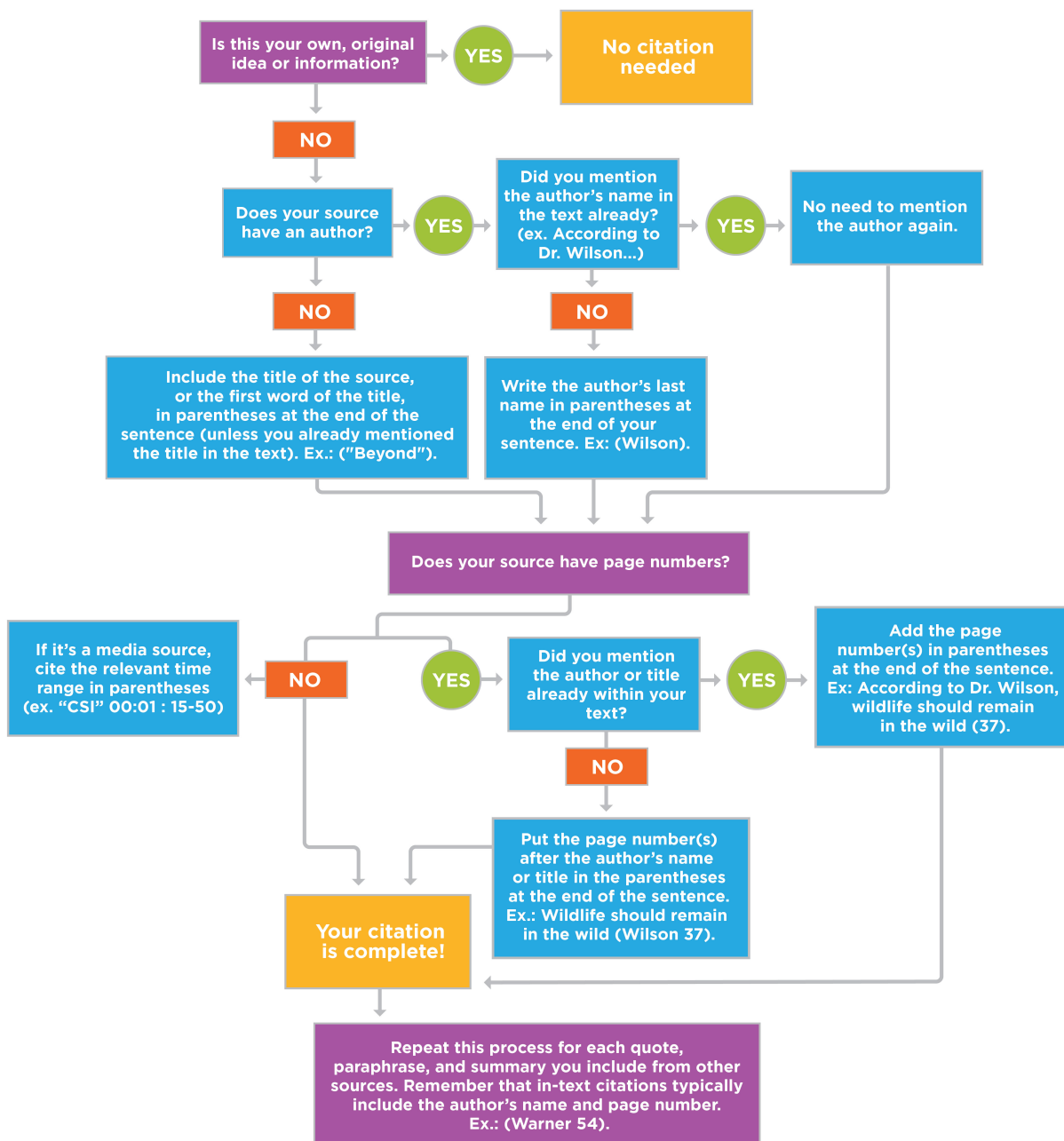
Do you notice the difference between this citation format and the format of the first example? Unlike the first example, this citation does not list the author's last name inside the parentheses. This is because the last name is included in quotation's introduction, which makes the identity of the author clear to the reader. Including the author's last name again inside of the parenthesis would be thus redundant and is not required for MLA citation.

The same rule about inclusion of the author's last name applies for paraphrased information, as well, as shown in the following example:

Elizabeth Gaskell's narrator makes it clear that her protagonist does not speak of her home once she is in Milton (100).

In this paraphrase, the author's last name precedes the paraphrased material, but as in the case of quotation integration, if the author's last name is not described in the paraphrase then it is required inside of the parentheses before the page number.

When and How to Create MLA In-Text Citations



Being more compliant with MLA in-text citation guidelines will become easier if you review these examples and the citation rules on which they rely.

EXAMPLE

A recent study determined that Himalayan brown bears eat both plants and animals (Rathore and Chauhan 6652).



Rathore and Chauhan determined that Himalayan brown bears eat both plants and animals (6652).



Rathore and Chauhan determined that Himalayan brown bears eat both plants and animals (Rathore and Chauhan 6652).



A recent study determined that Himalayan brown bears eat both plants and animals.



wikiHow to Cite an Essay

In-text citations are often parenthetical, meaning you add information to the end of a sentence in parentheses. But if you include that necessary information in the language of the sentence itself, you should not include the parenthetical citation. This example shows you proper uses of in-text citations.

When to Use a Block Quotation

A typical quotation is enclosed in double quotation marks and is part of a sentence within a paragraph of your paper. However, if you want to quote more than four lines of prose (or three lines of verse) from a source, you should format the excerpt as a block quotation, rather than as a regular quotation within the text of a paragraph. Most of the standard rules for quotations still apply, with the following exceptions: a block quotation will begin on its own line, it will not be enclosed in quotation marks, and its in-text citation will come after the ending punctuation, not before it.

For example, if you wanted to quote the entire first paragraph of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, you would begin that quotation on its own line and format it as follows:

Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, 'and what is the use of a book,' thought Alice, 'without pictures or conversations?' (Carroll 98)

The full reference for this source would then be included in your Works Cited section at the end of your paper.

The entire block quotation should be indented one inch from the left margin. The first line of the excerpt should not be further indented, unless you are quoting multiple paragraphs—in which case the first line of each quoted paragraph should be further indented 0.25 inches. As should the rest of your paper, a block quotation in MLA style should be double-spaced.

Block Quotations

Watch [this video](#) from Imagine Easy Solutions for more information on formatting block quotations.

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SELF CHECK: MLA DOCUMENTATION

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TRY IT: MLA DOCUMENTATION

To Do

- Return to the “quote sandwich” practice you completed earlier. Using the guidance in this section, add MLA in-text citations (also known as parenthetical citations) to the end of each quoted or paraphrased passage.
- Create a MLA Works Cited page that includes an entry for every source you plan on using in your Personal Analysis Essay Revision.



Worked Example

Video or text model of this step.

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PUTTING IT TOGETHER: RESEARCH PROCESS

Many of us have experienced research writing projects as a way to “prove” what we already believe. An essay assignment may ask us to take a position on a matter, and then support that position with evidence found in research. You will likely encounter projects like this in several classes in college.

Because you enter a project like this with a thesis in hand (you already know what you believe!), it is very tempting to look for and use only those sources that agree with you and to discard or overlook the others. If you are lucky, you find enough such sources and construct a paper. Ask yourself the following question, though: what have you found out or investigated during your research? Have you discovered new theories, opinions, or aspects of your subject? Did anything surprise you, intrigue you, or make you look further? If you answered no to these questions, you did not fulfill the purpose of true research, which is to explore, to discover, and to investigate.



The purpose of research is not to look for proofs that would fit the author’s pre-existing theories, but to learn about the subject of the investigation as much as possible and then form those theories, opinions, and arguments on the basis of this newly found knowledge and understanding. And what if there is no data that prove your theory? What if, after hours and days of searching, you realize that there is nothing out there that would allow you to make the claim that you wanted to make? Most likely, this will lead to frustration, a change of the paper’s topic, and having to start all over again.

So, should you begin every research project as a disinterested individual without opinions, ideas, and beliefs? Of course not! There is nothing wrong about having opinions, ideas, and beliefs about your subject before

beginning the research process. Good researchers and writers are passionate about their work and want to share their passion with the world. Moreover, pre-existing knowledge can be a powerful research-starter. But what separates a true researcher from someone who simply looks for “proofs” for a pre-fabricated thesis is that a true researcher is willing to question those pre-existing beliefs and to take his or her understanding of the research topic well beyond what he or she knew at the outset. Speaking in terms of the process theory of writing, a good researcher and writer is willing to create new meaning, a new understanding of his or her subject through research and writing and based on the ideas and beliefs that he or she had entering the research project.

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- Research Writing as Process. **Authored by:** Pavel Zemliansky. **Located at:** <https://threeivers.digication.com/mod/modchap2>. **Project:** Methods of Discovery. **License:** [CC BY-NC-SA: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike](#)

ASSIGNMENT: FINDING SOURCES

You’ve already completed an essay describing the challenges facing a specific category of students as they attempt to complete college. In this next step, we will find potential sources to help back up and support the claims in your essay.

The first step of research is to identify a question you hope to answer in your essay. Work with your tutor at the Enhancement Center to formulate a research question. Next, answer the following questions.

1. What is your **research question**?
2. What is your **working thesis statement**, based off of your research question?
3. What **keywords** can you use for your search?
4. Looking at a list of your [library's research databases by subject](#), identify a subject area that might be appropriate for finding articles for your research. Which subject area or areas will you search?
5. Now imagine that you want to find a newspaper article in order to get a sense of the most recent news on your topic (perhaps a local story or interview). Searching your library's databases by format, name a database that would be helpful for this research task.
6. Go to the Cerritos College [Library Database Tutorial](#). Watch the videos about basic and advanced searching in the database. Use the library database and EBSCO Search to find **two resources** that apply to your research question. Write a paragraph about each result describing what you found and how relevant it is to your search topic. (Be sure to write down the bibliographic information or use a program like Zotero to help keep track of your sources!).
7. Use the **bibliography or works cited section** from one of the two sources above to find *another* source related to your topic. Write a paragraph about this result as well, describing the source and its relevance to your research.

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ASSIGNMENT: SOURCE ANALYSIS

In this section, you learned about analyzing sources to verify that they are current, relevant, authoritative, accurate, and purposeful. In this exercise, you'll apply what you've learned to assess the usefulness of some articles.

1. Focusing on the "Authority" aspect of the C.R.A.A.P. test, take a few minutes to read the following two articles and consider the authors and their credentials.
 - [Facebook Use Predicts Declines in Subjective Well-Being in Young Adults](#)
 - [Facebook is Bad For You – Get a Life!](#)

After you have read each article, write a paragraph providing your opinion of the authority of each article using the established guidelines. Remember, you are not stating your opinion of the article but rather your justification of why or why not the article meets the authority test.

2. Now you are ready to apply your analysis skills to examine the sources you found in your previous database searching. Pick one of the search results you found through EBSCO and use the C.R.A.A.P. method to evaluate the resource. Write a short paragraph addressing each of the following sections:
 - Currency
 - Relevance
 - Authority
 - Accuracy
 - Purpose

Refer back to the content pages about for a list of questions and topics to consider with each C.R.A.A.P. section. Finally, write a summary statement indicating if and why you think the resource is worth utilizing for your research.

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ASSIGNMENT: WRITING ETHICALLY

1. Using the passage below, select a portion of the text that you think would support your argument if you were writing a paper about how rabies can be cured. Following the “quote sandwich” method explained in this section, write a short paragraph introducing and utilizing the quote. Remember that a quote sandwich begins with an introduction, then a signal phrase (like “according to...” or “[the author] states that...” or “In the passage from . . .”), then the quote, and an explanation of the paraphrase in your own words.
2. Next, construct a paraphrase of a portion of the text that answers the question, “why are more people not treated for rabies?” Use the quote sandwich method to introduce the text, include the paraphrase, and an explanation in your own words.
3. Next, choose a quote or passage from an article you discovered earlier in your EBSCO database search and construct a successful quote OR paraphrase sandwich from your article.

From the article, “Human Rabies Survivors in India: An Emerging Paradox?” by [Reeta Subramaniam \(Mani\)](#)

Rabies, a fatal disease, yet almost 100% preventable by timely and appropriate postexposure prophylaxis (PEP), continues to kill about 20,000 people every year in India, accounting for almost a third of the 61,000 global human deaths due to rabies. This figure may be an underestimate because rabies is not a notifiable disease in India, and systematic surveillance for animal and human rabies is not done.

These tragic deaths continue to happen primarily because a majority of victims do not receive rabies vaccination, and a few of those who do do not complete the full course. Moreover, the use of rabies immunoglobulins (RIG) is abysmally low. This serious lapse in PEP can be attributed to the lack of awareness about the potential seriousness of animal bites and the need for prompt PEP in the community as well as among medical professionals and an irregular supply of antirabies vaccines and RIG, particularly in primary health care facilities. In addition, some dog bite victims cannot afford the cost of PEP or may resort to indigenous treatment practices.

At the other end of the dismal spectrum of the rabies scenario in India, an incredibly paradoxical finding has emerged in the recent past. Survival from human rabies (albeit with severe residual deficits) has been reported in 6 patients in the last 6 years from India, almost unheard of until 2010 except for a single case of partial recovery from rabies reported in 2002. It is a well-known fact that survival from rabies is extremely rare, and only about 15 human survivors from rabies have been reported globally. In fact, we imbibed the tenets of rabies diagnosis as students of medicine decades ago: “If a patient has rabies, he will die in the next few days; if he does not die, he does not have rabies!”

The Neurovirology laboratory at NIMHANS, Bangalore, a WHO Collaborating Centre for Reference and Research on rabies, receives samples from clinically suspected human rabies cases all over India for diagnostic confirmation. In addition to the 6 reported survivors since 2010, over a period of 3 years (2012–2014), 6 patients have been reported to have had prolonged survival of 2 weeks to 3 months after onset of illness, unusual in victims of rabies, for whom the average interval from clinical disease onset to death has been reported to be 5.7 days in furious rabies and 11 days in paralytic rabies. At least a few more, if not many such cases, may be unreported from various hospitals in India, probably for want of a laboratory confirmation of rabies, which remains a challenge.

What could possibly explain the recent unusual surge of human rabies survivors in India?

While public health facilities—the only choice for the socioeconomically underprivileged population in India—may be found wanting, especially in rural areas, in a stark contradiction, several private and some public medical institutes offering world-class medical care have been recognized in India in the last decade or so. Besides being a hub for medical tourism, these advanced medical facilities are accessible to a considerable segment of the Indian population who are economically secure and are covered by health insurance. Access to excellent intensive care facilities and an aggressive approach of management with supportive care may be one of the most important factors contributing to prolonged survival of human rabies cases in India in the recent past. Some of these patients had atypical clinical manifestations, and availability of antemortem diagnostic facilities and the treating physicians’ efforts to

obtain an intravital laboratory confirmation could also have played a critical role. It is likely that the well-publicized survival and almost complete recovery of a teenager in the United States using the “Milwaukee protocol” in 2004 after she developed rabies may have provided an impetus for physicians to attempt aggressive management of human rabies.

Sadly, “survival” has not always been synonymous with “recovery,” and all except one of the reported human survivors in India are left with poor functional outcomes—a tragic occurrence with serious long-term repercussions for family members. Physicians and caregivers are therefore faced with the agonizing dilemma of whether “to treat or not to treat” patients with a diagnosis of rabies. Most public hospitals cannot justify expenditure from already limited resources on a patient with rabies who has statistically negligible chances of complete recovery, leading to several medical, ethical, legal, social, and economic challenges.

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- Activity from Listening to Sources, Talking to Sources. **Authored by:** Amy Guptill. **Located at:** <http://pressbooks.opensuny.org/writing-in-college-from-competence-to-excellence/chapter/5/>. **License:** [CC BY-NC-SA: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike](#)
- Quote Sandwich Activity. **Authored by:** Alexis McMillan-Clifton. **Provided by:** Tacoma Community College. **License:** [CC BY: Attribution](#)

ASSIGNMENT: MLA DOCUMENTATION

1. Return to the “quote sandwich” practice you completed earlier. Using the guidance in this section, add MLA in-text citations (also known as parenthetical citations) to the end of each quoted or paraphrased passage.
2. Create a MLA Works Cited page that includes an entry for every source you plan on using in your Personal Analysis Essay Revision.

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ASSIGNMENT: PERSUASIVE ESSAY REVISION FINAL DRAFT

Throughout this module you have been working on a revision of your Persuasive Essay to include additional research. Make final revisions and improvements now, as you’ve discussed with your tutor. Submit the final version of your revision here.

Persuasive Essay Revision Overview

In the Writing module, you completed an essay in which you defined a practice that could lead to enhanced success for a particular group of college students and argued for the adoption of that practice.

In this module, you will revisit that essay, **expanding it to include at least 3 outside resources not already part of required reading in course, including at least 2 from the library to help illustrate and clarify the points your essay makes.**

You will work with your tutors at the Enhancement Center to identify what kind of outside sources will be appropriate for your needs, and where to add source material into your essay draft.

Assignment Details

The revised essay will be 600-850 words long. It will demonstrate a clear, supported thesis statement, strong organizational skills, and attention to proofreading and editing.

Additionally, it will incorporate 1-2 credible outside sources to help support the essay's thesis. These sources will be cited using MLA in-text citations and the essay will include a MLA Works Cited page.

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GRAMMAR

WHY IT MATTERS: GRAMMAR

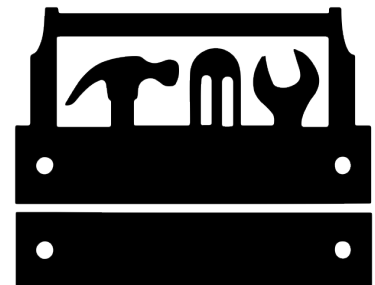
Why is it helpful to critique patterns of academic grammar and punctuation usage, including in your own work?

There are several different types of English. While there are some obvious examples of different varieties (e.g., American and British English), there are other differing types, such as formal vs. informal English or verbal vs. written English. There are also different varieties of English that are unique to cultural, societal, or professional groups.

While all of these types of English are equally dynamic and complex, each variety is appropriate in different situations. When you're talking to your friends, you should use slang and cultural references—if you speak in formal language, you can easily come off as stiff. If you're sending a quick casual message—via social media or texting—don't worry too much about capitalization or strict punctuation. Feel free to have five exclamation points standing alone, if that gets your point across.

However, there's this thing called Standard American English. This English is used in professional and academic settings. This is so people can communicate and understand each other. How many times have you heard people of older generations ask just what *smh* or *m* mean? While this online jargon is great for quick communication, it isn't formal: it isn't a part of the commonly accepted conventions that make up Standard American English.

Grammar is a set of rules and conventions that dictate how Standard American English works. These rules are simply tools that speakers of a language can use. When you learn how to use the language, you can craft your message to communicate exactly what you want to convey.



Learning Outcomes

- Critique the use of nouns and pronouns.
- Critique the use of verbs.
- Critique the use other parts of speech, including adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions, and articles.
- Critique the use of common punctuation marks.
- Critique sentence structure and variety of sentences.
- Critique the use of both active and passive voices.

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OUTCOME: NOUNS AND PRONOUNS

Critique the use of nouns and pronouns.

Nouns and pronouns are the “things” in our sentences—the things that complete actions (or have things done to them). They are the most common words used in English. Nouns are words that refer to specific things or people: for example, phones, umbrellas, or Nicki Minaj. Pronouns, on the other hand, stand in for a previous noun: the same word can refer to several different things. They include words like *those*, *them*, and *he*. Without the right context, it’s impossible to tell just what a pronoun is referring to, but when we use pronouns correctly, they can help us save time and space in our communication.

In this outcome, we’ll learn about the different types of nouns and pronouns, as well as how to correctly use them in English.



What You Will Learn to Do

- Critique the use of nouns
- Critique the use of different pronoun cases and types
- Critique passages for pronoun and antecedent clarity
- Critique passages for pronoun and antecedent agreement

The Learning Activities for this Outcome Include

- Text: Nouns
- Text: Pronoun Cases and Types
- Text: Pronoun Antecedents
- Self Check: Nouns and Pronouns
- Try It: Nouns and Pronouns

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TEXT: NOUNS

Nouns are a diverse group of words, and they are very common in English. Nouns are a category of words defining **things**—the name of people (Dr. Sanders, lawyers), places (Kansas, factory, home), things (scissors, sheet music, book), or ideas (love, truth, beauty, intelligence).

Pluralization

English has both regular and irregular plural nouns. Regular plurals follow this rule (and other similar rules), but irregular plurals are, well, not regular and don't follow a "standard" rule.



Regular Plurals

Let's start with regular plurals: **regular plural nouns** use established patterns to indicate there is more than one of a thing. As was mentioned earlier, we add the plural suffix *-s* or *-es* to most words (*cats*, *zebras*, *classes*, *foxes*, *heroes*). Remember that when words have a foreign origin (e.g., Latin, Greek, Spanish), we just add the plural suffix *-s* (*tacos*, *avocados*, *maestros*).

When a word ends in *y* and there is a consonant before *y*, we change the *y* to *i* and add *-es*. Thus *sky* becomes *skies*. However, if the *y* follows another vowel, you simply add an *-s*. (*donkeys*, *alloys*). When a word ends in *-f* or *-fe*, we change the *f* to *v* and add *-es* (*calves*, *leaves*). However, if there are two terminal *f*s or if you still pronounce the *f* in the plural, you simply add an *-s* (*cliffs*, *chiefs*).

Irregular Plurals

Irregular plurals, unlike regular plurals, don't necessarily follow any particular pattern—instead, they follow a lot of *different* patterns. Because of this, irregular plurals require a lot of memorization. If you're ever in doubt, the dictionary is there for you.

The first kind of irregular plural we'll talk about is the **no-change** or **base plural**. In these words, the singular noun has the exact same form as the plural (*sheep*, *fish*, *deer*, *moose*). Most no-change plurals are types of animals. The next type of irregular is the **mid-word vowel change**. This includes words like *tooth*, *man*, and *mouse*, which become *teeth*, *men*, and *mice*.

Note: The plural for a computer mouse (as opposed to the fuzzy animal) can either be *mice* or *mouses*. Some people prefer *mouses* as it creates some differentiation between the two words.

We also have the **plural *-en***. In these words *-en* is used as the plural ending instead of *-s* or *-es*.

- child → children
- ox → oxen
- brother → brethren
- sister → sistren

Note: *Brethren* and *sistren* are antiquated terms that you're unlikely to run into in your life; however, since these are the only four words in English that use this plural, all four have been included above.

The last category of irregular plurals is borrowed words. These words are native to other languages (e.g., Latin, Greek) and have retained the pluralization rules from their original tongue.

Singular <i>-us</i> ; Plural <i>-i</i>	cactus → cacti	fungus → fungi	syllabus → syllabi
Singular <i>-a</i> ; Plural <i>-ae</i>	formula → formulae	vertebra → vertebrae	larva → larvae
Singular <i>-ix</i> , <i>-ex</i> ; Plural <i>-ices</i> , <i>-es</i>	appendix → appendices	matrix → matrices	index → indices
Singular <i>-on</i> , <i>-um</i> ; Plural <i>-a</i>	bacterium → bacteria	criterion → criteria	medium → media
Singular <i>-is</i> ; Plural <i>-es</i>	thesis → theses	analysis → analyses	crisis → crises

The rules presented in the table above are almost always followed, but as a borrowed word becomes more popular in its usage, it can be adopted into regular pluralization. For example, *formulas* and *appendixes* are accepted words in formal situation. Additionally, in informal speech, *cactuses* and *funguses* are acceptable.

Note: Because of the word's history, *octopuses* is preferred to *octopi*, but *octopi* is an accepted word.

Practice

Look at each word in the table below. Identify if the word is singular or plural, then write the other version of the word and explain which rule the plural has used in its formation. For example:

- *stimuli* is the plural of *stimulus*. The singular ends with a *-us*, so the plural ends with an *-i*.
- *ox* is the singular of *oxen*. This is an *-en* noun. To form the plural, an *-en* was added.

reefs		boys		waltz	
memorandum		hypothesis		phenomena	
focus		vertebra		appendices	
children		squid		man	

Show Answer

There are a lot of ways to categorize nouns: concrete vs. abstract nouns, common vs. proper nouns, count vs. non-count nouns, and compound vs. non-compound nouns. Let's take a look at each of these kinds of categorization and see exactly what they each mean.

Concrete vs. Abstract Nouns

Concrete nouns are things you can hold, see, or otherwise sense, like *book*, *light*, or *warmth*.

Abstract nouns, on the other hand, are (as you might expect) abstract concepts, like *time* and *love*.

- concrete noun: rock
- abstract noun: justice

Common vs. Proper Nouns

Common nouns are generic words, like *tissue* or *watch*. They are lower-cased (unless they begin a sentence). A proper noun, on the other hand, is the name of a specific thing, like the brand name *Kleenex* or *Rolex*. Proper nouns are always capitalized.

- common noun: name
- proper noun: Ester

Note: This rule also applies to adjectives that are based on proper nouns:

- It's often difficult to understand Shakespearian language.
- After her encounter with Lukas, Elisa vowed to hate all Swiss men.

However, when you're talking about *swiss cheese*, *pasteurized milk*, and *french fries*, these adjectives lower-cased. They have a non-literal meaning: the cheese isn't really from Switzerland, Louie Pasteur didn't treat the milk himself, and the fries aren't really from France.

Count vs. Non-Count Nouns

A **count noun** (also **countable noun**) is a noun that can be modified by a numeral (*three chairs*) and that occurs in both singular and plural forms (*chair, chairs*). The can also be preceded by words such as *a, an, or the* (*a chair*). Quite literally, count nouns are nouns which can be counted.

A **non-count noun** (also **mass noun**), on the other hand, has none of these properties. It can't be modified by a numeral (*three furniture* is incorrect), occur in singular/plural (*furnitures* is not a word), or co-occur with *a, an, or the* (*a furniture* is incorrect). Again, quite literally, non-count nouns are nouns which cannot be counted.

Less or Fewer? Many or Much?

The adjectives *less* and *fewer* are both used to indicate a smaller amount of the noun they modify. *Many* and *much* are used to indicate a large amount of something. People often will use these pairs words interchangeably; however, the words *fewer* and *many* are used with count nouns, while *less* and *much* are used with non-count nouns:

- The pet day care has **fewer** dogs than cats this week.
- Next time you make these cookies, you should use **less** sugar.
- **Many** poets struggle when they try to determine if a poem is complete or not.
- There's too **much** goodness in her heart for her own good.

You may have noticed that *much* has followed the adverb *too* in this example (*too much*). This is because you rarely find *much* by itself. You don't really hear people say things like "Now please leave me alone; I have *much* research to do." The phrase "a lot of" has taken its place in current English: "I have a lot of research to do." *A lot of* can be used in the place of either *many* or *much*:

- **A lot of** poets struggle when they try to determine if a poem is complete or not.
- There's **a lot of** goodness in her heart for her own good.

Practice

Read the following sentences. Choose the correct words to complete each sentence.

1. There was (many / much) food at the event. There were (less / fewer) soups than salads and even (less / fewer) desserts.
2. Miguel loved studying (outer space / outer spaces)—especially different (galaxy / galaxies).
3. Arturo had too much (water / drinks) before his workout.

Show Answer

Choose the correct word to fill in the blanks in the following sentences:

1. You can only be in this line if you have fifteen items or ____.
2. Evelyn was disappointed in the weather forecast; there was ____ rain predicted. She preferred dry weather.
3. I had a lengthy list of my ____ ideas for the project.

Show Answer

Compound Nouns

A **compound noun** is a noun phrase made up of two nouns, e.g. *bus driver*, in which the first noun acts as a sort of adjective for the second one, but without really describing it. (For example, think about the difference between a *black bird* and a *blackbird*.)



Figure 1. A crow is a black bird, while a blackbird is a specific species of bird.

Compound nouns can be made up of two or more other words, but each compound has a single meaning. There are three typical structures of compound nouns.

Types of Compound Nouns

Compounds may be written in three different ways:

- **The solid or closed forms** in which two usually moderately short words appear together as one: *housewife*, *lawsuit*, *wallpaper*, *basketball*, etc.
- **The hyphenated form** in which two or more words are connected by a hyphen: *house-builder*, *single-mindedness*, *rent-a-cop*, and *mother-of-pearl*.
- **The open or spaced form** consisting of newer combinations of usually longer words, such as *distance learning*, *player piano*, *lawn tennis*, etc.

Hyphens are often considered a squishy part on language (we'll discuss this further in Text: Hyphens and Dashes). Because of this, you can encounter open, hyphenated, and closed forms for the same compound noun, such as the triplets *container ship/container-ship/containership* and *particle board/particle-board/particleboard*.

If you're ever in doubt whether a compound should be closed, hyphenated, or open, dictionaries are your best reference.

Plurals

The process of making compound nouns plural has its own set of conventions to follow. In all forms of compound nouns, we pluralize the chief element of a compound word (i.e., we pluralize the primary noun of the compound).

- *fisherman* → *fishermen*
- *black bird* → *black birds*
- *passerby* → *passersby*

The word *hand-me-down* doesn't have a distinct primary noun, so its plural is *hand-me-downs*.

Practice

Read the following sentence. Are the compound nouns in each being used correctly? How would you create the plural form of each compound noun?

1. Liam has one sister in law and one brother in law.
2. High blood pressure can lead to multiple types of heart disease.
3. When I was four, I was determined to be an astronaut, a fire-fighter, and a sous chef.

Show Answer

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TEXT: PRONOUN CASES AND TYPES

A pronoun stands in the place of a noun. Like nouns, pronouns can serve as the subject or object of a sentence: they are the things sentences are about. Pronouns include words like *he*, *she*, and *I*, but they also include words like *this*, *that*, *which*, *who*, *anybody*, and *everyone*. Before we get into the different types of pronouns, let's look at how they work in sentences.

Because a pronoun is replacing a noun, its meaning is dependent on the noun that it is replacing. This noun is called the **antecedent**. Let's look at the first sentence of this paragraph again:

Because a pronoun is replacing a noun, **its** meaning is dependent on the noun that it is replacing.

There are two pronouns here: *its* and *it*. *Its* and *it* both have the same antecedent: "a pronoun." Whenever you use a pronoun, you must also include its antecedent. Without the antecedent, your readers (or listeners) won't be able to figure out what the pronoun is referring to. Let's look at a couple of examples:

- Jason likes **it** when people look to him for leadership.
- Trini does her hair and make up every day—with no exceptions.

So, what are the antecedents and pronouns in these sentences?

- *Jason* is the antecedent for the pronoun *him*.
- *Trini* is the antecedent for the pronoun *her*.

Practice

Identify the antecedents and pronouns in the following examples:

1. Itzel and Camila were the top ranking doubles team at OSU. They hadn't been defeated all year.
2. People asked Jorge to review their papers so often that he started a small editing business.
3. Henry called his parents every week.

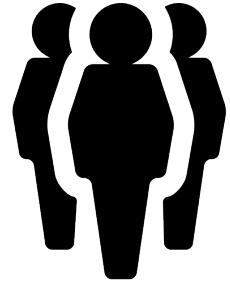
Show Answer

So far, we've only looked at personal pronouns, but there are a lot of other types, including demonstrative, and indefinite pronouns. Let's discuss each of these types in further depth:

Personal Pronouns

The following sentences give examples of personal pronouns used with antecedents:

- **That man** looks as if **he** needs a new coat. (the noun phrase *that man* is the antecedent of *he*)
- **Kat** arrived yesterday. I met **her** at the station. (*Kat* is the antecedent of *her*)
- When **they** saw us, **the lions** began roaring (*the lions* is the antecedent of *they*)
- **Adam and I** were hoping no one would find **us**. (*Adam and I* is the antecedent of *us*)



Note: Pronouns like *I*, *we*, and *you* don't always require an explicitly stated antecedent. When a speaker says something like "I told you the zoo was closed today," it's implied that the speaker is the antecedent for *I* and the listener is the antecedent for *you*.

Reflexive pronouns are a kind of pronoun that are used when the subject and the object of the sentence are the same.

- **Jason** hurt **himself**. (*Jason* is the antecedent of *himself*)
- **We** were teasing **each other**. (*we* is the antecedent of *each other*)

This is true even if the subject is only implied, as in the sentence "Don't hurt yourself." *You* is the unstated subject of this sentence.

Reflexive pronouns include *myself*, *ourselves*, *yourself*, *yourselves*, *himself*, *herself*, *itself*, *themselves*. They can only be used as the object of a sentence—not as the subject. You can say "I jinxed myself," but you can't say "Myself jinxed me."

Note: When the first- or second-person reflexive pronoun is appropriate, object-case and reflexive pronouns can often be used interchangeably:

- The only person I'm worrying about today is **me**.
- The only person I'm worrying about today is **myself**.
- You don't need to make anyone happy except **you**.
- You don't need to make anyone happy except **yourself**.

Why do you think this is? When would you use one or the other?

Practice

Read at the following sentences. Should the reflexive pronoun be used? Why or why not?

1. Aisha let (her / herself) in when she arrived.
2. Feel free to let (you / yourself) in when you get here!
3. Alex asked Jada if she would let (him / himself) in when (she / herself) arrived.

Show Answer

Pronouns may be classified by three categories: person, number, and case.

Person refers to the relationship that an author has with the text that he or she writes, and with the reader of that text. English has three persons (first, second, and third):

- **First-person** is the speaker or writer him- or herself. The first person is personal (*I*, *we*, etc.)
- **Second-person** is the person who is being directly addressed. The speaker or author is saying this is about you, the listener or reader.
- **Third-person** is the most common person used in academic writing. The author is saying this is about other people. In the third person singular there are distinct pronoun forms for male, female, and neutral gender.

There are two **numbers**: **singular** and **plural**. As we learned in nouns, singular words refer to only one a thing while plural words refer to more than one of a thing (*I* stood alone while *they* walked together).

English personal pronouns have two **cases**: **subject** and **object**. Subject-case pronouns are used when the pronoun is doing the action (*I* like to eat chips, but *she* does not). Object-case pronouns are used when something is being done to the pronoun (John likes *me* but not *her*).

Possessive pronouns are used to indicate possession (in a broad sense). Some must be accompanied by a noun: e.g., *my* or *your*, as in “I lost **my** wallet.” This category of pronouns behaves similarly to adjectives. Others occur as independent phrases: e.g., *mine* or *yours*. For example, “Those clothes are **mine**.”

The table below includes all of the personal pronouns in the English language. They are organized by person, number, and case:

Person	Number	Subject	Object	Possessive	
First	Singular	I	me	my	mine
	Plural	we	us	our	ours
Second	Singular	you	you	your	yours
	Plural	you	you	your	yours
Third	Singular	he	him	his	his

Person	Number	Subject	Object	Possessive	
		she	her	her	hers
		it	it	its	its
	Plural	they	them	their	theirs

Practice

In each sentence, fill in the blank with the correct pronoun. Identify why you selected the pronoun you did:

1. André told me that it was ____ box of cereal, but I couldn't remember having bought ____.
2. Amelia and Ajani still haven't arrived. I should make sure ____ texted ____.
3. You shouldn't be so worried about what other people think. The only person ____ need to please is ____.
4. George Washington was the first president of the United States. ____ set the standard of only serving two terms of office. However, ____ wasn't illegal to serve over two terms until 1951.

Show Answer

Demonstrative Pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns substitute for things being pointed out. They include *this*, *that*, *these*, and *those*. *This* and *that* are singular; *these* and *those* are plural.

The difference between *this* and *that* and between *these* and *those* is a little more subtle. *This* and *these* refer to something that is “close” to the speaker, whether this closeness is physical, emotional, or temporal. *That* and *those* are the opposite: they refer to something that is “far.”

- Do I actually have to read all of *this*?
 - The speaker is indicating a text that is close to her, by using “this.”
- *That* is not coming anywhere near me.
 - The speaker is distancing himself from the object in question, which he doesn't want to get any closer. The far pronoun helps indicate that.
- You're telling me you sewed all of *these*?
 - The speaker and her audience are likely looking directly at the clothes in question, so the close pronoun is appropriate.
- *Those* are all gross.
 - The speaker wants to remain away from the gross items in question, by using the far “those.”



Note: these pronouns are often combined with a noun. When this happens, they act as a kind of adjective instead of as a pronoun.

- Do I actually have to read all of *this* contract?
- *That* thing is not coming anywhere near me.
- You're telling me you sewed all of *these* dresses?
- *Those* recipes are all gross.

The antecedents of demonstrative pronouns (and sometimes the pronoun *it*) can be more complex than those of personal pronouns:

- Animal Planet's puppy cam has been taken down for maintenance. I never wanted *this* to happen.
- I love Animal Planet's panda cam. I watched a panda eat bamboo for half an hour. *It* was amazing.

In the first example, the antecedent for *this* is the concept of the puppy cam being taken down. In the second example, the antecedent for *it* in this sentence is the experience of watching the panda. That antecedent isn't explicitly stated in the sentence, but comes through in the intention and meaning of the speaker.

Practice

In the following sentences, determine if *this*, *that*, *these*, or *those* should be used.

1. Lara looked at her meal in front of her. "_____ looks great!" she said.
2. Tyesha watched the '67 Mustang drive down the street. "What I wouldn't give for one of _____."
3. "What do you think of _____?" Ashley asked, showing me the three paint samples she had picked out.

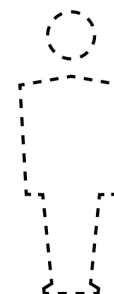
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Indefinite Pronouns

Indefinite pronouns, the largest group of pronouns, refer to one or more unspecified persons or things, for example: **Anyone** can do that.

These pronouns can be used in a couple of different ways:

- They can refer to members of a group separately rather than collectively. (To **each** his or her own.)
- They can indicate the non-existence of people or things. (**Nobody** thinks that.)
- They can refer to a person, but are not specific as to first, second or third person in the way that the personal pronouns are. (**One** does not clean **one's** own windows.)



Please note that all of these pronouns are singular. The table below shows the most common indefinite pronouns:

anybody	anyone	anything	each	either	every
everybody	everyone	everything	neither	no one	nobody
nothing	nobody else	somebody	someone	something	one

Note: Sometimes third-person personal pronouns are sometimes used without antecedents—this applies to special uses such as dummy pronouns and generic *they*, as well as cases where the referent is implied by the context.

- You know what *they* say.
- *It's* a nice day today.

Practice

Identify the indefinite pronouns in the following sentences. Is the best indefinite used, or is there another indefinite that would fit better?

1. Everyone should take the time to critically think about what he or she wants out of life.
2. If I had to choose between singing in public and swimming with leeches, I would choose neither.
3. Yasmin knew everything was wrong, but she couldn't figure out what.
4. If nobody else enrolls in this class, it will be cancelled this semester.

Show Answer

Singular *They*

As we've just seen, indefinite pronouns demand singular pronouns, like in "To each his or her own." However, in informal speech, you'll often hear things like "To each their own" or "Someone is singing in the hallway. If they haven't stopped in five minutes, I'm going to have to take drastic measures." If you think about your own speech, it's very likely that you use *they* as a singular pronoun for someone whose gender you don't know. So why do people use *they* this way, even though it's a plural? It likely stems from the clunkiness of the phrase "he or she." It is also possible that *they* is following the same evolution as the word *you*. In Early Modern English, *you* was used as either a plural, second-person pronoun or as a polite form for the more common, singular *thee*. However, *you* eventually overtook almost all of the second-person pronouns, both singular and plural.

While this use of the singular *they* is still not "officially" correct—and you definitely shouldn't use this in your English papers—it's interesting to watch English change before our very eyes.

Relative Pronouns

There are five relative pronouns in English: *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *that*, and *which*. These pronouns are used to connect different clauses together. For example:

- Belen, **who** had starred in six plays before she turned seventeen, knew that she wanted to act on Broadway someday.
- My daughter wants to adopt the dog **that** doesn't have a tail.

These pronouns behave differently from the other categories we've seen. However, they are pronouns, and it's important to learn how they work. Two of the biggest confusions with these pronouns are *that* vs. *which* and *who* vs. *whom*. The two following videos help with these:

That vs. Which

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/6Js8tBCfbWk>

Who vs. Whom

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/bPqMLKXoEac>

Practice

Does the following paragraph use relative pronouns correctly? Explain why or why not for each relative pronoun.

Katerina, whom had taken biology once already, was still struggling to keep the steps of cellular respiration straight. She knew the process took place in animals, which take in oxygen and put out carbon dioxide. She also knew that plants underwent the process of photosynthesis. However, the individual steps of the process seemed beyond her understanding.

Show Answer

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TEXT: PRONOUN ANTECEDENTS

Antecedent Clarity

We've already defined an **antecedent** as the noun (or phrase) that a pronoun is replacing. The phrase "antecedent clarity" simply means that it should be clear who or what the pronoun is referring to. In other words, readers should be able to understand the sentence the first time they read it—not the third, fourth, or tenth. In this page, we'll look at some examples of common mistakes that can cause confusion, as well as ways to fix each sentence.

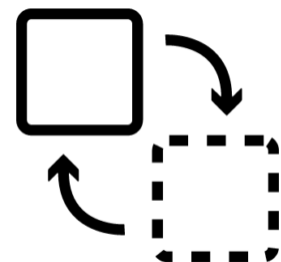
Let's take a look at our first sentence:

Rafael told Matt to stop eating his cereal.

When you first read this sentence, is it clear if the cereal Rafael's or Matt's? Is it clear when you read the sentence again? Not really, no. Since both Rafael and Matt are singular, third person, and masculine, it's impossible to tell whose cereal is being eaten (at least from this sentence).

How would you best revise this sentence? Type your ideas in the text frame below, and then look at the suggested revisions.

Show Possible Revisions



Were those revisions what you expected them to be?

Let's take a look at another example:

Katerina was really excited to try French cuisine on her semester abroad in Europe. They make all sorts of delicious things.

When you read this example, is it apparent who the pronoun *they* is referring to? You may guess that *they* is referring to the French—which is probably correct. However, this is not actually stated, which means that there isn't actually an antecedent. Since every pronoun needs an antecedent, the example needs to be revised to include one.

How would you best revise this sentence? Type your ideas in the text frame below, and then look at the suggested revisions.

Show Possible Revisions

As you write, keep these two things in mind:

- Make sure your pronouns always have an antecedent.
- Make sure that it is clear what their antecedents are.

Practice

Read the following passage, then re-write it using as many pronouns as possible, while still retaining clarity.

Marina and Marina's twin sister Adriana often fought over small things. Marina frequently took Adriana's clothes without asking and never returned them. Adriana always ate the last piece of dessert, even if Mariana had saved it for Mariana. However, Mariana always made sure Adriana knew about the sales at Adriana's favorite stores, and Adriana baked Mariana's favorite cookies at least once a month.

Show Answer

Antecedent Agreement

As you write, make sure that you are using the correct pronouns. When a pronoun matches the person and number of its antecedent, we say that it **agrees** with its antecedent. Let's look at a couple of examples:

- I hate it when Zacharias tells me what to do. **He's** so full of **himself**.
- The Finnegans are shouting again. I swear you could hear **them** from across town!



In the first sentence, *Zacharias* is singular, third person, and masculine. The pronouns *he* and *himself* are also singular, third person, and masculine, so they agree. In the second sentence, *the Finnegans* is plural and third person. The pronoun *them* is also plural and third person.

When you select your pronoun, you also need to ensure you use the correct case of pronoun. Remember we learned about three cases: subject, object, and possessive. The case of your pronoun should match its role in the sentence. For example, if your pronoun is doing an action, it should be a subject:

- **He** runs every morning.

- I hate it when **she** does this.

However, when something is being done to your pronoun, it should be an object:

- Birds have always hated **me**.
- My boss wanted to talk to **him**.
- Give **her** the phone and walk away.

Practice

Replace each bolded word with the correct pronoun:

1. **Hannah** had always loved working with plants. **Hannah's** garden was the envy of **Hannah's** neighbors.
2. People often lost patience with **Colin**.
3. Justin was unsure how well **Justin** and Terry would together.
4. **Alicia and Katie** made a formidable team. **Alicia and Katie's** maneuvers always caught the opposing team off guard.

Show Answer

However, things aren't always this straightforward. Let's take a look at some examples where things are a little more confusing.

Person and Number

Some of the trickiest agreements are with indefinite pronouns:

- Every student should do his or her best on this assignment.
- If nobody lost his or her scarf, then where did this come from?

As we learned earlier in this outcome, words like *every* and *nobody* are singular, and demand singular pronouns. Here are some of the words that fall into this category:

anybody	anyone	anything	each	either	every
everybody	everyone	everything	neither	no one	nobody
nothing	one	somebody	someone	something	

Some of these may feel "more singular" than others, but they all are technically singular. Thus, using "he or she" is correct (while *they* is incorrect).

- Anyone going on this hike should plan on being in the canyon for at least seven hours; he or she should prepare accordingly.
- I know somebody has been throwing his or her trash away in my dumpster, and I want him or her to stop.

However, as you may have noticed, the phrase "he or she" (and its other forms) can often make your sentences clunky. When this happens, it may be best to revise your sentences to have plural antecedents. Because "he or she" is clunky, you'll often see issues like this:

The way each individual speaks can tell us so much about him or her. It tells us what groups they associate themselves with, both ethnically and socially.

As you can see, in the first sentence, *him or her* agrees with the indefinite pronoun *each*. However, in the second sentence, the writer has shifted to the plural *they*, even though the writer is talking about the same group of people. When you write, make sure your agreement is correct and **consistent**.

Practice

Here's a paragraph that uses "he or she" liberally:

Every writer will experience writer's block at some point in his or her career. He or she will suddenly be unable to move on in his or her work. A lot of people have written about writer's block, presenting different strategies to "beat the block." However, different methods work for different people. Each writer must find the solutions that work best for him or her.

How would you best revise this paragraph? Type your ideas in the text frame below, and then look at the suggested revisions.

Show Possible Revisions

Case

You and I versus You and Me

Some of the most common pronoun mistakes occur with the decision between "you and I" and "you and me."

People will often say things like "You and me should go out for drinks." Or—thinking back on the rule that it should be "you and I"—they will say "Susan assigned the task to both you and I." However, both of these sentences are wrong. Remember that every time you use a pronoun you need to make sure that you're using the correct case.

Let's take a look at the first sentence: "You and me should go out for drinks." Both pronouns are the subject of the sentence, so they should be in subject case: "You and I should go out for drinks."

In the second sentence (Susan assigned the task to both you and I), both pronouns are the object of the sentence, so they should be in object case: "Susan assigned the task to both you and me."

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SELF CHECK: NOUNS AND PRONOUNS

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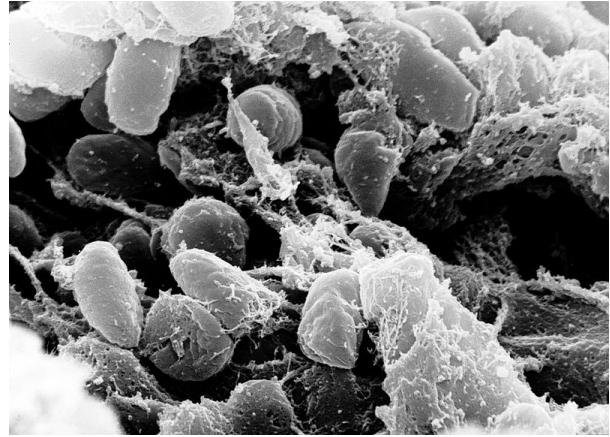
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TRY IT: NOUNS AND PRONOUNS

Read the following introduction to a research paper written by an undergraduate microbiology student. As you read, critique the use of nouns and pronoun case, clarity, and agreement. The sentences have been numbered to aid you in your comments.

(1) The type-six-secretion-system (T6SS) has been identified as a mechanism by which *Vibrio cholera* can resist predation by larger predators, such as protozoa, and by which it can alter the environment around it by killing other bacteria. (2) Other bacteria also contain the T6SS, but they have not been well studied. (3) In some bacteria, the T6SS appears to play an active role in host virulence as they assist the bacteria in altering the host environment. (4) The bacterium *Yersinia pestis* has genes which encode for several T6SSs, but they have not been well studied in virulence against different types of bacteria. (5) In this study, we hypothesize that the T6SSs in *Y. pestis* kill a variety of bacteria. (6) Identifying the function of these genes in *Y. pestis* could assist in understanding the mechanism by which the bacteria infect the host and cause disease. (7) It could also give a novel target for future antibiotics.



Yersinia pestis (the cause of the bubonic plague)

Show Answer

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OUTCOME: VERBS

Critique the use of verbs

Verbs are a crucial to language's functionality. Without verbs, language can't really *do* anything; after all, verbs are action words: *run, jump, work, dance*. Verbs can also connect two ideas together (the dog *is* beautiful) or help other verbs (you *can* stay).

In this outcome, we'll discuss these three main types of verbs: active verbs (action words), linking verbs (connecting two ideas), and helping verbs. We'll also learn how verbs change form to express action in the far past, the near past, the present, and the future.



What You Will Learn to Do

- Critique the use of different types of verbs
- Critique passages for verb tenses and agreement
- Critique the use of different non-finite verbs
- Critique the use of advanced verb tenses

The Learning Activities for this Outcome Include

- Text: Verb Types
- Text: Verb Tenses and Agreement
- Text: Non-Finite Verbs
- Text: Complex Verb Tenses
- Self Check: Verbs
- Try It: Verbs

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TEXT: VERB TYPES

Active Verbs

Active verbs are the simplest type of verb: they simply express some sort of action: e.g., *contain*, *roars*, *runs*, *sleeps*.

Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

Active verbs can be divided into two categories: transitive and intransitive verbs. A **transitive verb** is a verb that requires one or more objects. This contrasts with intransitive verbs, which do not have objects.

It might be helpful to think of it this way: transitive verbs have to be *done to* something or someone in the sentence. Intransitive verbs only have to be done *by* someone.

Let's look at a few examples of transitive verbs:

- We are going to **need** a bigger boat.
 - The object in this sentence is the phrase "a bigger boat." Consider how incomplete the thought would be if the sentence only said "We are going to need." Despite having a subject and a verb, the sentence is meaningless without the object phrase.
- She hates **filling out** forms.
 - *Hates* is also a transitive verb. Without the phrase "filling out forms," the phrase "She hates" doesn't make any sense.

Intransitive verbs, on the other do not take an object.

- John **sneezed** loudly.
 - Even though there's another word after *sneezed*, the full meaning of the sentence is available with just the subject *John* and the verb *sneezed*: "John sneezed." Therefore, *sneezed* is an intransitive verb. It doesn't have to be done to something or someone.
- My computer completely **died**.
 - Again, *died* here is enough for the sentence to make sense. We know that the computer (the subject) is what died.



Note: there are some verbs that can act as both transitive and intransitive verbs. Here are a few examples:

Intransitive	Transitive
The fire has burned for hundreds of years.	Miranda burned all of her old school papers.
Don't let the engine stop running !	Karl ran the best horse track this side of the river.
The vase broke .	She broke the toothpick.

Practice

Read the following sentences. Are the verbs in each transitive or intransitive? How can you tell?

1. Alba fell out of the car.
2. Ian has written over four hundred articles on the subject.
3. Javier sings really well.
4. Marton wondered about a lot of things.
5. Cate gave great gifts.

Show Answer

Multi-Word Verbs

Multi-word verbs are a subclass of active verbs. They are made up of multiple words, as you might have guessed. They include things like *stir fry*, *kickstart*, and *turn in*. Multi-word verbs often have a slightly different meaning than their base parts. Take a look at the difference between the next two sentences:

- Ben carried the boxes out of the house.
- Ben carried out the task well.

The first sentence uses a single word verb (*carried*) and the preposition *out*. If you remove the preposition (and its object), you get “Ben carried the boxes,” which makes perfect sense. In the second sentence, *carried out* acts as a single entity. If you remove *out*, the sentence has no meaning: “Ben carried the task well” doesn’t make sense.

Let’s look at another example:

- She’s been shut up in there for years.
- Dude, shut up.

Can you see how the same principles apply here? Other multi-word verbs include *find out*, *make off with*, *turn in*, and *put up with*.

Linking Verbs

A linking verb is a verb that links a subject to the rest of the sentence. There isn’t any “real” action happening in the sentence. Sentences with linking verbs become similar to math equations. The verb acts as an equal sign between the items it links.

While *to be* verbs are the most common linking verbs (*is*, *was*, *were*, etc.), there are other linking verbs as well. Here are some illustrations of other common linking verbs:

- Over the past five days, Charles **has become** a new man.
 - It’s easy to reimagine this sentence as “Over the past five days, Charles = a new man.”
- Since the oil spill, the beach **has smelled** bad.
 - Similarly, one could also read this as “Since the oil spill, the beach = smelled bad.”
- That word processing program **seems** adequate for our needs.
 - Here, the linking verb is slightly more nuanced than an equals sign, though the sentence construction overall is similar. (This is why we write in words, rather than math symbols, after all!)

Helping Verbs

Helping verbs (sometimes called *auxiliary verbs*) are, as the name suggests, verbs that help another verb. They provide support and add additional meaning. Here are some examples of helping verbs in sentences:

- Mariah **is** looking for her keys still.
- Kai **had** checked the weather three times already.

As you just saw, helping verbs include things like *is* and *had* (we'll look at a more complete list later). Let's look at some more examples to examine exactly what these verbs do. Take a look at the sentence "I have finished my dinner." Here, the main verb is *finish*, and the helping verb *have* helps to express tense. Let's look at two more examples:

- By 1967, about 500 U.S. citizens **had** received heart transplants.
 - While *received* could function on its own as a complete thought here, the helping verb *had* emphasizes the distance in time of the date in the opening phrase.
- Do you want tea?
 - *Do* is a helping verb accompanying the main verb *want*, used here to form a question.
- Researchers **are** finding that propranolol is effective in the treatment of heartbeat irregularities.
 - The helping verb *are* indicates the present tense, and adds a sense of continuity to the verb *finding*.

The following table provides a short list of some verbs that can function as helping verbs, along with examples of the way they function. [A full list of helping verbs can be found here.](#)

Helping Verb	Function	Examples
be	Express tense and a sense of continuity.	He is sleeping.
	Express tense and indicate the passive voice	They were seen.
can	Express ability	I can swim. Such things can help.
could	Express possibility	That could help.
do	Express negation (requires the word <i>not</i>)	You do not understand.
	Ask a question	Do you want to go?
have	Express tense and a sense of completion	They have understood.
might	Express possibility	We might give it a try.
must	Express confidence in a fact	It must have rained.
should	Express a request	You should listen.
	Express likelihood	That should help.
will	Express future tense	We will eat pie. The sun will rise tomorrow at 6:03.
would	Express future likelihood	Nothing would accomplish that.

The negative forms of these words (*can't*, *don't*, *won't*, etc.) are also helping verbs.



Note: The helping verbs *to be*, *to have*, and *would* are used to indicate tense. We'll discuss exactly how they function in more depth in [Text: Complex Verb Tenses](#).

Practice

Read the following sentences. In each sentence, identify the active, linking, and helping verbs.

1. Guilherme should arrive in the next three minutes.
2. Raymond is a fantastic boss.
3. Gina had smelled like chrysanthemums and mystery.
4. Damian can't work tonight. Do you want his shift?
5. Tim exercises a lot. His standard work out has three different circuits.

Show Answer

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TEXT: VERB TENSES AND AGREEMENT

Tenses

There are three standard tenses in English: past, present and future. All three of these tenses have simple and more complex forms. For now we'll just focus on the simple present (things happening now), the simple past (things that happened before), and the simple future (things that will happen later).

- **Simple Present:** work(s)
- **Simple Past:** worked
- **Simple Future:** will work

The singular third person requires a slightly different present than other persons. Look at the tables below to see the correct tenses for each person:

Person	Past	Present	Future
I	verb + <i>ed</i>	verb	will verb
We	verb + <i>ed</i>	verb	will verb
You	verb + <i>ed</i>	verb	will verb

He, She, It	verb + <i>ed</i>	verb + <i>s</i> (or <i>es</i>)	will verb
They	verb + <i>ed</i>	verb	will verb

Let's look at the verb *to walk* for an example:

Person	Past	Present	Future
I	walked	walk	will walk
We	walked	walk	will walk
You	walked	walk	will walk
He, She, It	walked	walks	will walk
They	walked	walk	will walk

Practice

Identify the tense of the following sentences. You can type your answers in the text field below:

1. Alejandra directed a play.
2. Lena will show me how to use a microscope.
3. Isaac eats a lot of steaks.

Show Answer

Irregular Verbs

There are a lot of irregular verbs. Unfortunately, there's a lot of memorization involved in keeping them straight. This video shows a few of the irregular verbs you'll have to use the most often (*to be*, *to have*, *to do*, and *to say*):

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/ZKr--3HpP_A

Here are the tables for *to be* and *to have* for a quick reference:

To be

Person	Past	Present	Future
I	was	am	will be
We	were	are	will be
You	were	are	will be

He, She, It	was	is	will be
They	were	are	will be

To have

Person	Past	Present	Future
I	had	have	will have
We	had	have	will have
You	had	have	will have
He, She, It	had	has	will have
They	had	have	will have

Here's a list of several irregular past tense verbs.

Practice

Change the tense of each sentence as directed below. You can type your answers in the text field below:

1. Make this sentence present tense: Ysabella was really good at getting others to open up.
2. Make this sentence past tense: Rodrigo will have a B+ in his math class.
3. Make this sentence future tense: Amanda said she didn't want to go to the party.
4. Make this sentence past tense: Jordan does five hundred sit-ups.
5. Make this sentence present tense: Marcela ran a car wash down the street from my house.

Show Answer

Tense Agreement

The basic idea behind sentence agreement is pretty simple: all the parts of your sentence should match (or **agree**). Verbs need to agree with their subjects in **number** (singular or plural) and in **person** (first, second, or third). In order to check agreement, you simply need to find the verb and ask who or what is doing the action of that verb, for example:

- I really **am** (first-person singular) vs. **We** really **are** (first-person plural)
- The **boy** **sings** (third-person singular) vs. The **boys** **sing** (third-person plural)

Compound subjects are plural, and their verbs should agree. Look at the following sentence for an example:

A pencil, a backpack, and a notebook **were** issued to each student.



Verbs will never agree with nouns that are in phrases. To make verbs agree with their subjects, follow this example:

The direction of the three plays is the topic of my talk.

The subject of “my talk” is *the direction*, not *plays*, so the verb should be singular.

In the English language, verbs usually come after subjects. But when this order is reversed, the writer must make the verb agree with the subject, not with a noun that happens to precede it. For example:

Beside the house **stand** sheds filled with tools.

The subject is *sheds*; it is plural, so the verb must be *stand*.

Practice

Choose the correct verb to make the sentences agree:

1. Ann (walk / walks) really slowly.
2. You (is / am / are) dating Tom?
3. Donna and April (get / gets) along well.
4. Chris and Ben (is / am / are) the best duo this company has ever seen.

Show Answer

Consistency

One of the most common mistakes in writing is a lack of tense consistency. Writers often start a sentence in one tense but ended up in another. Look back at that sentence. Do you see the error? The first verb *start* is in the present tense, but *ended* is in the past tense. The correct version of the sentence would be “Writers often start a sentence in one tense but end up in another.”

These mistakes often occur when writers change their minds halfway through writing the sentence, or when they come back and make changes but only end up changing half the sentence. It is very important to maintain a consistent tense, not just in a sentence but across paragraphs and pages. Decide if something happened, is happening, or will happen and then stick with that choice.

Read through the following paragraphs. Can you spot the errors in tense? Type your corrected passage in the text frame below:

If you want to pick up a new outdoor activity, hiking is a great option to consider. It's a sport that is suited for a beginner or an expert—it just depended on the difficulty hikes you choose. However, even the earliest beginners can complete difficult hikes if they pace themselves and were physically fit.

Not only is hiking an easy activity to pick up, it also will have some great payoffs. As you walked through canyons and climbed up mountains, you can see things that you wouldn't otherwise. The views are breathtaking, and you will get a great opportunity to meditate on the world and your role in it. The summit of a mountain is unlike any other place in the world.



Show Answer

Practice

Read the following sentences and identify any errors in verb tense. Type your corrections in the text frame below:

1. Whenever Maudeline goes to the grocery store, she had made a list and stick to it.
2. This experiment turned out to be much more complicated than Felipe thought it would be. It ended up being a procedure that was seventeen steps long, instead of the original eight that he had planned.
3. I applied to some of the most prestigious medical schools. I hope the essays I write get me in!

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TEXT: NON-FINITE VERBS

Just when we thought we had verbs figured out, we're brought face-to-face with a new animal: non-finite verbs. These words *look* similar to verbs we've already been talking about, but they *act* quite different from those other verbs.

By definition, a non-finite verb cannot serve as the main verb in an independent clause. In practical terms, this means that they don't serve as the action of a sentence. They also don't have a tense. While the sentence around them may be past, present, or future tense, the non-finite verbs themselves are neutral. There are three types of non-finite verbs: gerunds, participles, and infinitives.

Gerunds

Gerunds all end in *-ing*: *skiing*, *reading*, *dancing*, *singing*, etc. Gerunds **act like nouns** and can serve as subjects or objects of sentences. They can be created using active or helping verbs:

- I like **swimming**.
- **Being loved** can make someone feel safe.
- Do you fancy **going out**?
- **Having read the book once before** makes me more prepared.

Often the "doer" of the gerund is clearly signaled:

- We enjoyed **singing** yesterday (we ourselves sang)
- Tomás likes **eating** apricots (Tomás himself eats apricots)

However, sometimes the "doer" must be overtly specified, typically in a position immediately before the non-finite verb:

- We enjoyed their **singing**.
- We were delighted at Bianca **being** awarded the prize.

Practice

Identify the gerunds and their roles in the following sentences:

1. Sam was really bad at gardening.
2. Studying is one of Jazz's favorite things to do.

Show Answer

Participles

A **participle** is a form of a verb that is used in a sentence to modify a noun, noun phrase, verb, or verb phrase, and then plays a role similar to an adjective or adverb. It is one of the types of nonfinite verb forms.

The two types of participle in English are traditionally called the **present participle** (forms such as *writing*, *singing* and *raising*) and the **past participle** (forms such as *written*, *sung* and *raised*).

The Present Participle

Even though they look exactly the same, gerunds and present participles do different things. As we just learned, the gerund acts as a noun: e.g., “I like *sleeping*”; “*Sleeping* is not allowed.” Present participles, on the other hand, act similarly to an adjective or adverb: e.g., “The *sleeping* girl over there is my sister”; “*Breathing* heavily, she finished the race in first place.”

The present participle, or participial phrases (clauses) formed from it, are used as follows:

- as an adjective phrase modifying a noun phrase: *The man **sitting** over there is my uncle.*
- adverbially, the subject being understood to be the same as that of the main clause: ***Looking** at the plans, I gradually came to see where the problem lay. He shot the man, **killing** him.*
- more generally as a clause or sentence modifier: *Broadly **speaking**, the project was successful.*

The present participle can also be used with the helping verb *to be* to form a type of present tense: *Marta was **sleeping**.* (We'll discuss this further in [Text: Complex Verb Tenses](#).) This is something we learned a little bit about in helping verbs and tense.

The Past Participle

Past participles often look very similar to the simple past tense of a verb: *finished*, *danced*, etc. However, some verbs have different forms. Reference lists will be your best help in finding the correct past participle. [Here is one such list of participles](#). Here's a short list of some of the most common irregular past participles you'll use:

Verb	Simple Past	Past Participle
to be	was/were	been
to become	became	become
to do	did	done
to go	went	gone
to know	knew	known
to see	saw	seen
to speak	spoke	spoken
to take	took	taken
to write	wrote	written

Past participles are used in a couple of different ways:

- as an adjective phrase: *The chicken **eaten** by the children was contaminated.*
- adverbially: ***Seen** from this perspective, the problem presents no easy solution.*
- in a nominative absolute construction, with a subject: *The task **finished**, we returned home.*

The past participle can also be used with the helping verb *to have* to form a type of past tense (which we'll talk about in [Text: Complex Verb Tenses](#)): *The chicken has **eaten**.* It is also used to form the passive voice: *Tianna was **voted** as most likely to succeed.* When the passive voice is used following a relative pronoun (like *that* or *which*) we sometimes leave out parts of the phrase:

- He had three things **that were** taken away from him
- He had three things taken away from him

In the second sentence, we removed the words *that were*. However, we still use the past participle *taken*. The removal of these words is called *elision*. Elision is used with a lot of different constructions in English; we use it shorten sentences when things are understood. However, we can only use elision in certain situations, so be careful when removing words! (We'll discuss this further in [Text: Using the Passive Voice](#).)

Practice

Identify the participles in the following sentences, as well as the functions they perform:

1. Tucker had always wanted a pet dog.
2. Rayssa was practicing her flute when everything suddenly went wrong.
3. Having been born in the 1990s, Amber often found herself surrounded by nostalgia.

Show Answer

Infinitives

To be or not to be, that is the question.

—Hamlet

The infinitive is the basic dictionary form of a verb, usually preceded by *to* (when it's not, it's called the **bare infinitive**, which we'll discuss more later). Thus *to go* is an infinitive. There are several different uses of the infinitive. They can be used alongside verbs, as a noun phrase, as a modifier, or in a question.

With Other Verbs

The *to*-infinitive is used with other verbs (we'll discuss exceptions when we talk about the bare infinitive):

- I aim **to convince** him of our plan's ingenuity.
- You already know that he'll fail **to complete** the task.

You can also use multiple infinitives in a single sentence: "Today, I plan **to run** three miles, **to clean** my room, and **to update** my budget." All three of these infinitives follow the verb *plan*. Other verbs that often come before infinitives include *want*, *convince*, *try*, *able*, and *like*.

As a Noun Phrase

The infinitive can also be used to express an action in an abstract, general way: "**To err** is human"; "**To know** me is **to love** me." No one in particular is completing these actions. In these sentences, the infinitives act as the subjects.

Infinitives can also serve as the object of a sentence. One common construction involves a dummy subject (*it*): "It was nice **to meet** you."

As a Modifier

Infinitives can be used as an adjective (e.g., “A request **to see** someone” or “The man **to save** us”) or as an adverb (e.g., “Keen **to get** on,” “Nice **to listen** to,” or “In order **to win**”).

In Questions

Infinitives can be used in elliptical questions as well, as in “I don’t know where **to go**.”

Note: The infinitive is also the usual dictionary form or citation form of a verb. The form listed in dictionaries is the bare infinitive, although the *to*-infinitive is often used in referring to verbs or in defining other verbs: “The word *amble* means ‘to walk slowly’”; “How do we conjugate the verb *to go*?”
Certain helping verbs do not have infinitives, such *will*, *can*, and *may*.

Split Infinitives?

One of the biggest controversies among grammarians and style writers has been the appropriateness of separating the two words of the *to*-infinitive as in “to *boldly* go.” Despite what a lot of people have declared over the years, there is absolutely nothing wrong with this construction. It is 100 percent grammatically sound.

Part of the reason so many authorities have been against this construction is likely the fact that in languages such as Latin, the infinitive is a single word, and cannot be split. However, in English the infinitive (or at least the *to*-infinitive) is two words, and a split infinitive is a perfectly natural construction.

Try to versus Try and

One common error people make is saying *try and* instead of *try to*, as in “I’ll try and be there by 10:00 tomorrow.” However, *try* requires a *to*-infinitive after it, so using *and* is incorrect. While this construction is acceptable in casual conversation, it is not grammatically correct and should not be used in formal situations.

The Bare Infinitive

As we mentioned previously, the infinitive can sometimes occur without the word *to*. The form without *to* is called the **bare infinitive** (the form with *to* is called the ***to*-infinitive**). In the following sentences both *sit* and *to sit* would each be considered an infinitive:

- I want **to sit** on the other chair.
- I can **sit** here all day.

Infinitives have a variety of uses in English. Certain contexts call for the *to*-infinitive form, and certain contexts call for the bare infinitive; they are not normally interchangeable, except in occasional instances like after the verb *help*, where either can be used.

As we mentioned earlier, some verbs require the bare infinitive instead of the *to*-infinitive:

- The helping verb *do*
 - Does she **dance**?
 - Zi doesn’t **sing**.
- Helping verbs that express tense, possibility, or ability like *will*, *can*, *could*, *should*, *would*, and *might*
 - The bears will **eat** you if they catch you.
 - Lucas and Gerardo might **go** to the dance.
 - You should **give** it a try.
- Verbs of perception, permission, or causation, such as *see*, *watch*, *hear*, *make*, *let*, and *have* (after a direct object)

- Look at Caroline **go**!
- You can't make me **talk**.
- It's so hard to let someone else **finish** my work.

The bare infinitive can be used as the object in such sentences like "What you should do is **make** a list." It can also be used after the word *why* to ask a question: "Why **reveal** it?"

The bare infinitive can be tricky, because it often looks exactly like the present tense of a verb. Look at the following sentences for an example:

- You **lose** things so often.
- You can **lose** things at the drop of a hat.

In both of these sentences, we have the word *lose*, but in the first sentence it's a present tense verb, while in the second it's a bare infinitive. So how can you tell which is which? The easiest way is to try changing the subject of the sentence and seeing if the verb should change:

- She **loses** things so often.
- She can **lose** things at the drop of a hat.

Practice

Identify the infinitives in the following sentences, as well as their functions:

1. Paulina will be the girl to beat.
2. What you should do is stop talking for a moment and listen.
3. It was really nice to hear from you again.
4. Why walk when I could run?

Show Answer

Now that we've learned how to use each of the different non-finite verbs, let's take a look at how they're used together. This practice will help you distinguish non-finite verbs from each other (as well as distinguishing them from the "normal" verbs we learned about previously in this outcome).

Practice

The Australian magpie is a medium-size black and white bird native to Australia. Feeding magpies is a common practice among households around the country, and there generally is a peaceful co-existence. However, in the spring a small minority of breeding magpies (almost always males) become aggressive and swoop and attack passersby. Being unexpectedly swooped while cycling can result in loss of control of the bicycle, which may cause injury. Cyclists can deter attack by attaching a long pole with a flag to a bike. Using cable ties on helmets has become common as well, and it appears to be an effective deterrent.

Show Gerunds
Show Participles
Show Infinitives

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TEXT: COMPLEX VERB TENSES

We've finally learned the different pieces that we need to understand in order to discuss some more advanced tenses. We've mentioned them briefly in [Text: Verb Types](#), and they came up again in [Text: Non-Finite Verbs](#).

These tenses include things like “We had been going to the same restaurant for five years.” What’s the difference between this sentence and “We went to the same restaurant for five years?” While both sentences have the same meaning, the first sentence creates a sense of continuity: it’s something that happened repeatedly. There’s an even bigger difference when you look at future tenses:

- She will eat 500 gummy bears.
- She will have eaten 500 gummy bears.

In the first sentence, the entirety of the action takes place in the future. In the second sentence, we get a sense that the action will be complete some time in the future.

Was working	Is working	Will be working
WORKED	WORK	WILL WORK
Had been working	Has been working	Will have been working
Had worked	Has worked	Will have worked

These forms are created with different forms of *to be* and *to have*. When you combine a form of *to be* with the present participle, you create a **continuous tense**; these tenses indicate a sense of continuity. The subject of the sentence was (or is, or will be) doing that thing for awhile.

- **Present:** is working
- **Past:** was working
- **Future:** will be working (You can also say “is going to be working.”)

When you combine a form of *to have* with the past participle of a verb, you create a **perfect tense**; these tenses indicate a sense of completion. This thing had been done for a while (or has been, or will have been).

- **Present:** has worked
- **Past:** had worked
- **Future:** will have worked

You can also use these together. *To have* must always appear first, followed by the past participle *been*. The present participle of any verb can then follow. These **perfect continuous tenses** indicate that the verb started in the past, and is still continuing:

- **Present:** has been working

- **Past:** had been working
- **Future:** will have been working

Practice

Follow the instructions in each item:

1. Convert this sentence from a simple tense to a continuous tense: Ivone wrote a collection of short stories entitled *Vidas Vivas*.
2. Convert this sentence from a simple tense to a perfect tense: As a pilot, Sara will fly a lot of cross-country flights.
3. Convert this sentence from a simple tense to a perfect continuous tenses: Zachy reads all of the latest articles on archeology.

Show Answer

Sometimes these verb tenses can be split by adverbs: “Zachy has been **studiously** reading all of the latest articles on archeology.”

Now that we’ve learned about *how* we create each of these tenses, let’s practice using them. In this exercise, you will be asked to create some original writing. As you do so, use both simple and complex verb tenses.

Practice

Look at the following schedule for a Writer’s Workshop. Write a passage about the schedule as if it were Tuesday at 12:30.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
10:00	Check-In	Genre Speakers	Meet Editors/Agents
11:00	Group Orientation	Genre Speakers	
12:00	Lunch	Lunch	Check-Out
1:00	Peer-to-Peer Critique	Professional Critiques	
2:00			
3:00		Key-Note Speaker	

Show Answer

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SELF CHECK: VERBS

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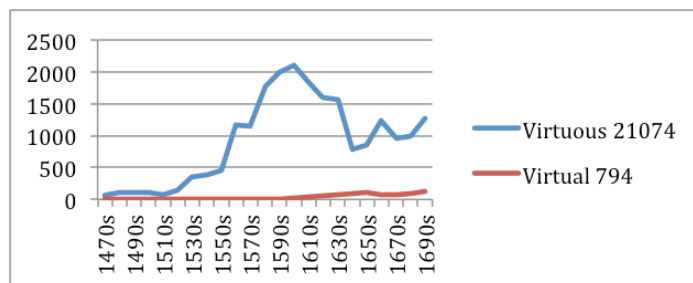
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TRY IT: VERBS

Read the following introduction to an academic paper written by an undergraduate linguistics student. Look at the verb usage (both regular verbs and non-finite verbs). Identify any errors that have been made, and suggest revisions. The sentences have been numbered to aid you in your comments.

(1) Early Modern English, the language spoke by Shakespeare and Queen Elizabeth I, existed during a period of rich language change and growth. (2) Vast amounts of words were borrowed into English from Latinate languages (such as French and Spanish). (3) English words were taking Latinate suffixes and adding them to words, so they could better to fit the needs of the people.

(4) Derivational doublets is word pairs from Early Modern English that have the same root word but have different suffixes. (5) Take the words *virtuous* and *virtual*, for example. (6) Both words come from the word *virtue*, but they had different suffixes (*-uous* and *-ual*) applied to them. (7) This paper will examine the usage of these doublets in Early Modern English, and it briefly looks at how these words have changing in our modern usage.



Show Answer

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OUTCOME: OTHER PARTS OF SPEECH

Critique the use other parts of speech, including adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions, and

Now that we've learned about the most common parts of speech (nouns, pronouns, and verbs), we're ready to move onto the other parts of speech.

First we have adjectives and adverbs, which are different types of modifiers (i.e., they modify other words). For example, compare the phrase "the bear" to "the harmless bear" or the phrase "run" to "run slowly." In both of these cases, the adjective (harmless) or adverb (slowly) changes how we understand the phrase.

We will also discuss the little connecting words of English: conjunctions, prepositions, and articles. These small words may not seem as important as verbs, nouns, and modifiers, but they are the backbone of English: these are the words that give our language structure.



What You Will Learn to Do

- Critique the use of adjectives
- Critique the use of adverbs
- Critique the use of conjunctions
- Critique the use of prepositions
- Critique the use of articles

The Learning Activities for this Outcome Include

- Text: Adjectives and Adverbs
- Text: Comparing Adjectives and Adverbs
- Text: Conjunctions
- Text: Prepositions
- Text: Articles
- Self Check: Other Parts of Speech
- Try It: Other Parts of Speech

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TEXT: ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS

Adjectives

An adjective modifies a noun; that is, it provides more detail about a noun. This can be anything from color to size to temperature to personality. Adjectives usually occur just before the nouns they modify, but they can also follow a linking verb (in these instances, adjectives can modify pronouns as well):

- The generator is used to convert **mechanical energy** into **electrical energy**.
- The kids' *schoolhouse* was **red**.

Numbers can also be adjectives in some cases. When you say “Seven is my lucky number,” *seven* is a noun, but when you say “There are seven cats in this painting,” *seven* is an adjective because it is modifying the noun *cats*.

Comparable Adjectives

Some adjectives are **comparable**: they exist on a scale. For example, a person may be polite, but another person may be more polite, and a third person may be the most polite of the three. The word *more* here modifies the adjective *polite* to indicate a comparison is being made (a **comparative**), and *most* modifies the adjective to indicate an absolute comparison (a **superlative**).

There is another way to compare adjectives in English. Many adjectives can take the suffixes *-er* and *-est* to indicate the comparative and superlative forms, respectively (e.g., *great, greater, greatest*). Some adjectives are *irregular* in this sense (*good, better, best, bad, worse, worst*).

There is no simple rule to decide which means is correct for any given adjective; however, the general tendency is for shorter adjectives to take the suffixes, while longer adjectives do not.

- *hotter* (not *more hot*)
- *more beautiful* (not *beautifuller*)
- *more pretentious* (not *pretentiouser*)

A Note about *Fun*

The adjective *fun* is one of the most notable exceptions to the rules. You might expect the comparative to be *funner* and the superlative to be *funnest*. However, for a long time, these words were considered non-standard, with *more fun* and *most fun* acting as the correct forms.

The reasoning behind this rule is now obsolete (it has a lot to do with the way *fun* became an adjective), but the stigma against *funner* and *funnest* remains. While the tides are beginning to change, it's safest to stick to *more fun* and *most fun* in formal situations (such as in academic writing or in professional correspondence).

When you use comparative adjectives, the adjective is often accompanied by the word *than* (e.g., “He is taller than me”). When using *than*, there are two things you should keep in mind:

1. You should use *than*, not the word *then*. *Then* indicates time, rather than comparison.
2. When you're trying to emphasize just how “adjective” a thing is, you shouldn't follow *than* with a second instance of the comparative. “She is shorter than shorter,” is incorrect. The emphatic phrase “She is shorter than short,” would be correct.

Non-Comparable Adjectives

Non-comparable adjectives, on the other hand, are not measured on a scale, but are binary. Either something is “adjective,” or it is not. For example, some English speakers would argue that it does not make sense to say that one thing is “more ultimate” than another, or that something is “most ultimate,” since the word *ultimate* is already an absolute. Other examples include *dead*, *true*, and *unique*.

Native speakers will frequently play with non-comparable adjectives. Although *pregnant* is logically non-comparable (someone is pregnant or she is not), you may hear a sentence like “She looks more and more pregnant each day.” Likewise *extinct* and *equal* appear to be non-comparable, but one might say that a language about which nothing is known is “more extinct” than a well-documented language with surviving literature but no speakers, and George Orwell once wrote “All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others.”

Practice

Look at the following list of adjectives. Are they comparable or non-comparable? Explain your reasoning why. If the adjective is comparable, list its comparative and superlative forms. For example:

- *Tall* is a comparable adjective. Height exists on a scale: there are many different heights. The comparative is *taller*, and the superlative is *tallest*.
- *Dead* is a non-comparable. You are either dead or alive. However, this concept is played with in the movie *The Princess Bride*. Miracle Max says Wesley is “only mostly dead.” Max is expressing the fact that Wesley is still alive, despite being very close to death’s door.

impossible		large	
pretty		nuclear	

Show Answer

Adverbs

Adverbs can perform a wide range of functions: they can modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. They can come either before or after the word they modify. An adverb may provide information about the manner, place, time, frequency, certainty, or other circumstances of the activity indicated by the verb:

- Suzanne sang **loudly** (*loudly* modifies the verb *sang*, indicating the manner of singing)
- We left it **here** (*here* modifies the verb phrase *left it*, indicating place)
- I worked **yesterday** (*yesterday* modifies the verb *worked*, indicating time)
- You **often** make mistakes (*often* modifies the verb phrase *make mistakes*, indicating frequency)
- He **undoubtedly** did it (*undoubtedly* modifies the verb phrase *did it*, indicating certainty)

They can also modify noun phrases, prepositional phrases, or whole clauses or sentences, as in the following examples. Once again the adverbs are in bold, while the words they modify are in italics.

- I bought **only** the fruit (*only* modifies the noun phrase *the fruit*)
- Roberto drove us **almost** to the station (*almost* modifies the prepositional phrase *to the station*)
- **Certainly** we need to act (*certainly* modifies the sentence as a whole)

Intensifiers and Adverbs of Degree

Adverbs can also be used as modifiers of adjectives, and of other adverbs, often to indicate degree. Here are a few examples:

- You are **quite** right (the adverb *quite* modifies the adjective *right*)
- Milagros is **exceptionally** pretty (the adverb *exceptionally* modifies the adjective *pretty*)

- She sang **very** loudly (the adverb *very* modifies another adverb—*loudly*)
- Wow! You ran **really** quickly! (the adverb *really* modifies another adverb—*quickly*)

Adverbs may also undergo comparison, taking comparative and superlative forms. This is usually done by adding *more* and *most* before the adverb (*more slowly*, *most slowly*). However, there are a few adverbs that take non-standard forms, such as *well*, for which *better* and *best* are used (i.e., “He did **well**, she did **better**, and I did **best**”).

Note: When using intensifiers alongside the adverb *also*, *also* should always appear first: “He also really loved pie” is correct, while “He really also loved pie” is not.

Very

Some people are of the opinion that the words *very* and *really* indicate weak writing. You’ve probably seen lists of adjectives to use instead of these adverbs (along with an adjective). While this can be true in some cases (*enormous* or *gigantic* would probably serve better than “really big”), *very* and *really* aren’t terrible words. As in most cases, you just need to be conscious of your choices. When you use these adverbs, pause and see if there’s a better way to word what you’re saying.

Practice

Read the following passage and identify the adverbs. Are the intensifiers and adverbs or degree being used well? Or would you suggest revision? The sentences have been numbered to aid you in your comments.

(1) Wojtek (usually spelled Voytek in English) was a Syrian brown bear found in Iran and literally adopted by soldiers of the 22nd Artillery Supply Company of the Polish II Corps. (2) Wojtek initially had problems swallowing and was fed with condensed milk from an old vodka bottle. (3) Later in life, he was oftenly rewarded with beer, which became his favorite drink. (4) He really also enjoyed smoking (or eating) cigarettes.

(5) To get him onto a British transport ship when the unit sailed from Egypt, Wojtek was officially drafted into the Polish Army as a Private and was listed among the soldiers of the 22nd Artillery Supply Company. (6) As an enlisted soldier of the company, with his own paybook, rank, and serial number, he lived either with the other soldiers in tents or by himself in a special wooden crate, which was transported by truck. (7) According to numerous accounts, Wojtek helped by carrying ammunition during the Battle of Monte Cassino—he never dropped a single crate. (8) In recognition of the bear’s immensely popularity, the HQ approved a depiction of a bear carrying an artillery shell as the official emblem of the 22nd Company.

Show Answer

Relative Adverbs

Relative adverbs are a subclass of adverbs that deal with space, time, and reason. In this video, David gives a quick intro to the three most common relative adverbs: *when*, *where*, and *why*.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/5Ub0Qu4uxpc>

As we just learned, we can use these adverbs to connect ideas about where, when, and why things happen.

Practice

Read the following questions and turn them into statements using relative adverbs:

1. Where did Nina last see her keys?
2. When are the repairmen going to get here?
3. Why did the desk just collapse?

Show Answer

Common Mistakes

Only

Have you ever noticed the effect the word *only* can have on a sentence, especially depending on where it's placed? Let's look at a simple sentence:

- She loves horses.

Let's see how *only* can influence the meaning of this sentence:

- *Only* she loves horses.
 - No one loves horses but her.
- She *only* loves horses.
 - The one thing she does is love horses.
- She loves *only* horses.
 - She loves horses and nothing else.

Only modifies the word that directly follows it. Whenever you use the word *only* make sure you've placed it correctly in your sentence.

Literally

A linguistic phenomenon is sweeping the nation: people are using *literally* as an intensifier. How many times have you heard things like "It was literally the worst thing that has ever happened to me," or "His head literally exploded when I told him I was going to be late again"?

So what's the problem with this? According to *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*, the actual definition of *literal* is as follows:

- involving the ordinary or usual meaning of a word
- giving the meaning of each individual word
- completely true and accurate : not exaggerated ((Note: "[Literal](#)." *Merriam-Webster.com*. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web. 20 June 2016.))

According to this definition, *literally* should be used only when something actually happened. Our cultural usage may be slowly shifting to allow *literally* as an intensifier, but it's best to avoid using *literally* in any way other than its dictionary definition, especially in formal writing.

Practice

Identify and correct any errors in adverb usage in each sentence.

1. Presilah literally died when she heard the news.
2. Teddy is literally the best person on the planet.
3. Daveed often takes things too literally.
4. A pirate only sails the seas.
5. In their vows, they promised to love only each other.

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TEXT: COMPARING ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS

As we've learned, adjectives and adverbs act in similar but different roles. A lot of the time this difference can be seen in the structure of the words. *Clever* is an adjective, and *cleverly* is an adverb. This adjective + *ly* construction is a short-cut to identifying adverbs.

While *-ly* is helpful, it's not a universal rule. Not all words that end in *-ly* are adverbs: *lovely*, *costly*, *friendly*, etc. Additionally, not all adverbs end in *-ly*: *here*, *there*, *together*, *yesterday*, *aboard*, *very*, *almost*, etc.

Some words can function both as an adjective and as an adverb:

- *Fast* is an adjective in "a **fast** car" (where it qualifies the noun *car*), but an adverb in "he drove **fast**" (where it modifies the verb *drove*).
- *Likely* is an adjective in "a **likely** outcome" (where it modifies the noun *outcome*), but an adverb in "we will **likely** go" (where it modifies the verb *go*).

Mistaking Adjectives and Adverbs

One common mistake with adjectives and adverbs is using one in the place of the other. For example, in the sentence "I wish I could write as neat as he can," *neat* should be replaced with *neatly*, an adverb, since it's modifying a verb. ("That's real nice of you" is also incorrect, it should be "That's *really* nice of you.")

Remember, if you're modifying a noun or pronoun, you should use an adjective. If you're modifying anything else, you should use an adverb.

Good v. Well

One of the most commonly confused adjective/adverb pairs is *good* versus *well*. There isn't really a good way to remember this besides memorization. *Good* is an adjective. *Well* is an adverb. Let's look at a couple of sentences where people often confuse these two:

- She plays basketball good.
- I'm doing good.

In the first sentence, *good* is supposed to be modifying *plays*, a verb; therefore the use of *good*—an adjective—is incorrect. *Plays* should be modified by an adverb. The correct sentence would read “She plays basketball well.” In the second sentence, *good* is supposed to be modifying *doing*, a verb. Once again, this means that *well*—an adverb—should be used instead: “I’m doing well.”

Note: The sentence “I’m doing good” can be grammatically correct, but only when it means “I’m doing good things,” rather than when it is describing how a person is feeling.

Practice

Select the correct modifier for each sentence. Identify whether each modifier is an adjective or an adjective. Type your sentences in the text frame below:

1. Billy has to work (real / really) hard to be (healthy / healthily).
2. Kate is really (good / well) with bows. She shoots really (good / well).
3. Eli reads (quick / quickly), and he retains the information (good / well).

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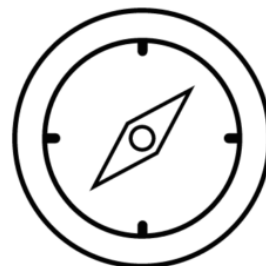
TEXT: CONJUNCTIONS

Conjunctions are the words that join sentences, phrases, and other words together. Conjunctions are divided into several categories, all of which follow different rules. We will discuss coordinating conjunctions, adverbial conjunctions, correlative conjunctions, and subordinating conjunctions.

Coordinating Conjunctions

The most common conjunctions are *and*, *or*, and *but*. These are all **coordinating conjunctions**. Coordinating conjunctions are conjunctions that join, or coordinate, two or more equivalent items (such as words, phrases, or sentences). The mnemonic acronym *FANBOYS* can be used to remember the most common coordinating conjunctions: *for*, *and*, *nor*, *but*, *or*, *yet*, and *so*. Here are some examples of these used in sentences:

- Nuclear-powered artificial hearts proved to be complicated, bulky, **and** expensive.
- Any external injury **or** internal injury put patients at risk of uncontrolled bleeding because the small clots that formed throughout the circulatory system used up so much of the clotting factor.
- The current from the storage batteries can power lights, **but** the current for appliances must be modified within an inverter.



Practice

Are the correct coordinating conjunctions being used in each of the following sentences? Explain your reasoning why or why not:

1. I love boxing or sewing. They're both a lot of fun.
2. Martin is pretty good at writing, for Jaden is better.
3. Juana had to choose. Would she join the red team and the blue team?

Show Answer

As you can see from the examples above, a comma only appears before these conjunctions sometimes. So how can you tell if you need a comma or not? There are three general rules to help you decide.

Rule 1: Joining Two Complete Ideas

Let's look back at one of our example sentences:

The current from the storage batteries can power lights, but the current for appliances must be modified within an inverter.

There are two complete ideas in this sentence (a complete idea has both a subject and a verb). Because each of these ideas could stand alone as a sentence, the coordinating conjunction that joins them must be preceded by a comma. Otherwise you'll have a run-on sentence.

Run-on sentences are one of the most common errors in college-level writing. Mastering the partnership between commas and coordinating conjunctions will go a long way towards resolving many run-on sentence issues in your writing. We'll talk more about run-ons and strategies to avoid them in [Text: Run-on Sentences](#).

Rule 2: Joining Two Similar Items

So what if there's only one complete idea, but two subjects or two verbs?

1. Any external injury or internal injury put patients at risk of uncontrolled bleeding because the small clots that formed throughout the circulatory system used up so much of the clotting factor.
2. In the 1960s, artificial heart devices did not fit well and tended to obstruct the flow of venous blood into the right atrium.

The first sentence has two subjects: *external injury* and *internal injury*. They are joined with the conjunction *and*. The second sentence has two verbs: *did not fit well* and *tended to obstruct*. They are joined with the conjunction *and*. In both sentences, we don't need any additional punctuation.

Rule 3: Joining Three or More Similar Items

What do you do if there are three or more items?

- Anna loves to run, David loves to hike, and Luz loves to dance.
- Fishing, hunting, and gathering were once the only ways for people do get food.
- Emanuel has a very careful schedule planned for tomorrow. He needs to work, study, exercise, eat, and clean.

As you can see in the examples above, there is a comma after each item, including the item just prior to the conjunction. There is a little bit of contention about this, but overall, most styles prefer to keep the additional comma (also called the serial comma). We discuss the serial comma in more depth in [Text: Commas](#).

Starting a Sentence

Many students are taught—and some style guides maintain—that English sentences should not start with coordinating conjunctions. However, this is not true. Students are often advised away from this in order to prevent sentence fragments, but there is nothing wrong with starting a sentence with a coordinating conjunction.

Adverbial Conjunctions

Adverbial conjunctions link two separate thoughts or sentences. When used to separate thoughts, as in the example below, a comma is required on either side of the conjunction. When used to separate complete ideas (items with both a subject and a verb), a semi-colon is required before the conjunction and a comma after.

- The first artificial hearts were made of smooth silicone rubber, which apparently caused excessive clotting and, **therefore**, uncontrolled bleeding.
- The Kedeco produces 1200 watts in 17 mph winds using a 16-foot rotor; **on the other hand**, the Dunlite produces 2000 watts in 25 mph winds.



Adverbial conjunctions include the following words; however, it is important to note that this is by no means a complete list.

therefore	however	in other words
thus	then	otherwise
nevertheless	on the other hand	in fact

Correlative Conjunctions

Correlative conjunctions are word pairs that work together to join words and groups of words of equal weight in a sentence. This video will define this types of conjunction before it goes through five of the most common correlative conjunctions:

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/R74Ly00UygU>

The table below shows some examples of correlative conjunctions being used in a sentence:



Correlative Conjunction	Example
either . . . or	You either do your work or prepare for a trip to the office. (Either do, or prepare)
neither . . . nor	Neither the basketball team nor the football team is doing well.
not only . . . but (also)	He is not only handsome, but also brilliant. (Not only A, but also B)
	Not only is he handsome, but also he is brilliant. (Not only is he A, but also he is B.)
both . . . and	Both the cross country team and the swimming team are doing well.
whether . . . or	You must decide whether you stay or you go. (It's up to you)
	Whether you stay or you go, the film must start at 8 pm. (It's not up to you)
just as . . . so	Just as many Americans love basketball, so many Canadians love ice hockey.
as much . . . as	Football is as much an addiction as it is a sport.
no sooner . . . than	No sooner did she learn to ski, than the snow began to thaw.
rather . . . than	I would rather swim than surf.
the . . . the	The more you practice dribbling, the better you will be at it.
as . . . as	Football is as fast as hockey (is (fast)).

Subordinating Conjunctions

Subordinating conjunctions, are conjunctions that join an independent clause and a dependent clause. Here are some examples of subordinating conjunctions:

- The heart undergoes two cardiac cycle periods: diastole, **when** blood enters the ventricles, and systole, **when** the ventricles contract and blood is pumped out of the heart.
- **Whenever** an electron acquires enough energy to leave its orbit, the atom is positively charged.
- She did the favor **so that** he would owe her one.

Let's take a moment to look back at the previous examples. Can you see the pattern in comma usage? The commas aren't dependent on the presence subordinating



conjunctions—they're dependent on the placement of clauses they're in. Let's revisit a couple examples and see if we can figure out the exact rules:

- The heart undergoes two cardiac cycle periods: diastole, **when** blood enters the ventricles, and systole, **when** the ventricles contract and blood is pumped out of the heart.
 - These clauses are both extra information: information that is good to know, but not necessary for the meaning of the sentence. This means they need commas on either side.
- **Whenever** an electron acquires enough energy to leave its orbit, the atom is positively charged.
 - In this sentence, the dependent clause comes before an independent clause. This means it should be followed by a comma.
- She did the favor **so that** he would owe her one.
 - In this sentence, the independent clause comes before an dependent clause. This means no comma is required.

The most common subordinating conjunctions in the English language are shown in the table below:

after	although	as	as far as	as if	as long as	as soon as
as though	because	before	even if	even though	every time	if
in order that	since	so	so that	than	though	unless
until	when	whenever	where	whereas	wherever	while

Practice

All of the conjunctions have been removed from the following passage. Which conjunctions would best fill the gaps? Explain your reasoning why. The sentences have been numbered to aid you in your comments.

- (1) Karni's roommate, Joana, decided to drive to work; _____, Karni rode into the city with her.
 (2) They needed to turn left on 140th Street, _____ that street was under construction.
 (3) _____ Karni could say anything, _____, Joana had already found an alternate route.
 (4) _____ did Karni arrive at work, _____ her boss told her she would be working with her coworker Ian on her next project. (5) Karni was really impressed by Ian's professional accomplishments, _____ she was anxious about working with him. (6) Karni thought Ian was annoying, unpredictable, _____ reckless.
 (7) _____, Karni was willing to put aside her opinions to get the job done. (8) She knew Ian would put in his best effort _____ they worked together, _____ she felt she could do no less—_____ he frustrated her. (9) Personal relationships are often _____ important _____ professional skills.

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TEXT: PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions are relation words; they can indicate location, time, or other more abstract relationships. A preposition combines with another word (usually a noun or pronoun) called the complement. Prepositions are still in bold, and their complements are in italics:

- The woods **behind** *my house* are super creepy **at** *night*.
- She sang **until** *three in the morning*.
- They were happy **for** *him*.
- He counted **to** *three*.



Prepositions generally come before their complements (e.g., **in** England, **under** the table, **of** Elena). However, there are a small handful of exceptions, including **notwithstanding** and **ago**:

- *Financial limitations* **notwithstanding**, Phil paid back his debts.
- He was released *three days* **ago**.

Prepositions of location are pretty easily defined (*near, far, over, under*, etc.), and prepositions about time are as well (*before, after, at, during*, etc.). Prepositions of “more abstract relationships,” however, are a little more nebulous in their definition. The video below gives a good overview of this category of prepositions:

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/RPiAT-Nm3JY>

Note: The video said that prepositions are a closed group, but it never actually explained what a closed group is. A closed group simply refers to a part of speech that doesn't allow in new words. While it's easy to invent new nouns (e.g., *selfie, Google*), you can't invent new words in a closed group.

So far, all of the prepositions we've looked at have been one word (and most of them have been one syllable). The most common prepositions are one-syllable words. According to one ranking, the most common English prepositions are *on, in, to, by, for, with, at, of, from, as*.

There are also some prepositions that have more than one word:

- in spite of (She made it to work in spite of the terrible traffic.)
- by means of (He traveled by means of boat.)
- except for (Joan invited everyone to her party except for Ben.)
- next to (Go ahead and sit down next to Jean-Claude.)

Practice

Identify the prepositions in the following sentences:

1. I love every painting by Vermeer except for *The Girl with the Pearl Earring*.
2. In spite of their fight, Beatriz wanted to know if she would still see Alexandre before lunch.
3. He only talks about two things: his band and his dogs.

Show Answer

Using Prepositions

A lot of struggles with prepositions come from trying to use the correct preposition. Some verbs require specific prepositions. Here's a table of some of the most commonly misused preposition/verb pairs:

different from	comply with	dependent on	think of or about
need of	profit by	glad of	bestow upon

Some verbs take a different preposition, depending on the object of the sentence:

agree with a person	agree to a proposition	part from (a person)	part with (a thing)
differ from (person or thing)	differ from or with an opinion	confide in (to trust in)	confide to (to intrust to)
reconcile with (a person)	reconcile to (a statement or idea)	confer on (to give)	confer with (to talk with)
compare with (to determine value)	compare to (because of similarity)	convenient to (a place)	convenient for (a purpose)

When multiple objects take the same preposition, you don't need to repeat the preposition. For example, in the sentence "I'll read any book by J.K. Rowling or R. L. Stine," both *J. K. Rowling* and *R. L. Stine* are objects of the preposition *by*, so it only needs to appear once in the sentence. However, you can't do this when you have different prepositions. Let's look at this using a common phrase: "We fell out of the frying pan and into the fire." If you leave out one of the prepositions, as in "We fell out of the frying pan and the fire," the sentence is saying that we fell out of the frying pan *and* out of the fire, which would be preferable, but isn't the case in this idiom.

Prepositions in Sentences

You'll often hear about **prepositional phrases**. A prepositional phrase includes a preposition and its complement (e.g., "**behind the house**" or "**a long time ago**"). These phrases can appear at the beginning or end of sentences. When they appear at the beginning of a sentence, they typically need a comma afterwards:

- You can drop that off behind the house.
- A long time ago, dinosaurs roamed the earth.
- As the saying goes, hard work always pays off.

Ending a Sentence with a Preposition

It is 100 percent okay to end a sentence with a preposition. The rule against doing so stems from Latin, which belongs to a completely different language family than English. Using a terminal preposition can often make your writing smoother and more concise. Winston Churchill is credited with saying "This is the sort of English up with which I will not put," when he was criticized for his use of terminal prepositions. (A more natural way to phrase Churchill's glib quote would be "This is the sort of English I will not put up with.") However, it's still best to avoid using terminal prepositions unnecessarily. If your sentence ends with a preposition and would still mean the same thing without the preposition, take it out. For example:

- Where are you at?
- That's not what it's used for.

If you remove *at*, the sentence becomes “Where are you?” This means the same thing, so removing *at* is a good idea. However, if you remove *for*, the sentence becomes “That’s not what it’s used,” which doesn’t make sense.

Practice

Read each sentence and determine if the prepositions are being used correctly. If they are not, re-write the sentence.

1. Do you have any idea why Olivia keeps calling for?
2. You have no idea how much trouble you’re in.
3. Luiz agreed with hand his credit card over to the cashier.
4. Last week Ngozi reconciled to the new prices and her new co-worker.

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TEXT: ARTICLES

There are three articles in the English language: *the*, *a*, and *an*. These are divided into two types of articles: definite (*the*) and indefinite (*a*, *an*). The definite article indicates a level of specificity that the indefinite does not. “An apple” could refer to any apple; however “the apple” is referring back to a specific apple. There are also cases where no article is required:

- with generic nouns (plural or uncountable): *cars have accelerators*, *happiness is contagious*, referring to cars and happiness in general (compare *the happiness I felt yesterday*, specifying particular happiness)
- with most proper names: *Sabrina*, *France*, *London*, etc.

Indefinite Article

The indefinite article of English takes the two forms *a* and *an*. These can be regarded as meaning “one,” usually without emphasis.

Distinction between *a* and *an*

You've probably learned the rule that *an* comes before a vowel, and that *a* comes before a consonant. While this is generally true, it's more accurate to say that *an* comes before a vowel *sound*, and *a* comes before a consonant *sound*. Let's look at a couple of examples with *a*:

- *a box*
- *a HEPA filter* (HEPA is pronounced as a word rather than as letters)
- *a one-armed bandit* (pronounced "won. . .")
- *a unicorn* (pronounced "yoo. . .")



Let's try it again with *an*:

- *an apple*
- *an EPA policy* (the letter *E* read as a letter still starts with a vowel sound)
- *an SSO* (pronounced "es-es-oh")
- *an hour* (the *h* is silent)
- *an heir* (pronounced "air")



Note: Some speakers and writers use *an* before a word beginning with the sound *h* in an unstressed syllable: *an historical novel*, *an hotel*. However, where the *h* is clearly pronounced, this usage is now less common, and *a* is preferred.

Practice

Look at the following words. When they require an indefinite article, should it be *a* or *an*? Explain your answers.

1. ewe
2. SEO specialist
3. apple
4. URL
5. herb

Show Answer

Definite Article

The definite article *the* is used when the referent of the noun phrase is assumed to be unique or known from the context. For example, in the sentence “The boy with glasses was looking at the moon,” it is assumed that in the context the reference can only be to one boy and one moon.

The can be used with both singular and plural nouns, with nouns of any gender, and with nouns that start with any letter. This is different from many other languages which have different articles for different genders or numbers. *The* is the most commonly used word in the English language.



Practice

Choose the article that should go in each sentence and explain your reasoning.

1. Every day, I eat (a / an / the) egg salad sandwich.
2. I love looking at (a / an / the) stars with you.
3. Dani was planning to buy (a / an / the) book she had been eyeing as soon as she got paid.
4. (A / An / The) brain like that will get you far in life.

Show Answer

Word Order

In most cases, the article is the first word of its noun phrase, preceding all other adjectives and modifiers.

The little old red bag held a very big surprise.

There are a few exceptions, however:

- Certain determiners, such as *all*, *both*, *half*, *double*, precede the definite article when used in combination (*all the team*, *both the girls*, *half the time*, *double the amount*).
- *Such* and *what* precede the indefinite article (*such an idiot*, *what a day!*).
- Adjectives qualified by *too*, *so*, *as* and *how* generally precede the indefinite article: *too great a loss*, *so hard a problem*, *as delicious an apple as I have ever tasted*, *I know how pretty a girl she is*.
- When adjectives are qualified by *quite* (particularly when it means “fairly”), the word *quite* (but not the adjective itself) often precedes the indefinite article: *quite a long letter*. **Note:** the phrase *a quite long letter* is also a correct construction. However the two have different meanings:
 - In *quite a long letter*, *quite* modifies *letter*: it’s quite a letter.
 - In *a quite long letter*, *quite* modifies *long*: the letter is quite long.

Practice

Read the following passage and make any necessary changes. Explain your reasoning for each change.

A Hubble Space Telescope (HST) is a space telescope that was launched into low Earth orbit in 1990, and remains in operation. Although not the first space telescope, Hubble is one of the largest and most

versatile, and is well known as both an vital research tool and an public relations boon for astronomy. The HST is named after the astronomer Edwin Hubble. Hubble's orbit outside the distortion of Earth's atmosphere allows it to take extremely high-resolution images. Hubble has recorded the some of most detailed visible-light images ever, allowing the deep view into space and time.

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SELF CHECK: OTHER PARTS OF SPEECH

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TRY IT: OTHER PARTS OF SPEECH

Adjectives and Adverbs

Read the following short passage. Critique the use of adjectives and adverbs. The sentences have been numbered to aid you in your comments.

(1) Eva and Ellie, who had been most good friends since their freshman year, both had an incredibly fear of heights. (2) They decided to conquer their fear by learning to rock climb. (3) The first time they went to a class, they were both real freaked out. (4) Ellie's hands shook so hard she couldn't tie the rope to her harness, and the instructor said that Eva was literally the slowest climber he had ever seen. (5) After climbing for several months, however, both girls had become confident in their skills. (6) Ellie was really proud of her knot-tying skills, and Eva could climb a wall in three minutes flat. (7) The girls decided they were ready to move onto the next challenge: skydiving.



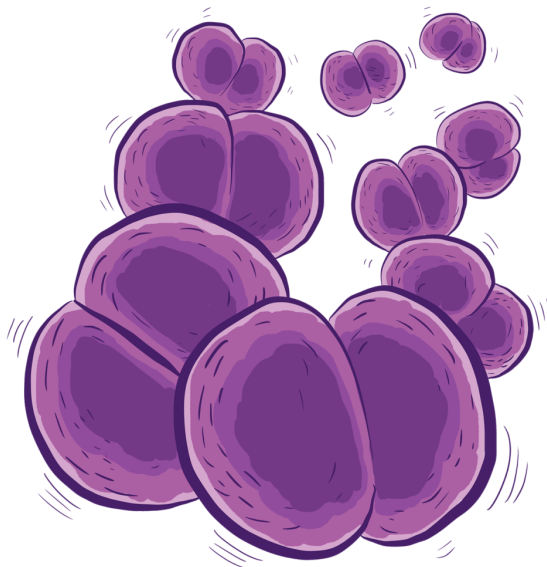
Show Answer

Conjunctions, Prepositions, and Articles

Read the following abstract to a research paper written by an undergraduate microbiology student. Critique the use of conjunctions, prepositions, and articles. The sentences have been numbered to aid you in your comments.

(1) Bacteria use many different methods to create infections and invade our immune systems. (2) Some bacteria hide in host cells and evade detection as they feast on nutrients provided by the cells, while others produce proteins that mimic the cell's proteins, and thus evade detection entirely. (3) Others live extracellularly and use a variety of other mechanisms for infection and survival in the host.

(4) Some pathogens, though, do not survive in the host cell alone. (5) Some pathogens group together and form biofilms within the host. (6) These biofilms provide protection from the host, but also allow the bacteria to communicate through a method known by quorum sensing. (7) This type of communication allows the bacteria to eavesdrop on communication within the host. (8) However, it also allows the host to eavesdrop on bacterial communication within the bacterial community.



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OUTCOME: PUNCTUATION

Critique the use of common punctuation marks.

Now that we've learned about the different types of words, it's time to learn punctuation. These little marks can often be the cause of a lot of heartaches and headaches. Errors in punctuation can often have unintended meanings. For example consider the difference the comma makes in these two sentences:

- Let's eat, Grandpa.
- Let's eat Grandpa.

However, punctuation doesn't exist simply to cause problems; in fact, it was created to help communication. These marks were invented to guide readers through passages—to let them know how and where words relate to each other. When you learn the rules of punctuation, you equip yourself with an extensive toolset so you can better craft language to communicate the exact message you want.



As we mentioned at the beginning of this module, different style guides have slightly different rules for grammar. This is especially true when it comes to punctuation. This outcome will cover the MLA rules for punctuation, but we'll also make note of rules from other styles when they're significantly different.

What You Will Learn to Do

- Critique the use of end punctuation: periods, question marks, exclamation marks
- Critique the use of commas
- Critique the use of semicolons and colons
- Critique the use of hyphens and dashes
- Critique the use of apostrophes and quotation marks
- Critique the use of brackets, parentheses, and ellipses

The Learning Activities for this Outcome Include

- Text: End Punctuation
- Text: Commas
- Text: Semicolons and Colons
- Text: Hyphens and Dashes
- Text: Apostrophes and Quotation Marks
- Text: Brackets, Parentheses, and Ellipses
- Self Check: Punctuation
- Try It: Punctuation

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TEXT: END PUNCTUATION

There are three punctuation marks that come at the end of a sentence: the period (.), the question mark (?), and the exclamation point (!). A sentence is always followed by a single space, no matter what the concluding punctuation is.

Periods

Periods indicate a neutral sentence, and as such are by far the most common ending punctuation mark. They've been at the end of every sentence on this page so far. They occur at the end of statements.



Question Marks

A question mark comes at the end of a question (How was class today?). A rhetorical question is asked to make a point, and does not expect an answer. Some questions are used principally as polite requests (Would you pass the salt?).

All of these questions can be categorized as direct questions, and all of these questions require a question mark at their ends.



Indirect Questions

Indirect questions do not have question marks at their ends. They can be used in many of the same ways as declarative ones, but they often emphasize knowledge or lack of knowledge:

- I can't guess **how Tamika managed it**.
- I wonder **whether I looked that bad**.
- Cecil asked **where the reports were**.

Notice how different word order is used in direct and indirect questions: in direct questions the verb usually comes before the subject, while indirect questions the verb appears second.

Exclamation Points

The exclamation point is a punctuation mark usually used after an interjection or exclamation to indicate strong feelings or high volume, and often marks the end of a sentence. You've likely seen this overused on the internet.

While this kind of statement is excessive, there are appropriate ways to use exclamation points. A sentence ending in an exclamation mark may be an exclamation (such as "Wow!" or "Boo!"), or an imperative ("Stop!"), or may indicate astonishment: "They were the footprints of a gigantic duck!"

The exclamation mark is sometimes used in conjunction with the question mark. This can be in protest or astonishment ("Out of all places, the water-hole?!").



Informally, exclamation marks may be repeated for additional emphasis (“That’s great!!!”), but this practice is generally considered only acceptable in casual or informal writing, such as text messages or online communication with friends and family.

Practice

Are ending punctuation marks used appropriately in these sentences? Explain why or why not. The sentences have been numbered to aid in your comments:

- (1) One famous eighteenth-century Thoroughbred racehorse was named Potooooooooo, or Pot-8-Os! (2) He was a chestnut colt bred by Willoughby Bertie, 4th Earl of Abingdon, in 1773, and he was known for his defeat of some of the greatest racehorses of the time. (3) With a well-to-do background like this, where do you suppose his strange name came from. (4) The horse once has a stable lad, who facetiously misspelled *Potatoes*. (5) Apparently, the owner thought the misspelling was funny enough to adopt it as the horse’s real name!

Show Answer

Punctuation Clusters

Occasionally, you’ll come across an instance that seems to require multiple punctuation marks right next to each other. Sometimes you need to keep all the marks, but other times, you should leave some out.

You should never use more than one ending punctuation mark in a row (period, question mark exclamation point). When quoting a question, you would end with a question mark, not a question mark and a period. If an abbreviation, like *etc.*, ends a sentence, you should only use one period.

- Carlos leaned forward and asked, “Did you get the answer to number six?”
- I think we’ll have enough food. Mary bought the whole store: chips, soda, candy, cereal, etc.

However, you can place a comma immediately after a period, as you can see above with *etc.* This rule also applies to the abbreviations *e.g.* and *i.e.*

Note: For those who are curious, *e.g.* stands for *exempli gratia*, which means “for example,” and *i.e.* stands for *id est*, which means “that is.”

Periods and parentheses can also appear right next to each other. Sometimes the period comes after the closing parenthesis (as you can see earlier in this section), but sometimes it appears inside the parentheses. (This is an example of a sentence where the period falls within the parentheses.) We’ll learn more about this in [Text: Brackets, Parentheses, and Ellipses](#).

Practice

Identify punctuation errors in the following sentences. Type the corrected sentences in the text frame below:

1. Dana had a lot of skills: reading, writing, note-taking, listening, etc..
2. My sister looked over and asked, “Why do you have so many grapes in the shopping cart?.”
3. Lucinda was the reigning Spring Queen (i.e. she had won the student vote at the last spring dance).

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TEXT: COMMAS

Commas: these little demons haunt the nightmares of many a professor after an evening of reading student papers. It seems nearly impossible to remember and apply the seventeen or so comma rules that seem to given out as the standard.

Perhaps the best and most instructive way for us to approach the comma is to remember its fundamental function: *it is a separator*. Once you know this, the next step is to determine what sorts of things generally require separation. This includes most transition words, descriptive words or phrases, adjacent items, and complete ideas (complete ideas contain both a subject and a verb). Commas are also used to separate similar items in lists.



Transition Words

Transition words add new viewpoints to your material; commas before and after transition words help to separate them from the sentence ideas they are describing. Transition words tend to appear at the beginning or in the middle of a sentence:

- *Therefore*, the natural gas industry can only be understood fully through an analysis of these recent political changes.
- The lead prosecutor was prepared, *however*, for a situation like this.

Note: As was mentioned, these words require commas at the beginning or middle of a sentence. When they appear between two complete ideas, however, a period or semicolon is required beforehand:

- Clint had been planning the trip with his kids for three months; *however*, when work called he couldn't say no.
- Sam was retired. *Nevertheless*, he wanted to help out.

As you can see from these examples, comma is *always* required after transition words.

Descriptive Phrases

Descriptive phrases often need to be separated from the things that they describe. Descriptive phrases tend to come at the very beginning of a sentence, right after the subject of a sentence, or at the very end of a sentence:

- **Near the end of the eighteenth century**, James Hutton introduced a point of view that radically changed scientists' thinking about geologic processes.
- James Lovelock, **who first measured CFCs globally**, said in 1973 that CFCs constituted no conceivable hazard.
- All of the major industrialized nations approved, **making the possibility a reality**.

In each example, the phrase separated by the comma could be deleted from the sentence without destroying the sentence's basic meaning. If the information is necessary to the primary sentence meaning, it should **not** be set off by commas. Let's look at a quick example of this:

- Jefferson's son, Miles, just started college.
- Jefferson's son Miles just started college

You would write the first sentence if Jefferson only has one son and his name is Miles. If Jefferson only has one son, then *Miles* is not needed information and should be set off with commas.

You would write the second sentence if Jefferson has multiple sons, and it is his son Miles who just got into college. In the second sentence, *Miles* is necessary information, because until his name is stated, you can't be sure which of Jefferson's sons the sentence is talking about.

This test can be very helpful when you're deciding whether or not to include commas in your writing.

Adjacent Items

Adjacent items are separated so that the reader can consider each item individually.

The river caught fire on July 4, 1968, in Cleveland, Ohio.

The dates (July 4, 1968) and places (Cleveland, Ohio) are juxtaposed, and commas are needed because the juxtaposed items are clearly different from each other. This applies to countries as well as states: "Paris, France, is beautiful this time of year."

Practice

The commas have been removed from the following sentences. Re-type them, adding the correct commas back in.

1. Sergi Sousa the top-ranked shoe designer in Rhode Island is going to be at the party tonight.
2. Sergi only wears shoes that he created himself.
3. Nevertheless he is incredibly courteous and polite to everyone he meets.
4. He was born in Barcelona Spain on April 19 1987.

Show Answer

Coordinating Conjunctions: FANBOYS

We learned about coordinating conjunctions earlier in the course. These are words that join two words or phrases of equal importance. The mnemonic FANBOYS helps us remember the seven most common: *for*, *and*, *nor*, *but*, *or*, *yet*, and *so*.

When these conjunctions join two words or phrases, no comma is necessary (for more than two, take a look at “Commas in Lists” just below). However, when these conjunctions are used to join two complete ideas, however, a comma is required:

- Paula and Lucca had a great time on their date.
- Danny studied the lifespan of rhinoceroses in their native Kenya and the lifespan of rhinoceroses in captivity.
- Minh turned off the lights but left the door unlocked.
- We could write this as two separate sentences, but we’ve chosen to join them together here.

Commas in Lists

Perhaps one of the most hotly contested comma rules is the case of the **serial comma**. MLA style (as well as APA and *Chicago*) requires the use of the serial comma—AP style highly recommends leaving it out. But what is the serial comma?

The serial comma is the comma before the conjunction (*and*, *or*, and *nor*) in a series involving a parallel list of three or more things. For example, “I am industrious, resourceful, **and** loyal.” The serial comma can provide clarity in certain situations. For example, if the *and* is part of a series of three or more phrases (groups of words) as opposed to single words:

Medical histories taken about each subject included smoking history, frequency of exercise, current height and weight, and recent weight gain.

The serial comma can also prevent the end of a series from appearing to be a parenthetical:

I’d like to thank my sisters, Beyoncé and Rhianna.

Without the serial comma, it may appear that the speaker is thanking his or her two sisters, who are named Beyoncé and Rhianna (which could be possible, but isn’t true in this case). By adding the serial comma, it becomes clear that the speaker is thanking his or her sisters, as well as the two famous singers: “I’d like to thank my sisters, Beyoncé, and Rhianna.”

By always using a comma before the *and* in any series of three or more, you honor the distinctions between each of the separated items, and you avoid any potential reader confusion.

Note: Some professors and many academic journals prefer to leave out the serial comma (for the journals, it is literally cheaper to print fewer commas). Because of this, the serial comma is not recommended in AP style.

Practice

The commas have been removed from the following sentences. Re-type them, adding the correct commas back in.

1. Victor and Ava were housesitting for Ava’s uncle while he was on vacation.
2. Ava had purchased food at a grocery store and Victor decided to cook Ava one of her favorite meals.
3. Ava’s favorite meals are cauliflower soup steak and eggs lasagna and chicken parmigiana.
4. Victor thought about the work needed for each meal. Unfortunately his skills are mostly limited to eating buying or serving food.
5. Victor and Ava decided to choose a restaurant and go out to eat.

Show Answer

Just as it is common for someone to have to look up the same tricky word dozens of times before committing its proper spelling to memory, you may need to reference comma rules multiple times before they feel natural to use. As with spelling, commas (or the absence of commas) must be repeatedly challenged in your writing.

As you perfect your comma usage, you will learn to recognize and reevaluate your sentence patterns, and the rewards are numerous. There is no foolproof or easy way to exorcise all of your comma demons, but a great place to start is reminding yourself of the comma's basic function as a separator and justifying the separation of elements. In the end, you simply must make a habit of reading, writing, and revising with comma correctness in mind.

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TEXT: SEMICOLONS AND COLONS

Semicolons

The semicolon is one of the most misunderstood and misused punctuation marks; in fact, it is often mistaken for the colon (which we'll discuss next). However, these two punctuation marks are not interchangeable. A semicolon connects two complete ideas (a complete idea has a subject and a verb) that are connected to each other. Look at this sentence for example:

Anika's statue is presently displayed in the center of the exhibit; this location makes it a focal point and allows it to direct the flow of visitors to the museum.

The first idea tells us where Anika's statue is, and the second idea tells us more about the location and its importance. Each of these ideas could be its own sentence, but by using a semicolon, the author is telling the reader that the two ideas are connected. Often, you may find yourself putting a comma in the place of the semicolon; this is incorrect. Using a comma here would create a run-on sentence (we'll discuss those more in [Text: Run-on Sentences](#)). Remember: a comma can join a complete idea to other items while a semicolon needs a complete idea on either side.

The semicolon can also be used to separate items in a list when those items have internal commas. For example, say you're listing a series of cities and their states, or you're listing duties for a resume:

- As a photographer for National Geographic, Renato had been to a lot of different places including São Paulo, Brazil; Kobe, Japan; Kyiv, Ukraine; and Barcelona, Spain.
- As an engineering assistant, I had a variety of duties: participating in pressure ventilation surveys; completing daily drafting, surveying, and data compilation; and acting as a company representative during a roof-bolt pull test.



Colons

The colon: well-loved but, oh, so misunderstood. The colon is not just used to introduce a list; it is far more flexible. The colon can be used after the first word of a sentence or just before the final word of a sentence. The colon can also be used to introduce a grammatically independent sentence. Thus, it is one of the most powerful punctuation marks.

The colon is like a sign on the highway, announcing that something important is coming. It acts as an arrow pointing forward, telling you to read on for important information. A common analogy used to explain the colon is that it acts like a flare in the road, signaling that something meaningful lies ahead.

Use the colon when you wish to provide pithy emphasis.

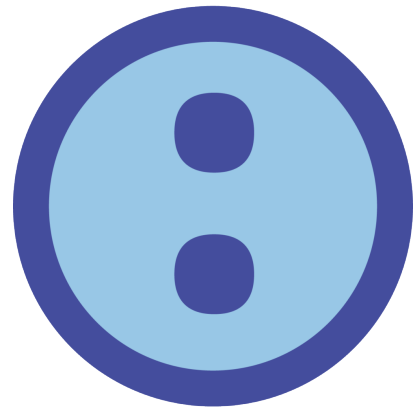
- To address this problem, we must turn to one of the biologist's most fundamental tools: the Petri dish.

Use the colon to introduce material that explains, amplifies, or summaries what has preceded it.

- The Petri dish: one of the biologist's most fundamental tools.
- In low carbon steels, banding tends to affect two properties in particular: tensile ductility and yield strength.

The colon is also commonly used to present a list or series:

- A compost facility may not be located as follows: within 300 feet of an exceptional-value wetland, within 100 feet of a perennial stream, or within 50 feet of a property line.



Practice

Are the semicolons and colons used correctly in the following sentences? Write your corrections and comments in the text frame below. The sentences have been numbered to aid in your comments.

(1) The Antikythera mechanism is an ancient analogue computer likely used for several purposes including: predicting astronomical positions and eclipses and calculating Olympiads: the cycles of the ancient Olympic Games. (2) The device is a complex clockwork mechanism composed of at least 30 meshing bronze gears. (3) Its remains were found as one lump; it was recovered from a shipwreck, and the device was originally housed in a wooden box. (4) This lump was later separated into 82 separate fragments after extensive conservation work.

(5) The artifact was recovered probably in July 1901 from the Antikythera shipwreck off the Greek island of Antikythera.

(6) Believed to have been designed and constructed by Greek scientists; the instrument has recently been dated to 205 BC. (7) After the knowledge of this technology was lost at some point in antiquity, technological artifacts approaching its complexity and workmanship did not appear again until the development of mechanical astronomical clocks in Europe in the fourteenth century.



(8) All known fragments of the Antikythera mechanism are kept at the National Archaeological Museum, Athens.



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TEXT: HYPHENS AND DASHES

Hyphens

The Oxford Manual of Style once stated, “If you take hyphens seriously you will surely go mad.” Hyphens belong to that category of punctuation marks that will hurt your brain if you think about them too hard, and, like commas, people disagree about their use in certain situations. Nevertheless, you will have to use them regularly because of the nature of academic and professional writing. If you learn to use hyphens properly, they help you to write efficiently and concretely.



The Hyphen’s Function

Fundamentally, the hyphen is a joiner. It can join several different types of things:

- two nouns to make one complete word (kilogram-meter)
- an adjective and a noun to make a compound word (accident-prone)
- two words that, when linked, describe a noun (agreed-upon sum, two-dimensional object)
- a prefix with a noun (un-American)
- double numbers (twenty-four)
- numbers and units describing a noun (1000-foot face; a 10-meter difference)
- “self” words (self-employed, self-esteem)
- new word blends (cancer-causing, cost-effective)
- prefixes and suffixes to words, in particular when the writer wants to avoid doubling a vowel or tripling a consonant (anti-inflammatory; shell-like)
- multiple adjectives with the same noun (blue- and yellow-green beads; four- and five-year-olds)

A rule of thumb for the hyphen is that the resulting word must act as one unit; therefore, the hyphen creates a new word that has a single meaning. Usually, you can tell whether a hyphen is necessary by applying common sense and mentally excluding one of the words in question, testing how the words would work together without the hyphen. For example, the phrases “high-pressure system,” “water-repellent surface,” and “fuel-efficient car” would not make sense without hyphens, because you would not refer to a “high system,” a “water surface,” or a “fuel car.” As your ears and eyes become attuned to proper hyphenation practices, you will recognize that both meaning and convention dictate where hyphens fit best.

Examples of Properly Used Hyphens

Some examples of properly used hyphens follow. Note how the hyphenated word acts as a single unit carrying a meaning that the words being joined would not have individually.

small-scale study	two-prong plug	strength-to-weight ratio	high-velocity flow	frost-free lawn
self-employed worker	one-third majority	coarse-grained wood	decision-making process	blue-green algae
air-ice interface	silver-stained cells	protein-calorie malnutrition	membrane-bound vesicles	phase-contrast microscope
long-term-payment loan	cost-effective program	time-dependent variable	radiation-sensitive sample	long-chain fatty acid

When Hyphens Are Not Needed

By convention, hyphens are not used after words ending in *-ly*, nor when the words are so commonly used in combination that no ambiguity results. In these examples, no hyphens are needed:

finely tuned engine	blood pressure	sea level
real estate	census taker	atomic energy
civil rights law	public utility plant	carbon dioxide

Note: Phrases like containing the word *well* like *well known* are contested. *Well* is an adverb, and thus many fall into the school of thought that a hyphen is unnecessary. However, others say that leaving out the hyphen may cause confusion and therefore include it (*well-known*). The standard in MLA is as follows: When it appears before the noun, *well known* should be hyphenated. When it follows the noun, no hyphenation is needed.

- She is a **well-known** person.
- She is **well known**.

Prefixes and Suffixes

Most prefixes do not need to be hyphenated; they are simply added in front of a noun, with no spaces and no joining punctuation necessary. The following is a list of common prefixes that do not require hyphenation when added to a noun:

after	anti	bi	bio	co
cyber	di	down	hetero	homo
infra	inter	macro	micro	mini
non	photo	poly	stereo	thermo

When prefixes are added to a proper noun, they require a hyphen (e.g., *nonviolent*, but *non-European*).

Note: The prefix *re* generally doesn't require a hyphen. However, when leaving out a hyphen will cause confusion, one should be added. Look at the following word pairs, for example:

- *resign* (leave a position) v. *re-sign* (sign the paper again)
- *recreation* (an activity of leisure) v. *re-creation* (create something again)

Common suffixes also do not require hyphenation, assuming no ambiguities of spelling or pronunciation arise. Typically, you do not need to hyphenate words ending in the following suffixes:

able	less	fold	like	wise
------	------	------	------	------

Commonly Used Word Blends

Also, especially in technical fields, some words commonly used in succession become joined into one. The resulting word's meaning is readily understood by technical readers, and no hyphen is necessary. Here are some examples of such word blends, typically written as single words:

blackbody	groundwater	airship
downdraft	longwall	upload
setup	runoff	blowout

Practice

Identify the compounds in the following sentences. All compounds have been treated as open compounds. Correct any compounds that this is incorrect for:

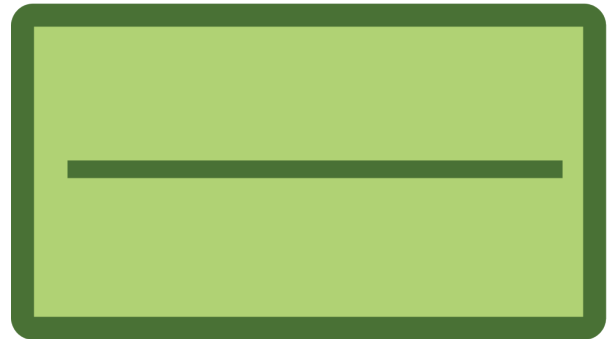
1. Have you ever seen someone with such a stereo typical appearance?
2. This is all publicly available information.
3. I bought a new yellow orange skirt last week.
4. One half of participants failed to complete the study.

Show Answer

Dashes

The dash functions almost as a colon does in that it adds to the preceding material, but with extra emphasis. Like a caesura (a timely pause) in music, a dash indicates a strong pause, then gives emphasis to material following the pause. In effect, a dash allows you to *redefine* what was just written, making it more explicit. You can also use a dash as it is used in the first sentence of this paragraph: to frame an interruptive or parenthetical-type comment that you do not want to de-emphasize.

- Jill Emery confirms that Muslim populations have typically been ruled by non-Muslims—specifically Americans, Russians, Israelis, and the French.
- The dissolution took 20 minutes—much longer than anticipated—but measurements were begun as soon as the process was completed.



There is no “dash” button on a computer keyboard. Instead, create it by typing the hyphen button twice in a row; or use the “symbol” option in your word processor; or use the Mac shortcut option + shift + —.

The dash we typically use is technically called the “em dash,” and it is significantly longer than the hyphen. There is also an “en dash”—whose length is between that of the hyphen and the em dash, and its best usage is to indicate inclusive dates and numbers:

- July 6–September 17
 - The date range began on July 6 and ended on September 17.
- Barack Obama (1961–)
 - This indicates the year a person was born, as well as the fact that he or she is still alive.
- pp. 148–56
 - This indicates pages 148 through 156. With number ranges, you can remove the first digit of the second number if it’s the same as the first number’s.



It can also be used for flight or train routes.

- The London–Paris train will be running thirty minutes late today.

Like the em dash, the en dash is not on the standard computer keyboard. Select it from word processor’s symbol map (or if you have a Mac, you can type **option** + —), or it may even be inserted automatically by your word processor when you type inclusive numbers or dates with a hyphen between them. In most contexts, a hyphen can serve as an en dash, but in professional publications—especially in the humanities—an en dash is correct.

When you type the hyphen, en dash, and em dash, no spaces should appear on either side of the punctuation mark.

Practice

Read the following passage. Identify any errors with hyphens or dashes. Type the corrected version of the passage in the text frame below:

John Milton Cage Jr. (1912-1992) was an American composer, music theorist, writer, and artist. A pioneer of indeterminacy in music and the non-standard use of musical instruments, Cage was one of the leading figures of the post-war avant-garde. Critics have lauded him as one of the most influential American composers of the twentieth-century.

Cage is perhaps best known for his 1952 composition 4'33" a performance of the absence of deliberate sound. Musicians who present this piece do nothing aside from being present for the duration specified by the title. The content of the composition is not "four minutes and 33 seconds of silence"—as is often assumed, but rather the sounds of the environment heard by the audience during performance.

Show Answer

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TEXT: APOSTROPHES AND QUOTATION MARKS

Apostrophes

Possession

With possessives, the apostrophe is used in combination with an *s* to represent that a word literally or conceptually possesses what follows it. Singular words whether or not they end in *s*, are made possessive by adding an apostrophe + *s*. For plural words, we typically indicate possession simply by adding the apostrophe without an additional *s*. However, a plural that does not end in an *s* (e.g., *bacteria*), we would add an apostrophe + *s*.

- a student's paper
- one hour's passing
- Illinois's law
- interviewees' answers
- her professors' office (an office shared by two of her professors; if it were just one professor we would write *her professor's office*)



Note: Practices vary from style to style, so be sure to check the rules in your course's discipline for this.

Contractions

A contraction is a shortened phrase. *He will* becomes *he'll*, *are not* becomes *aren't*, *would have* becomes *would've*, and *it is* becomes *it's*. In all of these cases, the apostrophe stands in for the missing letters.

You may find yourself being steered away from using contractions in your papers. While you should write to your teacher's preference, keep in mind that leaving out contractions can often make your words sound over formal and stilted. (And you shouldn't eliminate contractions in your papers just to up your word count!)

Your versus You're

Your versus You're

- Your v. you're
- Its v. it's
- Their v. they're

All three of these pairs are the same kind of pair: a possessive pronoun and a contracted version of a pronoun + *to be* (*you're* = *you are*; *it's* = *it is*; *they're* = *they are*). These are easy to mix up (especially *its/it's*) because—as we've learned—an apostrophe + *s* indicates possession. The best way to use these correctly is to remember that possessive pronouns never have an apostrophe: if there's an apostrophe with a pronoun, it's a contraction, not a possessive.

Acronyms and Numbers

In technical writing, acronyms and numbers are frequently pluralized with the addition of an apostrophe *s*, but this is falling out of favor, and there is typically no need to put an apostrophe in front of the *s*. Therefore, *SSTs* (sea surface temperatures) is more acceptable than *SST's* when your intention is simply to pluralize.

Ideally, use the apostrophe before the *s* with an acronym or a number only to show possession (i.e., “an 1860's law”; “DEP's testing”) or when confusion would otherwise result (“mind your *p*'s and *q*'s”).

When talking about a specific decade *the 1920s* should be shortened to *the '20s*. Notice that the apostrophe curls away from the numbers, indicating that the missing characters originally appeared prior to the apostrophe.

Practice

Read the following passage. Identify any errors with apostrophes. Type the corrected words in the text frame below:

Thanks to **NASAs'** team of sniffers, led by George Aldrich, astronauts can breathe a little bit easier. Aldrich is the “chief sniffer” at the White Sands Test Facility in New Mexico. **His's** job is to smell items before they can be flown in the space shuttle. Aldrich explained that smells change in space and that once astronauts are up there, **their** stuck with whatever smells are onboard with them. In space, astronauts aren't able to open the window for extra ventilation. He also said that **its** important not to introduce substances that will change the delicate balance of the climate of the International Space Station and the space shuttle.

Show Answer

Quotation Marks

There are three typical ways quotation marks are used. The first is pretty self-explanatory: you use quotation marks when you're making a direct quote.

- He said "I'll never forget you." It was the best moment of my life.
- Yogi Berra famously said, "A nickel ain't worth a dime anymore."



If you're just writing an approximation of something a person said, you would *not* use quotation marks:

- She told me about Pizza the three-toed sloth yesterday.
- He said that he would be late today.

The second is when you're calling attention to a word. For example:

- I can never say "Worcestershire" correctly.
- How do you spell "definitely"?

Note: It is this course's preference to use italics in these instances:

- I can never say *Worcestershire* correctly.
- How do you spell *definitely*?

However, using quotes is also an accepted practice.

The last use is scare quotes. This is the most misused type of quotation marks. People often think that quotation marks mean emphasis.

- Buy some "fresh" chicken today!
- We'll give it our "best" effort.
- Employees "must" wash their hands before returning to work.

However, when used this way, the quotation marks insert a silent "so-called" into the sentence, which is often the opposite of the intended meaning.

Where do Quotation Marks Go?

Despite what you may see practiced, the fact is that the period and comma always go inside the quotation marks. (The rules in British English are different, which may be where some of the confusion arises.)

- Correct: The people of the pine barrens are often called "pineys."
- Incorrect: The people of the pine barrens are often called "pineys".

The semicolon, colon, dash, question mark, and exclamation point can fall inside or outside of the quotation marks, depending on whether the punctuation is a part of the original quote:

- This measurement is commonly known as "dip angle"; dip angle is the angle formed between a normal plane and a vertical.
- Built only 50 years ago, Shakhtinsk—"minetown"—is already seedy.
- When she was asked the question "Are rainbows possible in winter?" she answered by examining whether raindrops freeze at temperatures below 0 °C. (Quoted material has its own punctuation.)
- Did he really say "Dogs are the devil's henchmen"? (The quote is a statement, but the full sentence is a question.)

Practice

Has the following passage been punctuated correctly? Type any corrections in the text frame below:

Gabrielly and Marcelo both knew a lot of “fun facts” that they liked to share with each other. Yesterday

Gabrielly said to Marcelo, “Did you know that wild turkeys can run up to twenty-five miles per hour?”

“Well, an emu can run twice that speed,” Marcelo responded.

“Did you know that there’s a dinosaur-themed park in Poland called JuraPark Bałtów”? Gabrielly asked.

Marcelo then told her about “Rusik, the first Russian police sniffer cat, who helped search for illegal cargoes of fish and caviar”.

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TEXT: BRACKETS, PARENTHESES, AND ELLIPSES

Parentheses

Parentheses are most often used to identify material that acts as an aside (such as this brief comment) or to add incidental information.

Other punctuation marks used alongside parentheses need to take into account their context. If the parentheses enclose a full sentence beginning with a capital letter, then the end punctuation for the sentence falls *inside* the parentheses. For example:

Typically, suppliers specify air to cloth ratios of 6:1 or higher.
(However, ratios of 4:1 should be used for applications involving silica or feldspathic minerals.)

If the parentheses indicate a citation at the end of a sentence, then the sentence's end punctuation comes after the parentheses are closed:

In a study comparing three different building types, respirable dust concentrations were significantly lower in the open-structure building (Hugh et al., 2005).

Finally, if the parentheses appear in the midst of a sentence (as in this example), then any necessary punctuation (such as the comma that appeared just a few words ago) is delayed until the parentheses are closed.



You can also use parentheses to provide acronyms (or full names for acronyms). For example, “We use the MLA (Modern Language Association) style guide here” or “The Modern Language Association (MLA) style guide is my favorite to use.”

Remember, parentheses always appear in pairs. If you open a parenthesis, you need another to close it!

Note: In technical writing, there are additional rules for using parentheses, which can be more nuanced. While we won’t discuss those rules here, it’s important to bear their existence in mind, especially if you’re considering going into a more technical field.

Practice

Have the parentheses been used correctly in the following sentences? Correct any errors you find.

1. (Escobar et al., 2014) wrote about this phenomenon in their most recent paper.
2. NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) just announced three new initiatives.
3. Michael lost the wrestling competition. (He also lost his temper).
4. Helena took the chocolate bars (her favorites) and gave Davi the sour candies.

Show Answer

Brackets

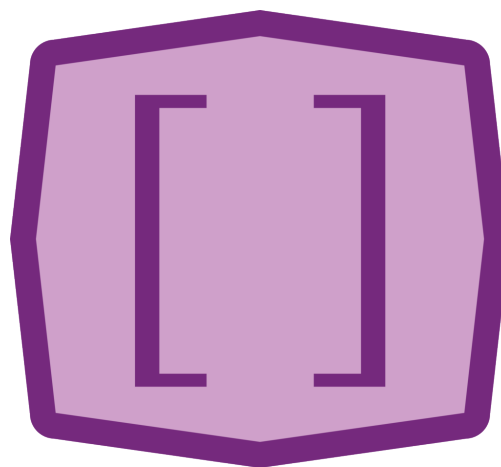
Brackets are a fairly uncommon punctuation mark. Their main use is in quotations: they can be used to clarify quotes. For example, say you want to quote the following passage:

“I finally got to meet Trent today. I had a really great time with him. He was a lot taller than expected, though.”

However, you only want to relay the fact that Trent was taller than the speaker expected him to be. In order to do this, you would write the following: “[Trent] was a lot taller than expected.”

The brackets let the reader know that while the word *Trent* wasn’t in the original quote, his name was implied there. When using brackets, you need to be careful not to change the original meaning of the quote.

Another use of brackets is when there is a spelling or informational error in the original quote. For example, “Gabriel sat down on the river bank to fed [*sic*] the ducks.” (The term *sic* means that the typo was in the original source of this quote.)



Practice

Read the following passages. Imagine you want to quote the numbered sentences. Each sentence would appear separately. Use brackets to indicate the best way to do so.

- (1) Mont Vesuvius is a stratovolcano in the Gulf of Naples, Italy, about 5.6 mi east of Naples and a short distance from the shore. It is one of several volcanoes which form the Campanian volcanic arc.

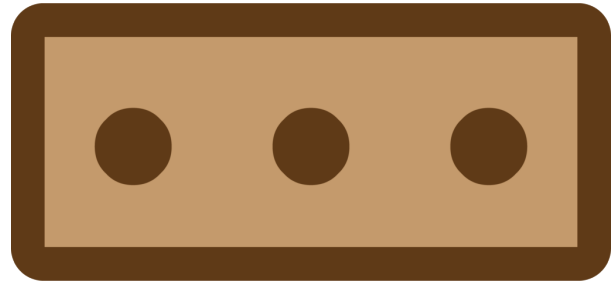
- (2) It consists of a large cone partially encircled by the steep rim of a summit caldera caused by the collapse of an earlier and originally much higher structure.
- (3) Mount Vesuvius is best known for its eruption in CE 79 that led to the burying and destruction of the Roman cities of Pompeii, Herculaneum, and several other settlements.

Show Answer

Ellipses

An ellipsis (plural *ellipses*) is a series of three periods, as you can see in the icon to the right.

As with most punctuation marks, there is some contention about its usage. The main point of contention is whether or not there should be a space between the periods (. . .) or not (...). MLA, APA, and *Chicago*, the most common style guides for students, support having spaces between the periods. Others you may encounter, such as in journalism, may not.



Quotes

Like the brackets we just learned about, you will primarily see ellipses used in quotes. They indicate a missing portion in a quote. Look at the following quote for an example:

Camarasaurus, with its more mechanically efficient skull, was capable of generating much stronger bite forces than *Diplodocus*. This suggests that *Camarasaurus* was capable of chomping through tougher plant material than *Diplodocus*, and was perhaps even capable of a greater degree of oral processing before digestion. This actually ties in nicely with previous hypotheses of different diets for each, which were based on apparent feeding heights and inferences made from wear marks on their fossilized teeth.

Diplodocus seems to have been well-adapted, despite its weaker skull, to a form of feeding known as branch stripping, where leaves are plucked from branches as the teeth are dragged along them. The increased flexibility of the neck of *Diplodocus* compared to other sauropods seems to support this too.

It's a lengthy quote, and it contains more information than you want to include. Here's how to cut it down:

Camarasaurus, with its more mechanically efficient skull, was capable of generating much stronger bite forces than *Diplodocus*. This suggests that *Camarasaurus* was capable of chomping through tougher plant material than *Diplodocus*. . . . This actually ties in nicely with previous hypotheses of different diets for each, which were based on apparent feeding heights and inferences made from wear marks on their fossilized teeth.

Diplodocus seems to have been well-adapted . . . to a form of feeding known as branch stripping, where leaves are plucked from branches as the teeth are dragged along them.

In the block quote above, you can see that the first ellipsis appears to have four dots. ("They are instantly recognized by their long, sweeping necks and whiplashed tails. . . .") However, this is just a period followed by an ellipsis. This is because ellipses **do not** remove punctuation marks when the original punctuation still is in use; they are instead used in conjunction with original punctuation. This is true for all punctuation marks, including periods, commas, semi-colons, question marks, and exclamation points.

By looking at two sympatric species (those that lived together) from the fossil graveyards of the Late Jurassic of North America . . . , [David Button] tried to work out what the major dietary differences were between sauropod dinosaurs, based on their anatomy.

One of the best ways to check yourself is to take out the ellipsis. If the sentence or paragraph is still correctly punctuated, you've used the ellipsis correctly. (Just remember to put it back in!)

Practice

Quote the following passage, using ellipses to remove the bolded portions and using brackets for clarity where necessary.

Sauropod dinosaurs are the biggest animals to have ever walked on land. They are instantly recognized by their long, sweeping necks and whiplashed tails, **and nearly always portrayed moving in herds, being stalked by hungry predators.** In recent years, a huge amount of taxonomic effort from scientists has vastly increased the number of known species of sauropod. **What we now know** is that in many areas we had two or more species co-existing alongside each other. A question that arises from this, is how did we have animals that seem so similar, and with such high energy and dietary requirements, living alongside one another? Was there some sort of spinach-like super plant that gave them all Popeye-like physical boosts, or something more subtle?



Show Answer

The ellipsis can also indicate . . . a pause. This use is typically informal, and is only be used in casual correspondence (e.g., emails to friends, posts on social media, texting) or in literature. Because this use occurs in literature, you may find yourself quoting a passage that already has an ellipsis in it. For example, look at this passage spoken by Lady Bracknell, in *The Importance of Being Ernest*.

Well, I must say, Algernon, that I think it is high time that Mr. Bunbury made up his mind whether he was going to live or to die. This shilly-shallying with the question is absurd. Nor do I in any way approve of the modern sympathy with invalids. I consider it morbid. Illness of any kind is hardly a thing to be encouraged in others. Health is the primary duty of life. I am always telling that to your poor uncle, but he never seems to take much notice . . . as far as any improvement in his ailment goes. I should be much obliged if you would ask Mr. Bunbury, from me, to be kind enough not to have a relapse on Saturday, for I rely on you to arrange my music for me. It is my last reception, and one wants something that will encourage conversation, particularly at the end of the season when every one has practically said whatever they had to say, which, in most cases, was probably not much.

If you were to quote the passage, it may appear that something has been removed from the quote. So how can we indicate that this is not the case? If you think back to the bracket rules we just discussed, you may remember that *[sic]* can be used to show that an error was in the original. In a similar practice, we can enclose the ellipsis in brackets to show it appeared in the original work:

Well, I must say, Algernon, that I think it is high time that Mr. Bunbury made up his mind whether he was going to live or to die. This shilly-shallying with the question is absurd. Nor do I in any way approve of the modern sympathy with invalids. I consider it morbid. Illness of any kind is hardly a thing to be encouraged in others. Health is the primary duty of life. I am always telling that to your poor uncle, but he never seems to take much notice [. . .] as far as any improvement in his ailment goes. I should be much obliged if you would ask Mr. Bunbury, from me, to be kind enough not to have a relapse on Saturday, for I rely on you to arrange my music for me. It is my last reception, and one wants something that will encourage conversation, particularly at the end of the season when every one has practically said whatever they had to say, which, in most cases, was probably not much.

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SELF CHECK: PUNCTUATION

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TRY IT: PUNCTUATION

Read the following introduction to an academic paper written by an undergraduate linguistics student. Has the punctuation in this passage been used effectively? Identify any errors, and comment where punctuation might be used to a better effect. The sentences have been numbered to aid you in your comments.

(1) American culture today is filled with external references—every piece of media seems to be connected to at least three others in some way or another. (2) Its almost jarring to sit through a movie, that doesn't make some type of reference to a preexisting work. (3) This kind of interplay between different works is called *intertextuality* a term coined in 1986 by Julia Kristeva. (4) This paper will look at the intertextuality present in the children's movie *Enchanted*; specifically, it will examine the kind of references made and the reason behind those references.

(5) Intertextuality in children's movies is a little unique because these films must appeal to two vastly different audiences: young children and their parents. (6) While children are the primary target audience for these movies parents are the ones who will ultimately purchase the movie (or not). (7) Because of these two distinct audiences, intertextuality appears constantly in childrens' media to create humor and to add interest for adults who may find themselves watching the same movie tens of times.



Show Answer

The speech below is given by Gwendolen in Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Act 1, Scene 1). Imagine you want to quote this speech in a paper, leaving out the bolded portions. How would you insert this quote into your paper? Be sure to correctly cite the quotation as well.

Jack? . . . No, there is very little music in the name Jack, if any at all, indeed. It does not thrill. It produces absolutely no vibrations . . . I have known several Jacks, and they all, without exception, were more than usually plain. Besides, Jack is a notorious domesticity for John! And I pity any woman who is married to a man called John. She would probably never be allowed to know the entrancing pleasure of a single moment's solitude. The only really safe name is Ernest.



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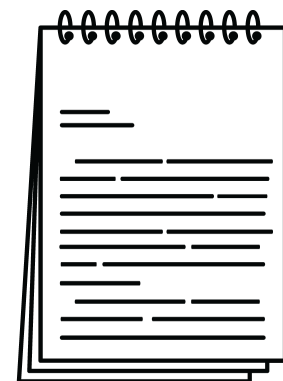
OUTCOME: SENTENCE STRUCTURE

Critique sentence structure and variety of sentences

Language is made up of words, which work together to form sentences, which work together to form paragraphs. In this outcome, we'll be focusing on sentences: how they're made and how they behave. Sentences help us to organize our ideas—to identify which items belong together and which should be separated.

So just what is a sentence? Sentences are simply collections of words. Each sentence has a subject, an action, and punctuation. These basic building blocks work together to create endless amounts and varieties of sentences.

In this outcome, we'll look at the different parts that work together to create sentences and at the different types of sentences that work together to create variety in your writing.



What You Will Learn to Do

- Critique the use of common sentence structures
- Critique the use of common sentence punctuation patterns
- Critique passages, revising for run-on sentences
- Critique passages, revising for sentence fragments
- Critique the use of parallel structure

The Learning Activities for this Outcome Include

- Text: Parts of a Sentence
- Text: Common Sentence Structures
- Text: Run-on Sentences
- Text: Sentence Fragments
- Text: Parallel Structure
- Self Check: Sentence Structure
- Try It: Sentence Structure

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TEXT: PARTS OF A SENTENCE

Every sentence has a subject and a predicate. The **subject** of a sentence is the noun, pronoun, or phrase or clause the sentence is about, and the **predicate** is the rest of the sentence after the subject:

- Einstein's general **theory** of relativity has been subjected to many tests of validity over the years.
- In a secure landfill, the **soil** on top and the **cover** block storm water intrusion into the landfill. (*compound subject*)
 - There are two subjects in this sentence: *soil* and *cover*.
 - Notice that the introductory phrase, "In a secure landfill," is not a part of the subject or the predicate.
- The **pressure** is maintained at about 2250 pounds per square inch then lowered to form steam at about 600 pounds per square inch. (*compound predicate*)
 - There are two predicates in this sentence: "is maintained at about 2250 pounds per square inch" and "lowered to form steam at about 600 pounds per square inch"
- Surrounding the secure landfill on all sides are impermeable barrier **walls.** (*inverted sentence pattern*)
 - In an inverted sentence, the predicate comes before the subject. You won't run into this sentence structure very often as it is pretty rare.

Practice

Identify the subject and predicate of each sentence:

1. Daniel and I are going to go to Hawaii for three weeks.
2. Raquel will watch the dogs while we're on vacation.
3. She will feed the dogs and will make sure they get enough exercise.

Show Answer

A predicate can include the verb, a direct object, and an indirect object.

Direct Object

A direct object—a noun, pronoun, phrase, or clause acting as a noun—takes the action of the main verb (e.g., the verb is happening to the object). A direct object can be identified by putting *what?*, *which?*, or *whom?* in its place.

- The housing assembly of a mechanical pencil contains the mechanical **workings** of the pencil.
- Lavoisier used curved glass **discs** fastened together at their rims, with wine filling the space between, to focus the sun's rays to attain temperatures of 3000° F.
- The dust and smoke lofted into the air by nuclear explosions might cool the earth's **atmosphere** some number of degrees.
- A 20 percent fluctuation in average global temperature could reduce biological **activity**, shift weather **patterns**, and ruin **agriculture**. (*compound direct object*)

Indirect Object

An indirect object—a noun, pronoun, phrase, or clause acting as a noun—receives the action expressed in the sentence. It can be identified by inserting *to* or *for*.

- The company is designing senior **citizens** a new walkway to the park area.
 - The company is not designing new models of senior citizens; they are designing a new walkway *for* senior citizens. Thus, senior citizens is the indirect object of this sentence.
- Please send the personnel **office** a resume so we can further review your candidacy.
 - You are not being asked to send the office somewhere; you're being asked to send a resume *to* the office. Thus, the personnel office is the indirect object of this sentence.

Note: Objects can belong to any verb in a sentence, even if the verbs aren't in the main clause. For example, let's look at the sentence "When you give your teacher your assignment, be sure to include your name and your class number."

- *Your teacher* is the indirect object of the verb *give*.
- *Your assignment* is the direct object of the verb *give*.
- *Your name* and *your class number* are the direct objects of the verb *include*.

Practice

Identify the objects in the following sentences. Are they direct or indirect objects?

1. The cooler temperatures brought about by nuclear war might end all life on earth.
2. On Mariners 6 and 7, the two-axis scan platforms provided much more capability and flexibility for the scientific payload than those of Mariner 4.
3. In your application letter, tell the potential employer that a resume accompanies the letter.

Show Answer

Phrases and Clauses

Phrases and clauses are groups of words that act as a unit and perform a single function within a sentence. A phrase may have a partial subject or verb but not both; a dependent clause has both a subject and a verb (but is

not a complete sentence). Here are a few examples (not all phrases are highlighted because some are embedded in others):

Phrases	Clauses
Electricity has to do with those physical phenomena involving electrical charges and their effects when in motion and when at rest . (<i>involving electrical charges and their effects</i> is also a phrase.)	Electricity manifests itself as a force of attraction, independent of gravitational and short-range nuclear attraction, when two oppositely charged bodies are brought close to one another .
In 1833 , Faraday's experimentation with electrolysis indicated a natural unit of electrical charge , thus pointing to a discrete rather than continuous charge . (<i>to a discrete rather than continuous charge</i> is also a phrase.)	Since the frequency is the speed of sound divided by the wavelength , a shorter wavelength means a higher wavelength.
The symbol that denotes a connection to the grounding conductor is three parallel horizontal lines, each of the lower ones being shorter than the one above it .	Nuclear units planned or in construction have a total capacity of 186,998 KW, which, if current plans hold, will bring nuclear capacity to about 22% of all electrical capacity by 1995 . (<i>if current plans hold</i> is a clause within a clause)

There are two types of clauses: dependent and independent. A dependent clauses is dependent on something else: it cannot stand on its own. An independent clause, on the other hand, is free to stand by itself.

So how can you tell if a clause is dependent or independent? Let's take a look at two the clauses from the table above:

- when two oppositely charged bodies are brought close to one another
- Since the frequency is the speed of sound divided by the wavelength
- which, if current plans hold, will bring nuclear capacity to about 22% of all electrical capacity by 1995

These are all dependent clauses. As we learned in [Text: Conjunctions](#), any clause with a subordinating conjunctions (like *when* or *since*) is a dependent clause. For example "I was a little girl in 1995" is an independent clause, but "Because I was a little girl in 1995" is a dependent clause. Clauses that start with relative pronouns, like *which*, also become dependent clauses.

Practice

In each of the following sentences, identify their phrases, dependent clauses, and independent clauses:

1. Because Dante won the steamboat competition, he let Maxwell win the rowing race.
2. Swimming across the English Channel in nearly twenty-three hours, Laís set a new personal record.
3. Whenever I see Alice and Armando's Instagram account, *The Two of Us*, I'm overwhelmed with feelings.

Show Answer

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TEXT: COMMON SENTENCE STRUCTURES

Basic Sentence Patterns

Subject + verb

The simplest of sentence patterns is composed of a **subject** and **verb** without a direct object or subject complement. It uses an **intransitive verb**, that is, a verb requiring no direct object:

- Control **rods remain** inside the fuel assembly of the reactor.
- The **development** of wind power practically **ceased** until the early 1970s.
- The **cross-member** exposed to abnormal stress eventually **broke**.
- Only two **types** of charge **exist** in nature.

Subject + verb + direct object

Another common sentence pattern uses the **direct object**:

- **Silicon conducts electricity** in an unusual way.
- The anti-reflective **coating** on the the silicon cell **reduces reflection** from 32 to 22 percent.

Subject + verb + indirect object + direct object

The sentence pattern with the **indirect object** and **direct object** is similar to the preceding pattern:

- **I am writing her** about a number of **problems** that I have had with my computer.
- **Austin, Texas, has** recently **built** its **citizens** a **system** of bike lanes.

Practice

Identify the basic sentence pattern of the sentences below. What are the different parts of each sentence?

1. All amplitude-modulation (AM) receivers work in the same way.
2. The supervisor mailed the applicant a description of the job.
3. We have mailed the balance of the payment in this letter.

Show Answer

Sentence Types

Simple Sentences

A simple sentence is one that contains a **subject** and a **verb** and no other independent or dependent clause.

- **One** of the tubes **is attached** to the manometer part of the instrument indicating the pressure of the air within the cuff.
- There **are** basically two **types** of stethoscopes.
 - In this sentence, the subject and verb are inverted; that is, the verb comes before the subject. However, it is still classified as a simple sentence.
- To measure blood pressure, a **sphygmomanometer** and a **stethoscope are needed**.
 - This sentence has a compound subject—that is, there are two subjects—but it is still classified as a simple sentence.

Command sentences are a subtype of simple sentences. These sentences are unique because they don't actually have a subject:

- **Clean** the dishes.
- **Make** sure to take good notes today.
- After completing the reading, **answer** the following questions.

In each of these sentences, there is an implied subject: *you*. These sentences are instructing the reader to complete a task. Command sentences are the only sentences in English that are complete without a subject.

Compound Predicates

A **predicate** is everything in the verb part of the sentence after the subject (unless the sentence uses inverted word order). A *compound predicate* is two or more predicates joined by a coordinating conjunction. Traditionally, the conjunction in a sentence consisting of just two compound predicates is not punctuated.

- Another library media specialist **has been using Accelerated Reader for ten years** and **has seen great results**.
- This cell phone app lets users **share pictures instantly with followers** and **categorize photos with hashtags**.

Compound Sentences

A compound sentence is made up of two or more *independent clauses* joined by a coordinating conjunction (and, or, nor, but, yet, for) and a comma, an adverbial conjunction and a semicolon, or just a semicolon.

- In sphygmomanometers, too narrow a cuff can result in erroneously high readings, and too wide a cuff can result in erroneously low readings.
- Some cuff hook together; others wrap or snap into place.

Command sentences can be compound sentences as well:

- Never give up; never surrender.
- Turn the handle 90 degrees and push the button four times.

When you have a compound command sentence with a coordinating conjunction, you do not need to include a comma, because the two have the same subject.

Practice

Identify the type of each sentence below. Why is each type of sentence useful in each instance?

1. The sphygmomanometer is usually covered with cloth and has two rubber tubes attached to it.
2. There are several types of sentences; using different types can keep your writing lively.
3. Words, sentences, and paragraphs are all combined to create a book.
4. Before giving up, take a deep breath and look at things from a different perspective.

Show Answer

Punctuation Patterns

While your sentence's punctuation will always depend on the content of your writing, there are a few common punctuation patterns you should be aware of.

Simple sentences have these punctuation patterns:

- _____.
- _____, _____.

Compound predicate sentences have this punctuation pattern: _____ and _____.

Compound Sentences have these punctuation patterns:

- _____, and _____.
- _____; _____.

As you can see from these common patterns, periods, commas, and semicolons are the punctuation marks you will use the most in your writing. As you write, it's best to use a variety of these patterns. If you use the same pattern repeatedly, your writing can easily become boring and drab.

Practice

The sentences in this passage follow a single punctuation pattern: _____.

Revise the passage to create variety.

Johann Sebastian Bach wrote six Cello Suites. The Cello Suites are suites for unaccompanied cello. They are some of the most frequently performed and recognizable solo compositions ever written for cello. Each movement is based around a baroque dance type. This basis is standard for a Baroque musical suite. The cello suites are structured in six movements each. Each includes a prelude; an allemande; a courante; a sarabande; two minuets, two bourrées, or two gavottes; and a final gigue. The Bach cello suites are considered to be among the most profound of all classical music works.

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TEXT: RUN-ON SENTENCES

Run-on sentences occur when two or more independent clauses are improperly joined. (We talked about clauses in [Text: Parts of a Sentence](#).) One type of run-on that you've probably heard of is the *comma splice*, in which two independent clauses are joined by a comma without a coordinating conjunction (*and*, *or*, *but*, etc.).

Let's look at a few examples of run-on sentences:

- Choosing a topic for a paper can be the hardest part but it gets a lot easier after that.
- Sometimes, books do not have the most complete information, it is a good idea then to look for articles in specialized periodicals.

All three of these have two independent clauses. Each clause should be separated from another with a period, a semicolon, or a comma and a coordinating conjunction:

- Choosing a topic for a paper can be the hardest part, but it gets a lot easier after that.
- Sometimes, books do not have the most complete information; it is a good idea then to look for articles in specialized periodicals.

Note: Caution should be exercised when defining a run-on sentence as a sentence that just goes on and on. A run-on sentence is a sentence that goes on and on **and** isn't correctly punctuated. Not every long sentence is a run-on sentence. For example, look at this quote from *The Great Gatsby*:

Its vanished trees, the trees that had made way for Gatsby's house, had once pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams; for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into an aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder.

If you look at the punctuation, you'll see that this quote is a single sentence. F. Scott Fitzgerald used commas and semicolons in such a way that, despite its great length, it's grammatically sound, as well. Length is no guarantee of a run-on sentence.

Common Causes of Run-Ons

We often write run-on sentences because we sense that the sentences involved are closely related and dividing them with a period just doesn't seem right. We may also write them because the parts seem too short to need any division, like in "She loves skiing but he doesn't." However, "She loves skiing" and "he doesn't" are both independent clauses, so they need to be divided by a comma and a coordinating conjunction—not just a coordinating conjunction by itself.

Another common cause of run-on sentences is mistaking adverbial conjunctions for coordinating conjunctions. For example if we were to write, "She loved skiing, however he didn't," we would have produced a comma splice. The correct sentence would be "She loved skiing; however, he didn't."

Fixing Run-On Sentences

Before you can fix a run-on sentence, you'll need to identify the problem. When you write, carefully look at each part of every sentence. Are the parts independent clauses, or are they dependent clauses or phrases? Remember, only independent clauses can stand on their own. This also means they have to stand on their own; they can't run together without correct punctuation.

Let's take a look at a few run-on sentences and their revisions:

1. Most of the hours I've earned toward my associate's degree do not transfer, however, I do have at least some hours the University will accept.
2. The opposite is true of stronger types of stainless steel they tend to be more susceptible to rust.
3. Some people were highly educated professionals, others were from small villages in underdeveloped countries.

Let's start with the first sentence. This is a comma-splice sentence. The adverbial conjunction *however* is being treated like a coordinating conjunction. There are two easy fixes to this problem. The first is to turn the comma before *however* into a period. If this feels like too hard of a stop between ideas, you can change the comma into a semicolon instead.

- Most of the hours I've earned toward my associate's degree do not transfer. However, I do have at least some hours the University will accept.
- Most of the hours I've earned toward my associate's degree do not transfer; however, I do have at least some hours the University will accept.

The second sentence is a run-on as well. "The opposite is true of stronger types of stainless steel" and "they tend to be more susceptible to rust." are both independent clauses. The two clauses are very closely related, and the second clarifies the information provided in the first. The best solution is to insert a colon between the two clauses:

The opposite is true of stronger types of stainless steel: they tend to be more susceptible to rust.

What about the last example? Once again we have two independent clauses. The two clauses provide contrasting information. Adding a conjunction could help the reader move from one kind of information to another. However, you may want that sharp contrast. Here are two revision options:

- Some people were highly educated professionals, while others were from small villages in underdeveloped countries.
- Some people were highly educated professionals. Others were from small villages in underdeveloped countries.

Practice

Identify the run-on sentences in the following paragraph. Type a corrected version of the paragraph in the text frame below:

I had the craziest dream the other night. My cousin Jacob and I were on the run from the law. Apparently we were wizards and the law was cracking down on magic. So, we obviously had to go into hiding but I lost track of Jacob and then I got picked up by a cop. But I was able to convince him that the government was corrupt and that he should take me to my escape boat.

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TEXT: SENTENCE FRAGMENTS

Fragments are simply grammatically incomplete sentences—they are phrases and dependent clauses. We talked about phrases and clauses a bit in [Text: Parts of a Sentence](#). These are grammatical structures that cannot stand on their own: they need to be connected to an independent clause to work in writing. So how can we tell the difference between a sentence and a sentence fragment? And how can we fix fragments when they already exist?

As you learn about fragments, keep in mind that length is not very helpful when determining if a sentence is a fragment or not. Both of the items below are fragments:

- Before you go.
- Ensuring his own survival with his extensive cache of supplies (food, water, rope, tarps, knives, and a first aid kit).

Let's dive in and see just what makes these both fragments.

Common Causes of Fragments

Part of the reason we write in fragments is because we often speak that way. However, there is a difference between writing and speech, and it is important to write in full sentences. Additionally, fragments often come about in writing because a fragment may already seem too long.

Non-finite verbs (gerunds, participles, and infinitives) can often trip people up as well. Since non-finite verbs don't act like verbs, we don't count them as verbs when we're deciding if we have a phrase or a clause. Let's look at a few examples of these:

- Running away from my mother.
- To ensure your safety and security.
- Beaten down since day one.

Even though all of the above have non-finite verbs, they're phrases, not clauses. In order for these to be clauses, they would need an additional verb that acts as a verb in the sentence.

Words like *since*, *when*, and *because* turn an independent clause into a dependent clause. For example "I was a little girl in 1995" is an independent clause, but "Because I was a little girl in 1995" is a dependent clause. This class of word includes the following:

after	although	as	as far as	as if	as long as	as soon as
as though	because	before	even if	even though	every time	if
in order that	since	so	so that	than	though	unless
until	when	whenever	where	whereas	wherever	while

Relative pronouns, like *that* and *which*, do the same type of thing as those listed above.

Coordinating conjunctions (our FANBOYS) can also cause problems. If you start a sentence with a coordinating conjunction, make sure that it is followed a complete clause, not just a phrase!

As you're identifying fragments, keep in mind that command sentences are *not* fragments, despite not having a subject. Commands are the only grammatically correct sentences that lack a subject:

- Drop and give me fifty!
- Count how many times the word *fragrant* is used during commercial breaks.

Fixing Sentence Fragments

Let's take a look at a couple of examples:

1. Ivana appeared at the committee meeting last week. And made a convincing presentation of her ideas about the new product.
2. The committee considered her ideas for a new marketing strategy quite powerful. The best ideas that they had heard in years.
3. She spent a full month evaluating his computer-based instructional materials. Which she eventually sent to her supervisor with the strongest of recommendations.

Let's look at the phrase "And made a convincing presentation of her ideas about the new product" in example one. It's just that: a phrase. There is no subject in this phrase, so the easiest fix is to simply delete the period and combine the two statements:

Ivana appeared at the committee meeting last week and made a convincing presentation of her ideas about the new product.

Let's look at example two. The phrase "the best ideas they had heard in years" is simply a phrase—there is no verb contained in the phrase. By adding "they were" to the beginning of this phrase, we have turned the fragment into an independent clause, which can now stand on its own:

The committee considered her ideas for a new marketing strategy quite powerful; they were the best ideas that they had heard in years.

What about example three? Let's look at the clause "Which she eventually sent to her supervisor with the strongest of recommendations." This is a dependent clause; the word *which* signals this fact. If we change "which she eventually" to "eventually, she," we also turn the dependent clause into an independent clause.

She spent a full month evaluating his computer-based instructional materials. Eventually, she sent the evaluation to her supervisor with the strongest of recommendations.

Practice

Identify the fragments in the sentences below. Why are they fragments? What are some possible solutions?

1. The corporation wants to begin a new marketing push in educational software. Although, the more conservative executives of the firm are skeptical.
2. Include several different sections in your proposal. For example, a discussion of your personnel and their qualifications, your expectations concerning the schedule of the project, and a cost breakdown.
3. The research team has completely reorganized the workload. Making sure that members work in areas of their own expertise and that no member is assigned proportionately too much work.

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TEXT: PARALLEL STRUCTURE

What exactly is parallel structure? It's simply the practice of using the same structures or forms multiple times: making sure the parts are parallel to each other. Parallel structure can be applied to a single sentence, a paragraph, or even multiple paragraphs. Compare the two following sentences:

- Yara loves running, to swim, and biking.
- Yara loves running, swimming, and biking.

Was the second sentence a smoother read than the first? The second sentence uses parallelism—all three verbs are gerunds—whereas in the first sentence two are gerunds and one is an infinitive. While the first sentence is technically correct, it's easy to trip up over the mismatching items. The application of parallelism improves writing style and readability, and it makes sentences easier to process.

Compare the following examples:

- Lacking parallelism: "She likes cooking, jogging, and to read."
- Parallel: "She likes cooking, jogging, and reading."
- Parallel: "She likes to cook, jog, and read."

Once again, the examples above combine gerunds and infinitives. To make them parallel, the sentences should be rewritten with just gerunds or just infinitives. Note that the nonparallel example, while inelegantly worded, is grammatically correct: "cooking," "jogging," and "to read" are all grammatically valid conclusions to "She likes."

- Lacking parallelism: "The dog ran across the yard and jumped over the fence, and **down the alley he sprinted.**"
- Parallel: "The dog ran across the yard, jumped over the fence, and **sprinted down the alley.**"

The nonparallel example, is grammatically valid; "down the alley he sprinted" is an entirely separate clause. However, it is not parallel. You may find that the parallel example sounds much better to your ears.

Parallelism can also apply to names. If you're writing a research paper that includes references to several different authors, you should be consistent in your references. For example, if you talk about Jane Goodall and Henry Harlow, you should say "Goodall and Harlow," not "Jane and Harlow" or "Goodall and Henry." This is something that would carry on through your entire paper: you should use the same mode of address for every person you mention.

You can also apply parallelism across a passage:

Manuel painted eight paintings in the last week. Jennifer sculpted five statues in the last month.
Zama wrote fifteen songs in the last two months.

Each of the sentences in the preceding paragraph has the same structure: Name + *-ed* verb + number of things + *in the* past time period. When using parallelism across multiple sentences, be sure that you're using it well. If you aren't careful, you can stray into being repetitive. Unfortunately, really the only way to test this is by re-reading the passage and seeing if it "feels right." While this test doesn't have any rules to it, it can often help.

Practice

Look at the following items. Identify and address any issues with parallelism.

1. Low self-esteem can manifest itself in various behaviors. Some individuals may become paralyzed at the prospect of making a decision. Other individuals may bend their wills to others' in order to keep the peace. Yet another symptom is the retreat from society as a whole—to become isolated.
2. The influence of genetics on human behavior has been shown through studies of twins who were separated at birth. Not only do these sets of individuals share many physical characteristics, but they also tend to have the same sort of interests and biases and utilize similar mental processes.
3. *Nocturne in Black and Gold (The Falling Rocket)* by James Abbott McNeil Whistler is very emblematic of the impressionist movement: its dark colors, contrast, and lack of definite form reflect the attitudes of the day.

Show Answer

Rhetoric and Parallelism

Parallelism can also involve repeated words or repeated phrases. These uses are part of “rhetoric” (a field that focuses on persuading readers) Here are a few examples of repetition:

- “**The inherent vice** of capitalism is the unequal sharing of blessings; **the inherent virtue** of socialism is the equal sharing of miseries.” —Winston Churchill
- “Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall **pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe** to assure the survival and the success of liberty.” —John F. Kennedy
- “And that government **of the people, by the people, for the people**, shall not perish from the earth.” —Abraham Lincoln, *Gettysburg Address*

When used this way, parallelism makes your writing or speaking much stronger. These repeated phrases seem to bind the work together and make it more powerful—and more inspiring. This use of parallelism can be especially useful in writing conclusions of academic papers or in persuasive writing.

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SELF CHECK: SENTENCE STRUCTURE

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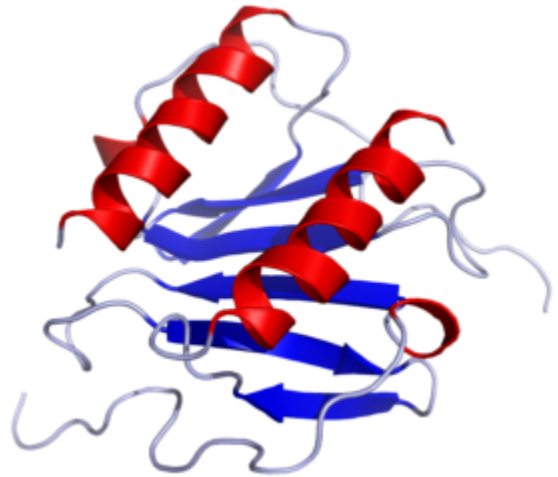
TRY IT: SENTENCE STRUCTURE

Academic Writing

Read the following passage pulled from a grant proposal written by an undergraduate microbiology student. Critique any run-on sentences, sentence fragments, and nonparallel structures you find as you read the passage. The sentences have been numbered to aid you in your comments.

(1) Several antimicrobial proteins are produced in the body. (2) These proteins attach to the cell walls of microbes and cause cell death through diverse mechanisms. (3) Chemokines are one type of these antimicrobial proteins. (4) Chemokines have generally been shown to direct immune cells to sites of infection in a body. (5) Some chemokines have been found to demonstrate antimicrobial properties; however, this has not been studied thoroughly.

(6) These antimicrobial chemokines may play an important role in innate immune response. (7) Not just as chemoattractants but also as active participants in the immune response. (8) The chemokine CCL28 has been shown to have antimicrobial properties (Liu 2010), our lab has also confirmed these findings. (9) Previous research has shown that the C terminal region of the chemokine CCL28 is largely responsible for the antimicrobial activity (Liu 2010). (10) However, it has not been shown what the C terminus region of the chemokine binds to.



Show Answer

Parallelism

Look at these two popular quotes. How do they employ parallelism?

1. With great power comes great responsibility. ((Note: The original of this quote is actually "With great power there must also come—great responsibility!" (Lee, Stan, and Steve Ditko. *Amazing Fantasy* #15. 10 Aug. 1962. Digital.)))
2. Live. Laugh. Love.

Show Answer

Sources

Liu, Bin, and Eric Wilson. "The Antimicrobial Activity of CCL28 Is Dependent on C-terminal Positively-charged Amino Acids." *European Journal of Immunology* 40.1 (2010): 186–96. Print.

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OUTCOME: VOICE

Critique the use of both active and passive voices

Voice is a nebulous term in writing. It can refer to the general “feel” of the writing, or it can be used in a more technical sense. In this course, we will focus on the latter sense as we discuss active and passive voice.

You’ve probably heard of the passive voice—perhaps in a comment from an English teacher or in the grammar checker of a word processor. In both of these instances, you were (likely) guided away from the passive voice. Why is this the case? Why is the passive voice so hated? After all, it’s been used twice on this page already (three times now).

In this outcome, we’ll learn about active and passive voices, their construction, and their correct use.



What You Will Learn to Do

- Critique the use of active voice
- Critique the use of passive voice

The Learning Activities for this Outcome Include

- Text: Active and Passive Voice
- Text: Using the Passive Voice
- Self Check: Voice
- Try It: Voice

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TEXT: ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOICE

There are two main “voices” in English writing: the active voice and the passive voice. You’ve probably heard a lot about them—and you’ve probably been warned away from the passive voice. But what exactly are they?

In the simplest terms, an active voice sentence is written in the form of “A does B.” (For example, “Carmen sings the song.”) A passive voice sentence is written in the form of “B is done by A.” (For example, “The song is sung by Carmen.”) Both constructions are grammatically sound and correct. Let’s look at a couple more examples of the passive voice:

- I’ve been hit! (*or*, I have been hit!)
- Jasper was thrown from the car when it was struck from behind.

You may have noticed something unique about the previous two sentences: the subject of the sentence is not the person (or thing) performing the action. The passive voice “hides” who does the action. Despite these sentences being completely grammatically sound, we don’t know who hit “me” or what struck the car.

The passive is created using the verb *to be* and the past participle. When identifying passive sentences, remember that *to be* has other uses than just creating the passive voice. “She was falling” and “His keys were lost” are not passive sentences. In the first, *to be* is a continuous past verb, and in the second *to be* is past tense linking verb. There are two key features that will help you identify a passive sentence:

1. Something is happening (the sentence has a verb that is not a linking verb).
2. The subject of the sentence is not doing that thing.

Usage

As you read at the two sentences below, think about the how the different voice may affect the meaning or implications of the sentence:

- **Passive voice:** The rate of evaporation is controlled by the size of an opening.
- **Active voice:** The size of an opening controls the rate of evaporation.

The passive choice slightly emphasizes “the rate of evaporation,” while the active choice emphasizes “the size of an opening.” Simple. So why all the fuss? Because passive constructions can produce grammatically tangled sentences such as this:

Groundwater flow is influenced by zones of fracture concentration, as can be recognized by the two model simulations (see Figures 1 and 2), by which one can see . . .

The sentence is becoming a burden for the reader, and probably for the writer too. As often happens, the passive voice here has smothered potential verbs and kicked off a runaway train of prepositions. But the reader’s task gets much easier in the revised version below:

Two model simulations (Figures 1 and 2) illustrate how zones of fracture concentration influence groundwater flow. These simulations show . . .

To revise the above, all we did was look for the two buried things (simulations and zones) in the original version that could actually *do* something, and we made the sentence clearly about these two nouns by placing them in front of active verbs. This is the general principle to follow as you compose in the active voice: Place concrete nouns that can perform work in front of active verbs.

Practice

Are the following sentences in the active or passive voice? How can you tell?

1. The samples were prepared in a clean room before being sent out for further examination.
2. Karen was dancing with Joshua when she suddenly realized she needed to leave.
3. Carlos was a very serious scientist with unique interests.

Show Answer

Revise Weak Passive-Voice Sentences

As we've mentioned, the passive voice can be a shifty operator—it can cover up its source, that is, who's doing the acting, as this example shows:

- **Passive:** The papers **will be graded** according to the criteria stated in the syllabus.
 - *Graded by whom though?*
- **Active:** **The teacher** will grade the papers according to the criteria stated in the syllabus.

It's this ability to cover the actor or agent of the sentence that makes the passive voice a favorite of people in authority—policemen, city officials, and, yes, teachers. At any rate, you can see how the passive voice can cause wordiness, indirectness, and comprehension problems.

Passive	Question	Active
Your figures have been reanalyzed in order to determine the coefficient of error. The results will be announced when the situation is judged appropriate.	Who analyzes, and who will announce?	We have reanalyzed your figures in order to determine the range of error. We will announce the results when the time is right.
With the price of housing at such inflated levels, those loans cannot be paid off in any shorter period of time.	Who can't pay the loans off?	With the price of housing at such inflated levels, homeowners cannot pay off those loans in any shorter period of time.
After the arm of the hand-held stapler is pushed down , the blade from the magazine is raised by the top-leaf spring, and the magazine and base.	Who pushes it down, and who or what raises it?	After you push down on the arm of the hand-held stapler, the top-leaf spring raises the blade from the magazine, and the magazine and base move apart.
However, market share is being lost by 5.25-inch diskettes as is shown in the graph in Figure 2.	Who or what is losing market share, who or what shows it?	However, 5.25-inch diskettes are losing market share as the graph in Figure 2 shows.
For many years, federal regulations concerning the use of wire-tapping have been ignored . Only recently have tighter restrictions been	Who has ignored the regulations, and who is now imposing them?	For many years, government officials have ignored federal regulations concerning the use of wire-tapping. Only recently has the federal government imposed tighter

Passive	Question	Active
imposed on the circumstances that warrant it.		restrictions on the circumstances that warrant it.

Practice

Convert these passive voice sentences into the active voice. Why is the active voice a better choice for each of these sentences?

1. The process, which was essential for the experiment's success, was completed by Enzo.
2. The cake that I worked on all day long is being eaten by Justin.
3. After the pattern has been applied to the fabric, work on the embroidery can be started.

Show Answer

Don't get the idea that the passive voice is always wrong and should never be used. It is a good writing technique when we don't want to be bothered with an obvious or too-often-repeated subject and when we need to rearrange words in a sentence for emphasis. The next page will focus more on how and why to use the passive voice.

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TEXT: USING THE PASSIVE VOICE

There are several different situations where the passive voice is more useful than the active voice.

- When you don't know who did the action: *The paper had been moved.*
 - The active voice would be something like this: "Someone had moved the paper." While this sentence is technically fine, the passive voice sentence has a more subtle element of mystery, which can be especially helpful in creating a mood in fiction.
- When you want to hide who did the action: *The window had been broken.*
 - The sentence is either hiding who broke the window or they do not know. Again, the sentence can be reformed to say "Someone had broken the window," but using the word *someone* clearly indicates that someone (though we may not know who) is at fault here. Using the passive puts the focus on the window rather than on the person who broke it, as he or she is completely left out of the sentence.
- When you want to emphasize the person or thing the action was done to: *Caroline was hurt when Kent broke up with her.*
 - We automatically focus on the subject of the sentence. If the sentence were to say "Kent hurt Caroline when he broke up with her," then our focus would be drawn to Kent rather than Caroline.
- A subject that can't actually *do* anything: *Caroline was hurt when she fell into the trees.*

- While the trees hurt Caroline, they didn't actually do anything. Thus, it makes more sense to have Caroline as the subject rather than saying "The trees hurt Caroline when she fell into them."

Note: It's often against convention in scholarly writing to use *I*. While this may seem like a forced rule, it also stems from the fact that scholars want to emphasize the science or research as opposed to the author of the paper. This often results in the passive voice being the best choice. This is not the case in other formal settings, such as in resumes and in cover letters.

Practice

Consider the following instances. In each case, determine why the writers might want to use active or passive voice. Write an example sentence based on their circumstances.

1. Antonella made an error in her calculations that ruined an experiment. This error ended up costing both time and materials. She has to write a report to her boss. What might she say about the experiment?
2. Isabel is writing a supernatural thriller. Her main character, Liam, notices that his keys aren't where he left them. How might Isabel word this realization?
3. Thiago is writing a cover letter to apply for a new job. He is listing out tasks that he does at his current job. How would he want to word these items?

Show Answer

Using the Passive

Now that we know there are some instances where passive voice is the best choice, how do we use the passive voice to it fullest? The answer lies in writing direct sentences—in passive voice—that have simple subjects and verbs. Compare the two sentences below:

- Photomicrographs were taken to facilitate easy comparison of the samples.
- Easy comparison of the samples was facilitated by the taking of photomicrographs.

Both sentences are written in the passive voice, but for most ears the first sentence is more direct and understandable, and therefore preferable. Depending on the context, it does a clearer job of telling us what was done and why it was done. Especially if this sentence appears in the "Experimental" section of a report (and thus readers already know that the authors of the report took the photomicrographs), the first sentence neatly represents what the authors actually did—took photomicrographs—and why they did it—to facilitate easy comparison.

Practice

Read the following sentences. Are they using the passive effectively? If there are any errors, rewrite the sentences accordingly.

1. The machine needs to be reset at 10:23, 11:12, and 11:56 every night.
2. The final steps, which need to be finished before the sun sets over the mountains, are going to be completed by Kajuana.

3. The difficult task of measuring minute fluctuations in weight was made easier by the use of a new digital scale.

Show Answer

As we mentioned in [Text: Non-Finite Verbs](#), the passive voice can also be used following relative pronouns like *that* and *which*.

- I moved into the house **that was built** for me.
- Adrián's dog loves the treats **that are given** to him.
- Brihanna has an album **that was signed** by the Beastie Boys.

In each of these sentences, it is grammatically sound to omit (or *elide*) the pronoun and *to be*. Elision is used with a lot of different constructions in English; we use it shorten sentences when things are understood. However, we can only use elision in certain situations, so be careful when removing words! You may find these elided sentences more natural:

- I moved into the house **built** for me.
- Adrián's dog loves the treats **given** to him.
- Brihanna has an album **signed** by the Beastie Boys

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SELF CHECK: VOICE

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TRY IT: VOICE

Read this introduction to an academic study written by an undergraduate linguistics student. As you read, note the use of the active and passive voices. Are they used effectively? What revisions would you suggest? The sentences have been numbered to aid you in your comments.

- (1) In this modern age, technology is becoming ever more prevalent, appearing in every facet of our lives. (2) A lot of discussion about whether technology is hurting or helping our ability to communicate has been inspired by this increase in technology. (3) The debate about the effectiveness of uni- and multi-modality in media is one of the most interesting research topics in this area. (4) Uni-modality is the use of one medium

(e.g., only text or only audio), and multi-modality is the use of multiple mediums (e.g., text and images or audio and a video). (5) It is argued that mutli-modality enhances a work’s intended message, but others think that mutli-modality detracts from the experience.

(6) The effectiveness of the multi-modailty of the music video of the song *Brave* by Sara Bareilles will be examined in this paper (its two modalities are audio and video). (7) In the lyrics, listeners are encouraged to cast aside their fear and be themselves. (8) The video features Sara Bareilles and six other individuals dancing by themselves (all in separate locations) in public. (9) While Sara is featured in locations without any other people, the other dancers are surrounded by people who don’t know why they are dancing. (10) This paper will analyze the lyrics of this song to find their intended effect, and then analyze the video to see if it enhances or detracts from this intention.



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PUTTING IT TOGETHER: GRAMMAR

Grammar is made up of lots of little rules that work together to create a language. Since there are so many rules, you can’t expect to remember everything, especially not at once. No one can, not even professional writers and editors, who typically have at least three reference books and style manuals at their fingertips. Feel free to come back and reference the material taught in this course as often as you need.

Remember, language is always changing: new words are being created (e.g., *google*, *selfie*), and words are changing meaning (e.g., *they*, *literally*). This kind of change is how these are all from the same language:

- Hwæt, we gar-dena in geardagum, þeodcyninga þrym gefrunon, hu ða æþelingas ellen fremedon! (*Beowulf*, the Beowulf poet, c. 700 AD)
- Thanne kam þer a Kyng: Knyȝthod hym ladde; Might of þe communes made hym to regne. (*Piers Plowman*, William Langland, c. 1300 AD)
- And for myself, foe as he was to me, Might liquid tears or heart-offending groans Or blood-consuming sighs recall his life. (Henry VI, William Shakespeare, c. 1550 AD)
- Never do anything by halves if you want to get away with it. Be outrageous. Go the whole hog. Make sure everything you do is so completely crazy it’s unbelievable. (*Matilda*, Roald Dahl, 1998)

In another couple hundred years, the things we say right now will be just as incomprehensible to people as the things Shakespeare wrote are to us.

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