

ENG 101 OER



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Licensing

Introduction- Equipment for Writing

1: Reading in College

- 1.1: Develop general reading strategies by reflecting on you as a reader
- 1.2: Read to study the choices made by other writers
- 1.3: Understand the difference between responding and analyzing
- 1.4: Reading for Rhetoric and Reasoning
- 1.5: Annotation is a system for remembering what you read
- 1.6: Effective reading prepares you for higher order thinking

2: Writing with Sources

- 2.1: Understand how an assignments wants you to use texts
- 2.2: Summarize to demonstrate that you've read and understand the whole text
- 2.3: Paraphrase to demonstrate your understanding of the complex ideas in a text
- 2.4: Quote to emphasize the writerly choices made in a text
- 2.5: Make writerly choices when quoting texts
- 2.6: Correct citation builds trust and authority
- 2.7: Learn how to avoid plagiarism

3: Essential Essay Strategies

- 3.1: Brainstorming helps you develop your ideas
- 3.2: Topic + Stance + Reasons + Importance = Thesis
- 3.3: There is no one-size-fits-all essay structure, but there are useful patterns
- 3.4: Strong paragraphs start with good evidence
- 3.5: Writing Introductions
- 3.6: A conclusion should explain "So What" or "Now What"

4: Essential Grammar Strategies

- 4.1: Understand the level of "correctness" necessary for your writing situation
- 4.2: Master some sentence basics
- 4.3: Whose mistake? Reading like writer
- 4.4: When you're ready, learn the rules that will help you

5: Revision

- 5.1: Fix the big stuff before you fix the little stuff
- 5.2: Outlining your draft is a good revision tool
- 5.3: Giving and receiving feedback will make you a better writer
- 5.4: It's OK to be anxious or afraid
- 5.5: Triplecheck your essay before turning it in (Spell Check, Grammar Check, Checklist)

6: Finding and Using Sources

- 6.1: Your readers expect you to find and cite reliable sources
- 6.2: Your readers expect you to use sources that have information your readers don't already know
- 6.3: Your readers expect you to understand your sources
- 6.4: Your readers expect you to do interesting things with your sources

7: Moving Beyond Essay Basics

- 7.1: Use reasoning to connect claims and evidence
- 7.2: Use patterns of organization and development
- 7.3: Use transitions and signposts to develop relationships between ideas
- 7.4: Your essay should continue the conversation
- 7.5: Reading like a writer can help you develop conversations in your essays

8: Modes and Genres

9: Coming Soon- Genres of Real World Writing

10: Equipment for Writing

11: Housing Inequality

- 11.1: 1. Separated by Design- How Some of America's Richest Towns Fight Affordable Housing
- 11.2: 2. Separated by Design- Why Affordable Housing Is Built in Areas With High Crime, Few Jobs and Struggling Schools
- 11.3: 3. How Wealthy Towns Keep People With Housing Vouchers Out
- 11.4: 4. One of America's Wealthiest States Might Pass Up an Opportunity to Tackle Housing Segregation
- 11.5: 5. Housing Segregation and Redlining in America- A Short History
- 11.6: 6. Urban planning as a tool of white supremacy – the other lesson from Minneapolis
- 11.7: 7. Opinion- "Joe Biden's disastrous plans for America's suburbs."
- 11.8: 8.realDonaldTrump Tweets

[Index](#)

[Glossary](#)

[Detailed Licensing](#)

Licensing

A detailed breakdown of this resource's licensing can be found in [Back Matter/Detailed Licensing](#).

Introduction- Equipment for Writing

The title of this OER is inspired by Kenneth Burke's essay "Literature as Equipment for Living." After listing and categorizing a range of proverbs, Burke draws a series of conclusions:

- 1) that proverbs exist to provide "strategies for dealing with situations";
- 2) that the range of proverbs demonstrates the range of situations requiring strategies;
- 3) that often one situation can require a range of proverbs, and thus a range of strategies;

In typical Burkean fashion, does not arrive at an easy answer. Instead, he arrives at a word that he redefines for his own purposes. He defends his use of the word strategy (a word that evokes battle) by turning to dictionaries and arguing that art, too, is "designed to organize and command the army of one's thoughts..." I imagine this textbook in a similar vein, as something that offers students strategies that will transfer to the different writing situations they will face in and out of school; that will, as Burke suggests, equip them for living.

In a sense, OER is a kind of proverb. It responds to the situation of the increased cost of higher education, of which textbooks are only a part. OER's openness opens a door, making school a more welcoming place by offering students at least one aspect of their education that doesn't require yet another payment; OER moves knowledge outside of the confines of specific course and LMS, thus providing students resources that will exist long beyond their classes. OER also responds to the situation of skepticism about the publishing industry as a way of distributing academic knowledge, and a frustration at the ways that paywalls create another barrier to the democratizing power of education in particular, and knowledge in general. OER fights back against neoliberalism's encroachment into higher education, and the value placed on the monetary value. And, OER responds to the situation of our digital age, in which words on a screen are so, so much cheaper than words on paper. In responding to these forces, OER also provides strategies--giving us tool with which to fight back. OER creates an army--both of thought and of people.

When I began working with OER, I might have used the proverb "The grass is always greener on the other side" to make the point that OER merely seemed better than my current course adoptions; now I might use a proverb like "Make hay while the sun shines" to make the point that now is always the time to make OER; or I might use a proverb like "A stitch in time saves nine" to make the point that OER saves students money NOW, and so it can't be just another thing that we'll get to next semester. Burke offers an unwitting endorsement of OER when he describes the value of slang as a kind of proverb:

"Mencken's book on The American Language, I hate to say, is splendid. I console myself with the reminder that Mencken didn't write it. Many millions of people wrote it, and Mencken was merely the amanuensis who took it down from their dictation. He found a true 'vehicle' (that is, a book that could be greater than the author who wrote it)."

On that note, I did not "write" this book. I remixed other good OER. I added a joke or two. I edited a few other parts. Maybe I'll do more. I've tried to be clear about what OER I'm drawing from. Throughout, I draw heavily on these OER, and I hope I've done right by these works by providing proper attributions where needed

Monique Babin, Carol Burnell, Susan Pesznecker, Nicole Rosevear, and Jaime Wood, *The Word on College Reading and Writing* ([https://human.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Composition/Book%3A_The_Word_on_College_Reading_and_Writing_\(Babin_et_al.\)](https://human.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Composition/Book%3A_The_Word_on_College_Reading_and_Writing_(Babin_et_al.))) CC-BY-NC

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Anna Mills, *How Arguments Work: A Guide to Writing and Analyzing in Texts in College*, [https://human.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Composition/Advanced_Composition/Book%3A_How_Arguments_Work_-_A_Guide_to_Writing_and_Analyzing_Texts_in_College_\(Mills\)](https://human.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Composition/Advanced_Composition/Book%3A_How_Arguments_Work_-_A_Guide_to_Writing_and_Analyzing_Texts_in_College_(Mills)) CC-BY-NC

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

1: Reading in College

Article directory
Topic hierarchy
1.1: Develop general reading strategies by reflecting on you as a reader 1.2: Read to study the choices made by other writers 1.3: Understand the difference between responding and analyzing 1.4: Reading for Rhetoric and Reasoning 1.5: Annotation is a system for remembering what you read 1.6: Effective reading prepares you for higher order thinking

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1.1: Develop general reading strategies by reflecting on you as a reader

(1200 words)

Why start a book of writing strategies with a section on reading?

As Ellen Carillo explains in *Bad Ideas about Writing* (a book about bad ideas that we need to change), the separation between reading and writing needs to change.

If students are not given the opportunity to continue working on their reading throughout their college careers, they may struggle analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating all that surrounds them since comprehension is a crucial step toward these more advanced interpretive practices. Students may lack the ability to read the world around them because they do not have the tools to recognize the values and assumptions that inform the images, advertisements, news stories, political campaigns, and ideas with which they come into contact on a daily basis. By not focusing on reading as an equally creative and active enterprise as writing—very much writing’s counterpart in the creation of meaning—colleges and universities are potentially producing students, or citizens, who think reading is passive. These students might blindly accept whatever comes their way rather than actively engaging ideas, asking questions, and seeking out multiple perspectives.

Although writing is more often thought of as a creative act, reading is just as creative. When one writes, one is creating meaning by putting words and ideas together. When one reads, the same thing is happening. Although someone else has already put the words and ideas together, the reader interacts with those and creates meaning by bringing her perspective, personal experiences, and background to what literary scholar Louise Rosenblatt has called the transaction between the text and reader. This is why a few people might read the same novel but each take something different from it. That personal transaction with the text has affected how each reader creates meaning. When reading and writing are taught alongside each other in the college-level classroom, students can gain practice experiencing and relishing in opportunities to create meaning not just through writing, but through reading everything from print texts to art to websites to national news events, all of which they will continue to engage beyond school. Focusing on active reading approaches, including everything from comprehension strategies to ways of determining something’s inherent values and biases to productive methods of responding, is crucial if students are going to leave postsecondary institutions prepared to be informed, aware, and engaged citizens.

As Carillo suggests, a text is anything that conveys a set of meanings to the person who examines it. You might have thought that texts were limited to written materials, such as books, magazines, newspapers. Those items are indeed texts—but so are movies, paintings, television shows, songs, political cartoons, online materials, advertisements, maps, works of art, even rooms full of people. If we can look at something, explore it, find layers of meaning in it, and draw information and conclusions from it, we’re looking at a text. And while most of advice that follows is specific to written materials, that doesn’t mean that you can’t extend these concepts to other kinds of texts.

As a college student, much of your time will be spent interacting with texts of all types, shapes, sizes, and delivery methods. And, most of the writing you do in college will be based on your response to a text. That means that good writing begins with good reading. No matter what field you're going into, you'll be doing a lot of reading. The more effectively you read, the easier it'll be, the less time it will take, and the more you'll enjoy the experience. People who read effectively use a variety of skills and techniques.

How do you become an better reader?

Know the purpose of your reading.

As a student, this is probably the most important question you have: What assignments are associated with this reading? What will your professor expect you to know about this reading? Sometimes the purpose will be obvious. If you don't know the purpose, look for a reason to read within the text itself: what does the text want you to do? Knowing your purpose will help you to select the most relevant of the strategies that follow.

Reflect on your experience of reading a text.

As you read, frequently stop to check in on yourself. Are you understanding the text? Enjoying it? Do you remember what you just read? Are you distracted? Throughout your education, you'll want to be reflective about everything you do as a student. Indeed, [much research show that reflection is one of the habits of successful students.](#)

Be willing to read a text more than once.

Really. Any text you are going to write about needs to be read at least two times, and probably three times. Read a text more than once, focusing on different details each time. All of the skills required for effective reading build on the practices of effective reading. Create an optimal setting for reading.

Create a reading environment

As much as you can, pick the best time, place, and conditions that help decrease distraction. Or, adapt to your reading environment when the perfect environment isn't available by chunking your reading. Again, this is part of reflection. Understanding when you are at your best can help you to maximize those situations.

Keep reading.

Read every day. And vary the materials you read: a book, a magazine article, an online blog, etc. Try readings things that are a little challenging. In other words, don't just vary the subject matter—vary the difficulty, too. Stretch!

Research or investigate content you don't fully understand.

As you read, you might run into ideas, words, or phrases you don't understand, or the text might refer to people, places, or events you're unfamiliar with. It's tempting to skip over those and keep reading, and sometimes that actually works. But keep in mind that when you read something written by a professional writer or academic, they've written with such precision that every word carries meaning and contributes to the whole. Therefore, skipping over words or ideas could change the meaning of the text or leave the meaning incomplete. When you're reading and come to words and ideas you're unfamiliar with, you may want to stop and take a moment to do a bit of quick research. Google is a great tool for this—plug in the idea or word and see what comes up. Keep on digging until you have an answer, and then, to help retain the information, take a minute to write a note about it.

But, draw a clear line for yourself between research and plagiarism. Many of the texts you will be asked to read in college have been read before, and someone, somewhere has probably put there ideas about a text somewhere online. Please refrain from drawing on the ideas you find on websites like Course Hero, Enotes, and Shmoop. Your professors have not assigned the texts they have BECAUSE the answers are on Shmoop; rather, your professors have chosen these texts because these texts are good texts for teaching you how to develop a process for finding your own answers. Your future employers will not hire you based on your ability to Shmoop, and you cannot put Shmoop down as a skill on your résumé; rather, your future employers will want to know YOUR ideas about the new guidelines for widget optimization. Even if you are never required to analyze a poem in your future career, you will have to analyze something. Analyzing the poem is just practice.

Questions for Reflection

Why is reading a creative act?

Reflect on your experience of reading this text so far. How would you describe the experience? What do you notice about how you read? Did you successfully achieve the purpose of this reading?

[Content adapted from [The Word on College Reading and Writing](#) (Babin, et al) CC-BY-NC]

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1.2: Read to study the choices made by other writers

(1800 words)

Identifying Writerly Choices

When you Read Like a Writer (RLW) you work to identify some of the choices the author made so that you can better understand how such choices might arise in your own writing. Instead of reading for content or to better understand the ideas in the writing (which you will automatically do to some degree anyway), you are trying to understand how the piece of writing was put together by the author and what you can learn about writing by reading a particular text. As you read in this way, you think about how the choices the author made and the techniques that he/she used are influencing your own responses as a reader. What is it about the way this text is written that makes you feel and respond the way you do?

The goal as you read like a writer is to locate what you believe are the most important writerly choices represented in the text—choices as large as the overall structure or as small as a single word used only once—to consider the effect of those choices on potential readers (including yourself). Then you can go one step further and imagine what *different* choices the author *might* have made instead, and what effect those different choices would have on readers.

Say you're reading an essay in class that begins with a short quote from President Barack Obama about the war in Iraq. As a writer, what do you think of this technique? Do you think it is effective to begin the essay with a quote? What if the essay began with a quote from someone else? What if it was a much *longer* quote from President Obama, or a quote from the President about something other than the war?

And here is where we get to the most important part: *Would you want to try this technique in your own writing?*

Would you want to start your own essay with a quote? Do you think it would be effective to begin your essay with a quote from President Obama? What about a quote from someone else? You could make yourself a list. What are the advantages and disadvantages of starting with a quote? What about the advantages and disadvantages of starting with a quote from the President? How would other readers respond to this technique? Would certain readers (say Democrats or liberals) appreciate an essay that started with a quote from President Obama better than other readers (say Republicans or conservatives)? What would be the advantages and disadvantages of starting with a quote from a *less* divisive person? What about starting with a quote from someone *more* divisive?

The goal is to carefully consider the choices the author made and the techniques that he or she used, and then decide whether you want to make those same choices or use those same techniques in your own writing. It is helpful to ask yourself questions *as* you read like a writer. As you're first learning to read in this new way, you may want to have a set of questions written or typed out in front of you that you can refer to while reading. Eventually—after plenty of practice—you will start to ask certain questions and locate certain things in the text almost automatically. Remember, for you, and most students, this is a new way of reading, and you'll have to train yourself to do it well. Also keep in mind that you're reading to understand how the text was *written*—how the house was built—more than you're trying to determine the meaning of the things you read or assess whether the texts are good or bad.

Do you know the author's purpose and intended audience?

It may be that you need to start reading before you can answer these first two questions, but it's worth trying to answer them before you start. For example, if you know at the outset that the author is trying to reach a very specific group of readers, then his or her writerly techniques may seem more or less effective than if he/she was trying to reach a more general audience. Similarly—returning to our earlier example of beginning an essay with a quote from President Obama about the war in Iraq—if you know that the author's purpose is to address some of the dangers and drawbacks of warfare, this may be a very effective opening. If the purpose is to encourage Americans to wear sunscreen while at the beach this opening makes no sense at all.

In What Genre Is This Written?

Another important thing to consider before reading is the genre of the text. Genre means a few different things in college English classes, but it's most often used to indicate the *type* of writing: a poem, a newspaper article, an essay, a short story, a novel, a legal brief, an instruction manual, etc. Because the conventions for each genre can be very different (who ever heard of a 900-page

newspaper article?), techniques that are effective for one genre may not work well in another. Many readers expect poems and pop songs to rhyme, for example, but might react negatively to a legal brief or instruction manual that did so. RLW helps you understand the structures and expectations of different genres, and can be used equally well with either published or student-produced writing.

Is this the kind of writing you will be assigned to write yourself?

Knowing ahead of time what kind of writing assignments you will be asked to complete can really help you to read like a writer. It's probably impossible (and definitely too time consuming) to identify *all* of the choices the author made and *all* techniques an author used, so it's important to prioritize while reading. Knowing what you'll be writing yourself can help you prioritize. Maybe your instructor has assigned the text you're reading to serve as a model for the kind of writing you'll be doing later.

If the text you're reading is a model of a particular style of writing—for example, highly-emotional or humorous—RLW is particularly helpful because you can look at a piece you're reading and think about whether you want to adopt a similar style in your own writing. You might realize that the author is trying to arouse sympathy in readers and examine what techniques he/she uses to do this; then you can decide whether these techniques might work well in your own writing. You might notice that the author keeps including jokes or funny stories and think about whether you want to include them in your writing—what would the impact be on your potential readers

How effective is the language the author uses?

Is it too formal? Too informal? Perfectly appropriate? Depending on the subject matter and the intended audience, it may make sense to be more, or less, formal in terms of language. As you begin reading, you can ask yourself whether the word choice and tone/ language of the writing seem appropriate.

What kinds of evidence does the author use to support his/her claims?

Does he/she use statistics? Quotes from famous people? Personal anecdotes or personal stories? Does he/she cite books or articles? How appropriate or effective is this evidence? Would a different type of evidence, or some combination of evidence, be more effective? To some extent the kinds of questions you ask should be determined by the genre of writing you are reading. For example, it's probably worth examining the evidence that the author uses to support his/ her claims if you're reading an opinion column, but less important if you're reading a short story. An opinion column is often intended to convince readers of something, so the kinds of evidence used are often very important. A short story *may* be intended to convince readers of something, sometimes, but probably not in the same way. A short story rarely includes claims or evidence in the way that we usually think about them.

Are there places in the writing that you find confusing?

What is it about the writing in those places that makes it unclear or confusing? It's pretty normal to get confused sometimes while reading, especially while reading for class, so it can be helpful to look closely at the writing to try and get a sense of exactly what tripped you up. Are the ideas new? If so, they might become clearer upon rereading. Are there terms and concepts you don't know? If so, you might need to look them up to gain an adequate understanding of the text.

Pay attention to the ways that texts confuse you to avoid those same problems in your own writing.

How does the author move from one idea to another in the writing? Are the transitions between the ideas effective? How else might he/she have transitioned between ideas instead?

Notice that in these questions I am encouraging you to question whether aspects of the writing are *appropriate* and *effective* in addition to deciding whether you liked or disliked them. You need to imagine how other readers might respond to the writing and the techniques you've identified. Deciding whether you liked or disliked something is only about you; considering whether a technique is appropriate or effective lets you contemplate what the author might have been trying to do and to decide whether a majority of readers would find the technique successful. This is important because it's the same thing you should be thinking about while you are writing: how will readers respond to this technique I am using, to this sentence, to this word? As you read, ask yourself what the author is doing each step of the way, and then consider whether the same choice or technique might work in your own writing.

What Should You Be Writing As You Are Reading?

The most common suggestion made by former students—was to mark up the text, make comments in the margins, and write yourself notes and summaries both during and after reading. Often the notes students took while reading became ideas or material for the students to use in their own papers. It's important to read with a pen or highlighter in your hand so that you can mark—right on the text—all those spots where you identify an interesting choice the author has made or a writerly technique you might want to use. One thing that I like to do is to highlight and underline the passage in the text itself, and then try to answer the following three questions on my notepad:

- What is the technique the author is using here?
- Is this technique effective?
- What would be the advantages and disadvantages if I tried this same technique in my writing?

By utilizing this same process of highlighting and note taking, you'll end up with a useful list of specific techniques to have at your disposal when it comes time to begin your own writing.

Reflection

1. How is "Reading Like a Writer" similar to and/or different from the way(s) you read for other classes?
2. What writerly choices do you notice in this reading? Were the choices effective?

Attributions

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1.3: Understand the difference between responding and analyzing

(1100 words)

Two common assignments based on reading a text are Responding and Analyzing. Recognizing which you need to do will help you be successful as a writer.

As you might have noticed from the reading so far, the key to any effective reading of a text is asking questions. The kinds of questions you ask form what is sometimes called a **heuristic** (a fancy word for a process that leads you to a solution). The responses that you eventually have to a text will only be as good as the questions you ask. Over time, as you practice, asking these questions will become automatic. For now, please consult these lists regularly.

Responding means explaining how you feel about a text

One common writing task in college is to respond to a text. The typical pattern of a response is to explain the ideas in a text AND THEN have something to say about them. When you respond to a text, you focus on your own view of text. Here are some questions you can ask yourself when you want to respond to a text

- What is the text's main point (thesis)?
- What points to you find especially interesting?
- What do you agree with? What do you disagree with? Why?
- What does the text make you think about? Have you had any experiences like those being described? Can you identify with the text? If not, why not?
- How does who you are (age, education, cultural background, religion, ethnicity, etc.) shape your response to this text?
- What questions do you have about the work? What would you ask the author? What would you ask your professor?

Analysis means explaining how the parts of text work together to create the meaning

Another common writing task in college is analysis: breaking something down into its parts so that you can understand how it works. This is common task across disciplines, so you will hear this word throughout your college career. In writing courses, analyzing a text means reading through the writer's eyes to understand the deeper, interwoven meanings layered within a text. You should assume that ALL choices in a text are deliberate writerly choices, even if they don't make sense to you right away. The two most fundamental questions to ask when analyzing are

- What is the text's main point (thesis)?
- How does the text support its claims?
- Is the author objective, or does he/she try to convince you to have a certain opinion? Why does the author try to persuade you to adopt this viewpoint?

Analyze the structure of the piece to understand how the text works.

Exploring a text's structure may sound a little complicated, but it really isn't. It means looking for how it's been constructed or built, and how the structure supports the work the text is trying to do. The fancy literary terms for this are "form" and "function." Form refers to the way the text is structured, while function refers to what it communicates to the reader.

- How is the text organized? (Does it seem logical? Is it in time-related, chronological order? Does it skip around in time with flashbacks or flash-forwards? Does it return to the same themes throughout? Do the later parts of the text echo the beginning?)
- Is it divided into obvious sections? Do the sections have headings, or are they just visually separated?
- Does the author use comparison/contrast, explore cause and effect, or examine a process to present their ideas?
- Is there a lot of detail and description in the text? Why does the text give these details? Is the level of detail consistent?
- How do the parts of text relate to each other?
- Does the author do anything unusual* or unexpected with the text?

Analyze the word and style choices

Simple language can help make a text available to everyone. But some readers might be bored or frustrated by overly-simple language. Using more complex language allows a writer to add deeper layers of information and meaning to a text, and this can work if the audience is familiar with the language (or jargon) being used. But if they're not, they may find the text confusing, irritating, or even impossible to understand.

Jargon refers to language, abbreviations, or terms that are used by specific groups— typically those people involved in a profession. Using jargon within that group makes conversation simpler, and it works because everyone in the group knows the lingo. The problem with using jargon when writing is that if your reader has no idea of what those terms mean, you'll lose them.

Read this paragraph that relies heavily on jargon:

- *Those who experience sx of URI might consider visiting a PCP. This should happen ASAP with pyrexia >101, enlarged cervical nodes, purulent nares drainage, or tonsillar hypertrophy. Tx may include qid antibiotics, ASA, fluids, and a mucolytic.*

If you're in a medical field, you probably understood that paragraph. Otherwise, it probably sounded like another language!

Now read this translation in lay (non-jargon) terms:

- *Those who have cold symptoms might consider visiting their primary care provider. This should happen quickly if there is fever over 101, swollen glands in the neck, green or yellow drainage from the nose, or inflamed, swollen tonsils. Treatment may include antibiotics, aspirin, fluids, and medications designed to loosen phlegm and make it easier to cough.*

That's quite a change, yes? It's a good example of why we usually want to avoid jargon, only use it with an audience that understands it, or explain each term carefully as we use them.

Sometimes writers play with spelling and punctuation to create a certain sound or dialect within a text. Dialect is a language or language-sound that is known by and particular to a specific group of people or a specific geographical region. For example, think about how people define a sweet carbonated drink as "pop," "soda," or "Coke" depending on what part of the U.S. they live in.

Consider this example from the book, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee; it's set in the south and written in words that create a distinct dialect:

- "Reckon I have. Almost died first year I come to school and et them pecans—folks say he pizened 'em and put 'em over on the school side of the fence."
- Translation: "I suppose I have. I almost died the first year I came to school and ate those pecans. Folks say he [Mr. Radley] poisoned them and put them on the school's side of the fence."

Remember: you should treat all choices as deliberate, writerly choices.

Here I made the deliberate, writerly choice to make that last statement into a heading so that it would be bigger, and bold, and show up on the table of contents

Discussion

Why should you treat all choices as deliberate, writerly choices when doing an analysis?

Thinking back on the questions you've been told to ask when reading, do you see any patterns emerging?

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1.4: Reading for Rhetoric and Reasoning

(900 words)

Adapted from Tanya Long Bennett "Writing and Literature: Composition as Inquiry, Learning, Thinking, and Communication" CC-BY-SA

Strategy: Recognize when texts are using rhetorical strategies and reasoning

Rhetoric the use of persuasive techniques. When you read to understand how writers use rhetoric, you are also reading to understand how you can use rhetoric to be persuasive. (Persuasive, in the rhetorical sense, means bringing someone to your side through means OTHER than through force. Essentially, making someone choose to be on your side). In order to persuade a particular audience of a particular point, a writer makes decisions about how best to convince the reader. Aristotle (the Greek philosopher whose works on rhetoric have best survived to the present) called these decisions "appeals," and he defined 3 main appeals.

Logos: Appeal to Logic

Consider this hypothetical plea from Zach to his father: "Dad, could you loan me money for gas until I get my paycheck at the end of the week? If you do, I'll be able to haul your junk pile to the dump as well as drive myself back and forth to work. I'll pay you back as soon as I get my check!"

Logos appeals to the reader's intellect. As readers, we test arguments for their soundness. Does the writer make false assumptions? Are there gaps in the argument? Does the writer leap to conclusions without sufficient evidence to back up his claims? A writer's job is to build a solid, well-explained, sufficiently supported argument.

What about Zach's argument above? Essentially, he asserts that a loan from his father would benefit both Zach and his dad. Does the argument seem sound? We do not know why Zach is short on cash this week—his father may be aware that Zach spent most of last week's check on the newest iPhone, so he does not have enough to cover his gas this week. Thus, there may be factors that undermine Zach's implication that his request is motivated by responsibility. However, he does offer evidence that the loan will allow him to fulfill his obligations.

We'll say more about constructing your own logic in a later chapter. For now, it's important to recognize the ways that sources often make claims that supported by combinations of evidence, reasoning, assumptions, and values.

Ethos: an appeal based on the credibility of the writer

Ethos is often generated by the expertise of the writer. A doctor who studies immunology would have more ethos when speaking about COVID-19 than would a radio host. But ethos is also generated by the author's apparent ethics. If the reader perceives that she shares important values with the writer, the door of communication opens wider than if the writer and reader seem to lack common values. If a reader believes that mask regulations are an example of government overreach, they will be more likely to believe the conspiracy theories of a radio host who has similar views about masks. Reflecting back to Zach's request for a loan from his father, Zach does remind his father subtly that the loan will allow him to work, both at his job and at home. This respect for work is likely a value held by Zach's father, so it becomes important common ground for the argument.

Pathos: an appeal to the reader's emotions

Certainly, Zach's father will be affected by his feelings for his son Zach as he considers whether to loan Zach the money for gas, but what about in a more academic or professional context? Even though the goal of an academic writer is to approach a research topic as objectively as possible, even scholars are people, and people are emotional creatures.

When you read to understand a writer's pathos, make sure that you can identify the emotions they try to create in you, and ask yourself why that emotion might be a useful part of their argument. 19th Century rhetorician George Campbell offers an effective explanation of the power of pathos in argument.

If the orator would prove successful, it is necessary that he engage in his service all these different powers of the mind: the imagination, the memory, and the passions. These are not the supplanters of reason, or even rivals in her sway; they are her handmaids, by whose ministry she is enabled to usher truth into the heart, and procure it there a favourable reception

As Campbell suggest with imagery, the passions help us want to get married to an idea. The image makes sense. When people first fall in love, they have strong passions and emotions for the other person. Later, they find other reasons to want to be with that partner. Campbell explains how emotions are use to excite the mind toward the writer's opinion, but the audience is not persuaded unless the emotions are consistent with the logic of the argument.

Analysis means looking at how the parts work together

When you analyze the rhetoric, you should try to identify the Logos, Ethos, and Pathos on their own. But, as Campbell suggests, you should also look at how they work together.

Logical Fallacies: Treat every choice as a deliberate choice

A logical fallacy is a faulty argument. Sometimes it is just sloppy or lazy, other times it is deliberately manipulative. If you want, you can start learning more about them in [other OER on Libretexts](#).

Reflection

- **Think about a time you had to be persuasive. Which appeals did you use? Were you effective? Would you do anything differently now?**
- **Do you think Campbell is right about the connection between passion and reason?**

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1.5: Annotation is a system for remembering what you read

(1400 words)

adapted from [https://human.libretexts.org/Bookshe...\(Babin_et_al.\)](https://human.libretexts.org/Bookshe...(Babin_et_al.))

Writing is a Technology for Memory

Remember: Technology is just a tool. The origin of the word is "techne", the Greek word for a system or method for making or doing (etymonline.com). The philosopher Plato famously worried that the technology of writing was evil because it encouraged people to forget. Perhaps he was partly right. But writing is also a powerful tool for remembering. Think about how iCloud backs up your photos: it saves the full version of a photo in the cloud, and just keeps a smaller version of the file on your phone. Writing works the same way: it's like saving your ideas to the cloud so they don't take up too much space in your brain. That way, you can put more ideas in your brain.

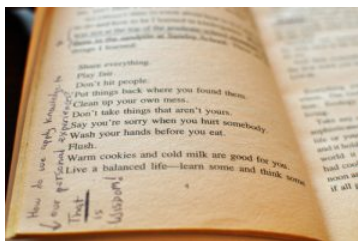


Figure 1.5.1 - Image of words written in a book: *Words of Wisdom* by Anne CN is licensed under CC by 2.0

As children, most of us were told never to write in books, but now that you're a college student, your teachers will tell you just the opposite. Writing in your texts as you read—annotating them—is encouraged! It's a powerful strategy for engaging with a text and entering a discussion with it. Capturing these ideas as they occur to you is important, for they may play a role in not just understanding the text better but also in your college assignments. If you don't make notes as you go, today's great observation will likely become tomorrow's forgotten detail.

[Important note: most college and university bookstores approve of textual annotation and don't think it decreases a textbook's value. In other words, you can annotate a college textbook and still sell it back to the bookstore later on if you choose to. You can even write in Rental Books. As the Textbook FAQ says (<https://www.bkstr.com/housatoniccstore/help-faq/textbook-rental>): "Normal highlighting and note-taking are perfectly acceptable. So, what's not OK? Well, excessive markings, as these would render the book unusable for the next customer."]

Many students use brightly-colored highlighting pens to mark up texts. These are better than nothing, but in truth, they're not much help. Using them creates big swaths of eye-popping color in your text, but when you later go back to them, you may not remember why they were highlighted. Writing in the text with a simple pen or pencil is always preferable. Ball point ink is less likely to soak through the page. If using erasable pens, test in an inconspicuous area to make sure they actually erase on that paper. What about e-books? Most of them have on-board tools for note-taking as well as providing dictionaries and even encyclopedia access. Another option is to copy a text into a word processing file and use the comment feature to take notes.

Some Tips for Annotating: Something is better than nothing, and often less is more

- Something is better than nothing. Make some marks as you read through a text the first time. Develop your own set of symbols.
 - use checkmarks and exclamation points for important points
 - use question marks for things you don't understand
- Circle important words.
- Underline or highlight brief passages
 - No more than two lines. If everything is underlined, then nothing stands out as important.
- Take advantage of blank space on the page

- Don't cram all of your ideas in the small margins. Use the top and bottom of the page. Before you print something, play with the print options to give yourself more space on the page.
- Write numbers in the margins and then write more complete ideas where you have room

If you can't write on the text itself (perhaps because the text is a video), you can accomplish almost the same thing by taking notes—either by hand (on paper) or e-notes. You might also choose to use sticky notes to capture your ideas—these can be stuck to specific pages for later recall.

Many students also like to keep reading journals. A good way to use these is to write a quick summary of your reading immediately after you've finished. Capture the reading's main points and discuss any questions you had or any ideas that were raised. For complicated texts, you might want to summarize each page or each section. Make sure you quote any exact words or phrases from a text that you write in your notes (more about this later).

Creating Dialectic Notes

A dialectical approach to taking notes sounds much more complicated than it is. A dialectic is just a dialogue, a discussion between two (or more) voices trying to figure something out. Whenever we read new material, particularly material that is challenging in some way, it can be helpful to take dialectic notes to create clear spaces for organizing these different sets of thoughts.

Dialectic notes serve many purposes

- They can help you contribute to class discussion about this piece and the topics it addresses.
- Significant questions you encountered while reading are already written down and collected in one place so you don't have to sift back through the reading to re-discover those questions.
- These notes provide a place where many of your observations and thoughts about the piece are already organized, which can help you see patterns and connections within those observations. Finding these connections can be a strong starting point for written assignments.
- If you are asked to respond to this piece in writing, these notes can serve as a reference point as you develop a draft. They can give you new ideas if you get stuck and help keep the original connections you saw when reading fresh in your mind as you respond more formally to that reading.

On your computer (or tablet, or phone) start by creating a table with with 3 columns. In a notebook, open to a blank two page spread. Draw a vertical line down the middle of the left sheet to make two columns, and then use the other page as the third column (you want your ideas to take up more space than the quotes and examples from the text).

[NOTE: you can make any number of columns you want. I suggest three. but you can add more if you want]

Left Column	Middle Column	Right Column
Quotes from the text	Your initial response	New ideas about the text and your responses

The Left Column

This column will be the ideas in the text you are reading (or viewing). In it, you will note things like

- What are the author's main points in this section?
- What kind of support is the author using in this section?
- Other points of significant interest?
- Note the source and page number, if any, so that you can find and document this source later

You can directly quote these points, but do write them down as you encounter them, not after the fact. If you quote directly, use quotation marks; if you paraphrase, do not use quotation marks. Be consistent so that you don't make more work for yourself when you start writing your draft. For more guidance with [writing summaries](#), [paraphrasing](#), and [quoting](#), see the "Writing in College" section of this book

The Middle Column

The middle column will be the questions and connections you make as you encounter this author's ideas. This might include

- Questions you want to ask in class
- Bigger-picture questions you might explore further in writing
- Connections to other texts you've read or viewed for this class
- Connections to your own personal experiences
- Connections to the world around you (issues in your community, stories on the news, or texts you've read or viewed outside of this class)

The Right Column

It is often a good idea to leave space for a third column where you can add your thoughts as they develop beyond your initial ideas. During class discussions, for example, your classmates and professor might offer ideas that help you build on what you've already written. You can also use the third column to make notes about how you want to use these ideas in your essay: where in your essay do you see this quote fitting in? what connections do you want to make?

Annotating Online

Reading and annotating online open up new possibilities. You might sometimes miss the feel of a hard copy, and reading online requires new ways of paying attention. But the tools available for online and electronic annotation can lessen the drawbacks. Some ways to annotate electronically include

- Copying texts into word or google files and annotating with comments
- Saving files as PDFs or OneNote files to draw on the file with your pen or other drawing tool
- Using a collaborative annotation tool like hypothes.is

Reflection

- How do you like to annotate? Why (or why not, if you don't)?
- How is annotation an important part of the effective reading strategies described in this chapter?

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1.6: Effective reading prepares you for higher order thinking

(1300 words)

Critical thinking and effective reading share many of the same practices

Everything you've read so far has been about reading. But even more than that, it's been about asking questions. Knowing the questions to ask is key to being a critical thinker. Critical thinking is one of those terms that has been used so often and in so many different ways that it often seems meaningless. But critical thinking actually does mean something. The Association of American Colleges and Universities usefully defines it as “a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.”⁶

Here's a helpful anecdote. An art teacher asked his class, “What color is the ceiling?” The class answered, “White.” He then asked, “What color is it really?” The class turned their eyes upwards, and eventually began to offer more accurate answers: “Ivory?” “Yellow-ish tan.” “It's grey in that corner.” After finally getting a few thoughtful responses, the teacher said, “Making good art is about drawing what you see, not what you think you're supposed to see.” The AAC&U definition, above, essentially amounts to the same thing: taking a good look and deciding what you *really* think rather than relying on the first idea or assumption that comes to mind.

The critical thinking rubric produced by the AAC&U describes the relevant activities of critical thinking in more detail. To think critically, one must ...

- (a) “clearly state and comprehensively describe the issue or problem”,
- (b) “independently interpret and evaluate sources”,
- (c) “thoroughly analyze assumptions behind and context of your own or others' ideas”,
- (d) “argue a complex position and one that takes counter-arguments into account,” and
- (e) “arrive at logical and well informed conclusions”.⁸

College Assignments & the Cognitive Domain of Learning

This chapter presented you with a range of questions that can help you become a better reader. Do you remember the first two questions?

What assignments are associated with this reading? What will your professor expect you to know about this reading?

Knowing the kind of work you need to do will help you to do the kind of reading you need to do. Teachers at all levels use the terms from Bloom's taxonomy to define the kinds of work they assign you. Benjamin Bloom was an educational psychologist best known for his clarification of the stages of learning. He divided learning into six main learning-skill levels, or learning-skill stages, which are arranged hierarchically—moving from the simplest of functions like remembering and understanding, to more complex learning skills, like applying and analyzing, to the most complex skills—evaluating and creating. The lower levels are more straightforward and fundamental, and the higher levels are more sophisticated.

Find “analyze” on the taxonomy. It sits at the bottom of the higher-order skills. It is the foundation for any work at the higher levels. If you don't understand how to analyze the texts you read, you don't understand how to use them to evaluate or create.

Consider these two assignments

*“Quote from the story and **analyze** how the growth of the main character.”*

*“**Explain** your first two weeks of college through the concept of socialization from Chapter 5 of the textbook.”*

The first is very straight forward and uses a term from the taxonomy.

The second is less clear. This assignment could be asking to to apply: how does the concept of socialization give you language to explain how you feel about your first week of college? Or it could be analysis: how can the parts of your first week of college be understood as part of a whole process of socialization? Or, you could do higher order thinking by evaluating the effectiveness of the concept of socialization itself when applied to starting college. If in doubt, higher order thinking is better.

Figure 1: The New Version of Bloom's Taxonomy



Figure: ." Writing@CSU. 2010. Web. 10 March 2010. Used by permission from Mike Palmquist.

The following table describes the six main skill sets within the cognitive domain.

Table 2.2: Main Skill Sets within the Cognitive Domain

MAIN SKILL LEVELS WITHIN THE COGNITIVE DOMAIN	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES OF RELATED LEARNING SKILLS (specific actions related to the skill set)
Remembering	When you are skilled in remembering, you can recognize or recall knowledge you've already gained, and you can use it to produce or retrieve or recite definitions, facts, and lists. <i>Remembering may be how you studied in grade school or high school, but college will require you to do more with the information.</i>	identify · relate · list · define · recall · memorize · repeat · record · name
Understanding	Understanding is the ability to grasp or construct meaning from oral, written, and graphic messages. <i>Each college course will introduce you to new concepts, terms, processes, and functions. Once you gain a firm understanding of new information, you'll find it easier, perhaps later, to comprehend how or why something works.</i>	restate · locate · report · recognize · explain · express · identify · discuss · describe · discuss · review · infer · illustrate · interpret · draw · represent · differentiate · conclude
Applying	When you apply, you use learned material (or you implement the material) in new and concrete situations. <i>In college you will be tested or assessed on what you've learned in the previous levels. You will be asked to solve problems in new situations by applying understanding in new ways. You may need to relate abstract ideas to practical situations.</i>	apply · relate · develop · translate · use · operate · organize · employ · restructure · interpret · demonstrate · illustrate · practice · calculate · show · exhibit · dramatize
Analyzing	When you analyze, you have the ability to break down or distinguish the parts of material into its components, so that its organizational structure may be better understood. <i>At this level, you will have a clearer sense that you comprehend the content well. You will be able to answer questions such as what if, or why, or how something would work.</i>	analyze · compare · probe · inquire · examine · contrast · categorize · differentiate · contrast · investigate · detect · survey · classify · deduce · experiment · scrutinize · discover · inspect · dissect · discriminate · separate
Evaluating	With skills in evaluating, you are able to judge, check, and even critique the value of material for a given purpose. <i>At this level in college you will be able to think critically. Your understanding of a concept or discipline will be profound. You may need to present and defend opinions.</i>	judge · assess · compare · evaluate · conclude · measure · deduce · argue · decide · choose · rate · select · estimate · validate · consider · appraise · value · criticize · infer
Creating	With skills in creating, you are able to put parts together to form a coherent or unique new whole. You can reorganize elements into a new pattern or structure through generating, planning, or producing. <i>Creating requires originality and inventiveness. It brings together all levels of learning to theorize,</i>	compose · produce · design · assemble · create · prepare · predict · modify · plan · invent · formulate · collect · generalize · document · combine · relate · propose · develop · arrange · construct · organize · originate · derive · write · propose

MAIN SKILL LEVELS WITHIN THE COGNITIVE DOMAIN	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES OF RELATED LEARNING SKILLS (specific actions related to the skill set)
	<i>design, and test new products, concepts or functions.</i>	

The following video from the Center for Learning Success at the Louisiana State University discusses Bloom's taxonomy learning levels with regard to student success in college.



Video 2.2.12.2.1

Reflection

- "Respond" is not part of Bloom's taxonomy. Where would you put it? Why?
- Overall, how to do the ideas presented in this chapter match up with what you expected to learn about the first week of this course?

[Adapted from [Amy Guptil Writing in College: From Competence to Success](#) and [Reading and Writing for College Success](#) by Athena Kashyap & Erika Dyquisto]

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2: Writing with Sources

Topic hierarchy
Article directory

- [2.1: Understand how an assignments wants you to use texts](#)
- [2.2: Summarize to demonstrate that you've read and understand the whole text](#)
- [2.3: Paraphrase to demonstrate your understanding of the complex ideas in a text](#)
- [2.4: Quote to emphasize the writerly choices made in a text](#)
- [2.5: Make writerly choices when quoting texts](#)
- [2.6: Correct citation builds trust and authority](#)
- [2.7: Learn how to avoid plagiarism](#)

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2.1: Understand how an assignments wants you to use texts

(400 words)

Remember the first two questions from the last chapter.

What assignments are associated with this reading? What will your professor expect you to know about this reading?

All of the other questions follow from these to questions, and I encourage you to revisit the questions throughout the semester. Ultimately, you're reading texts to do something with them. In writing classes, you will have to write about the texts. When you're asked to use texts, then you'll have to present their ideas in your essay. Whatever else you have to do, you'll have to start here. In general, there are three ways to present the ideas from a text:

1. Summarize -- name the author and restate in your own words the general points of a text
2. Paraphrase -- name the author and restate in your own words a specific ideas from a text
3. Quote -- name the author and "present the exact words from a text in quotation marks"

Pay attention to clues in your assignment instructions that will tell you which of these three ways of using texts you will need to successfully complete your assignments. Consider these two examples again

"Quote from the story and analyze how the growth of the main character."

"Explain your first two weeks of college through the concept of socialization from Chapter 5 of the textbook."

The first is straight-forward: select quotes that will let you break down the story into parts, use the quotes to explain how the parts of the story work together.

The second is less clear. To explain a concept, you should start by summarizing. But, as you work with specific details from your experience, you will want to paraphrase and quote more specific parts of the concept that directly relate.

Note that these two prompts ask you to use different kinds of reasoning. The first is deductive: you will draw a conclusion out of the pattern created by the evidence. The second is inductive: you will start with the principle of socialization and then apply it to the evidence of your experience.

In college, as in life, you will face various writing situations with different levels of clarity in the instructions. Fortunately, you are learning a variety of strategies that should help you to cope with whatever situation arises.

Reflection

- Imagine you are describing a movie to a friend. Would you summarize? paraphrase? quote? some combination of the three?
- Are there other situations in life that require you to summarize, paraphrase, or quote?

[adapted from [The Word on College Reading and Writing](#) by Babin, et al]

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2.2: Summarize to demonstrate that you've read and understand the whole text

(1400 words)

Strategy: Summaries show that you've read and understand the whole text

Whenever you read a text, you should be prepared to summarize it. There are many reasons you might summarize:

- Your instructor might ask you to summarize in order to know that you've understood the material (or you can summarize as a way to check your own understanding)
- The ideas in that source are critical to an assignment you are working on and you feel they need to be included, but they would take up too much space in their original form.
- The general ideas from a source are important to include in your work, but the details aren't as important. For example, technical documents or in-depth studies might go into much, much more detail than you are likely to need to support a point you are making for a general audience.

While there are many different reasons to summarize, all summaries share several important characteristics. You know you are summarizing when you

- Use your own words.
- Significantly condense the original text.
- Provide accurate representations of the main points of the text.
- Avoid personal opinion.

A summary is NOT a response

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

Likewise, we might choose only to focus the ideas that best support a point we want to make, or to ignore ideas that don't support that point. This approach has two significant problems, though:

First, it no longer correctly represents the original text, so it misleads your reader about the ideas presented in that text. A summary should give your reader an accurate idea of what they can expect if we pick up the original article to read.

Second, it undermines your own credibility as an author to not represent this information accurately. If readers cannot trust an author to accurately represent source information, they may not be as likely to trust that author to thoroughly and accurately present a reasonable point.

Who said it, when, and where

The more you write, the sooner the pattern of a summary will feel automatic.

In his July 2017 article in *The Atlantic*, "Beyond the Five Senses," Matthew Hutson explores...

In June 2020, Timo Mitze, along with 3 other professors of statistics and economics, published a research article titled "Unmasked! The effect of face masks on the spread of COVID-19,"

Always begin by making it clear that this is a summary of someone else's work; these ideas are not your original ideas. You will almost always begin a summary with an introduction to the author, article, and publication so the reader knows what we are about to read. Then, you should introduce where this text was presented (if it's an art installation, where is it being shown? If it's an article, where was that article published? Not all texts will have this component—for example, when summarizing a book written by one author, the title of the book and name of that author are sufficient information for your readers to easily locate the work you are summarizing. You can also provide context: Is this text responding to a current event? That might be important to know. Does this author have specific qualifications that make them an expert on this topic? This might also be relevant information.

What did they say, why do they think it's true, and how do they support it

The rest of the summary should be a description of the main and supporting ideas of a text. At the very least, you need to state the main idea of a text--it's thesis and it's purpose. Then, depending on why you are summarizing, you should include as many supporting ideas as needed. You don't want your summary to be just a list of ideas in the source. You can still show the relationship between ideas by explaining HOW the source uses evidence and WHY the source has interpreted the evidence the way it has. Provide the reader with a idea of how these supporting points fit together. If a professor asks you to "Summarize this article in 500 words," you will include far more detail than you would if a professor asked you to "Write a brief summary." If a professor asks you to "Summarize the article and then respond," make sure to include in your summary those ideas to which you want to respond.

To review, a summary should:

- Introduce the name of the author whose work you are summarizing.
- Introduce the title of the text being summarized.
- Introduce where this text was presented.
- Give context when necessary.
- State the main ideas of the text you are summarizing.
- State as many of the supporting ideas as necessary for your purpose.

So, for example, if you were to get an assignment asking you to summarize Matthew Hutson's *Atlantic* article, "[Beyond the Five Senses](#)" (found at www.theatlantic.com) a summary might look something like this:

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

Or, if you were asked to summarize an article that includes real evidence of the effect of facemask use, you could summarize "[Unmasked! The effect of face masks on the spread of COVID-19](#),"

In June 2020, Timo Mitze, along with 3 other professors of statistics and economics, published a research article titled "Unmasked! The effect of face masks on the spread of COVID-19," which found that using face masks slowed the spread of COVID. The city of Jena introduced masks sooner than other cities, and through statistical analysis they found that the rate of COVID spread in Jena was 40% lower than in comparable cities that introduced masks later.

To Quote or Not to Quote?

In general, you should avoid quoting in a summary. By definition, a summary is a your own words. That said, sometimes brief quotations of words and phrases from a source will make your summary more accurate and more interesting. If the assignment instructions expressly prohibit quoting, then don't quote. Otherwise, quote as little as possible.

The connection between annotating and summarizing

Effective reading should lead you directly into an effective summary. As you read, mark in the text what you think are the main points. Afterward, review those main points and then choose the points that you think are important to include in your summary. Write the summary without looking at the text. Afterwards, return to the text to check your accuracy.

ProTip: Editing down a summary is easier than building it up

When you first start a summary, don't worry about length. Include all the points you think are relevant to the writer's main idea. Remember, writing is like saving your ideas to the cloud. If you write a good summary the first time, you might not have to go back a re-read the article when you write or revise your essay. You can just cut out the ideas that don't relate to your point (without changing the meaning of the article, of course). But, if your summary is missing key details that you realize you skipped in your initial summary, and you now need those ideas in your essay, you will probably need to re-read the article.

Reflection:

What is the shortest summary you can imagine yourself writing? Next time you write a summary, try it. Imagine you're writing a tweet, for example.

Adapted from The Word in College Reading and Writing

2.2: Summarize to demonstrate that you've read and understand the whole text is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

2.3: Paraphrase to demonstrate your understanding of the complex ideas in a text

(1200 words)



Figure 2.3.1

Why Paraphrase?

Paraphrasing is another way of presenting ideas from source material in your own words, but without the condensing that happens in a summary. Instead, paraphrases stay approximately the same length as the original source material being paraphrased. Choose paraphrase over summary when you need to demonstrate your understanding of complex detail in a text that will require several sentences to explain.

What Makes Something a Paraphrase?

A paraphrase

- Is in your own words
- Is not condensed
- Avoids personal opinion
- Is completely rephrased (and somewhat restructured) from the original

Like summary, a paraphrase is someone else's ideas rewritten in your own words. Unlike summary, though, paraphrase should not be condensed—the ideas as you write them should take up about the same amount of space as they do in the original text. A paraphrase should not include your own opinions about the topic, what the author of the text is saying about it, or how that author is presenting their point

A paraphrase should look similar, but not TOO similar

Here is a brief passage from Sarah Boxer's article in *The Atlantic*, "[An Artist for the Instagram Age](#)":

The fact that some folks have managed to make the scene while others get left out in the cold is integral to the excitement of participatory art. The thrill is akin to exotic travel, or getting to see Hamilton. Because not everyone who wants the experience actually gets the experience, these works, even if their intentions and messages are democratic, tend to become exclusive affairs.

Which of the following is an appropriate paraphrase of this passage? (the answer is below)

1. According to Boxer, the truth that many people have been able to attend these events as others have been shut out of them is key to what makes this kind of art appealing. The excitement is similar to visiting foreign countries or attending a showing of a sold-out musical. Since some people who wish to attend can't do so, these art forms, despite not necessarily wanting to, often end up denying access to many would-be attendees.
2. Boxer notes that this kind of art only maintains its appeal as long as there are more people clamoring to view it than can possibly actually view it. This reliance on scarcity means these artists are ultimately relying on elitist principles to find their success and remain in demand.

Avoiding Plagiarism when Paraphrasing

It can be easy, when writing a paraphrase, to rely on some of the original author's phrasing or direct synonyms for the author's original words. Remember that a paraphrase must be entirely your own writing, not just phrases or words substituted in the same sentence structure, length, etc. used by the original text. **Write paraphrases in sentence structures that are natural to you and true to your own writing voice.** The only job of a paraphrase is to accurately and completely represent the relevant idea presented in the text you are paraphrasing. If you must use words or phrases from the original, you must quote them. Sometimes words or short phrases from the text are essential to the text's point and impossible to translate into your own words.

In the above exercise, Example 1 follows too closely the structure of the original. It merely translates word for word. Thus, it would be considered a form of plagiarism, albeit an accidental form, given that you've provided proper attribution. Example 2 is better paraphrase because it conveys the same ideas in the writer's own words and form.

Recently, websites have sprung up that offer to paraphrase for you. I am not going to link to one. Professors consider the use of these websites plagiarism. They seem designed to help students avoid plagiarism detection programs. Do not use them for academic purposes. They are good for a laugh. Here's the above passage after a website paraphrased it:

The way that a few people have figured out how to cause the scene while others to get left without a friend in the world is basic to the energy of participatory workmanship. The rush is similar to colorful travel, or getting the opportunity to see Hamilton. Since not every person who needs the experience really gets the experience, these works, regardless of whether their aims and messages are popularity based, will in general become selective undertakings

ProTip: Look, look away, look back

When paraphrasing, the look, look away, then look back technique.

Look: read the passage you want to paraphrase. Hint: read it more than once.

Look away: try to write the meaning of the passage from memory. Here's my first attempt at paraphrasing Boxer

Sarah Boxer compares the experience of "participatory art" to exotic travel and attending sold-out shows. Whatever positive message the art wants to convey, that message is lost by the elitism created by the fact that not everyone gets to experience it.

Look back: is your paraphrase accurate? is it too close in places?

When I look back, I see that I took the phrase "exotic travel." I could quote it, but it's not important, so I will change it. I also use the word "experience" in the exact same way Boxer does. This word is important to the meaning, so I will quote it the second time but delete it the first time. Overall, I think my meaning is similar, so I will fix my paraphrase in those small ways

Sarah Boxer compares "participatory art" to specialized tourism or attending sold-out shows. Whatever positive message the art wants to convey, that message is lost by the elitism created by the fact that not everyone "gets the experience".

Wait! You can quote in a paraphrase?

Use paraphrase instead of direct quote unless you have compelling reasons to preserve the exact language of the original text. Often, the reason to preserve the original text in a direct quote is because that text uses specialized language that you can't easily rephrase. As much of your work as possible should be in your own voice.

For example, let's look at the last paragraph of the *Scientific American* article (found at www.scientificamerican.com) "[Are you a Magnet for Mosquitoes?](#)," about why mosquitoes are more attracted to some humans than others. Consider this passage:

"Scientists that study human odors and genetics have previously suggested scent cues associated with genetics are likely controlled via the major histocompatibility complex (MHC) genes. Those genes appear to play a role in odor production

and also in mammals' mating choices—because humans and mice alike appear to prefer mates that smell less similar to themselves, which scientists have theorized may be a natural control against inbreeding.”

You might want to quote the phrase "scent cues" because it's a handy phrase that would take far longer to try to paraphrase. So, a good paraphrase of this passage would look like this

Scientists who study these things have found that some of our "scent cues" are genetic. These genetic scent cues help in mate selection because many mammals --humans included -- avoid mates that have the same scent. This helps prevent choosing a mate that is too close a genetic relation.

Reflection

- How can paraphrase be an effective annotation technique?
- Why do you think this page spends so much time talking about plagiarism (accidental or intentional)?

[adapted from The Word on College Reading and Writing (Babin, et al)]

2.3: Paraphrase to demonstrate your understanding of the complex ideas in a text is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

2.4: Quote to emphasize the writerly choices made in a text

(900 words)

When a professor asks you to quote, they are asking you to use the exact language from a source and place that language into your own paper. Careful copy the source's original language word for word and put the words in quotation marks.

Why Quote?

Ultimately, because you want to retain the powerful, specialized, or unique language of the original

If the original text is phrased in a way that is particularly powerful and paraphrasing it would be likely to weaken it, quoting is a good option. This is also true when the language of the original source is so special or unique that it can't be reasonably rephrased.

Or, if you intend to respond to both the language and the ideas of a source, quoting is a good option.

Direct quotation can demonstrate that existing authoritative sources support a point you are making. It can also present an opposing view to your own for you to then discuss. It can be useful to present opposing views as direct quotes to avoid the risk of personal bias affecting the language of a paraphrase.

Pro Tip: Cutting and Pasting

When you're reading online and you want to quote something, you can save yourself some time by Copy and Pasting.

Before you do anything else, put the quotation marks in your document.

""

Select a passage of text and right click on your mouse to open the copy and paste commands, or use the keyboard commands

Ctrl + C = Copy

Ctrl + X = Cut

Ctrl + V = Paste

Then, **paste the quote directly in between the quotation marks**. If you do this every time you copy and paste a quote into your document, you'll never have to worry about forgetting later where a quote started and ended.

Limit Quotes

It is generally a good idea to limit quotes—don't rely too heavily on them in a paper. Remember that most of your paper should be in your own words and in your own voice. It's also a good rule of thumb to avoid using unnecessarily long quotes. If a quote is longer than a sentence or two, it is a good idea to examine whether the full quote is needed or if a summary, paraphrase, or just part of the quote would get the job done.

Introduce the source

Many of the guidelines for incorporating quotation into your written work will look familiar if you have already read the summary and paraphrase sections of this text, but quotation does have some special rules.

Introduce the author and original text (and potentially context), just as you would for a summary or paraphrase. Often this introduction is only an introductory phrase, in which case it would be followed by a comma and the quote would begin immediately after this phrase as part of the same sentence. Some examples:

According to Amelia Smith, a researcher affiliated with Harvard, "[insert quote here]."

Harvard researcher Amelia Smith argues / explains / concludes / [other appropriate action word] "[insert quote here]."

When you introduce a quote, try to do it as smoothly as possible. No need to draw attention to the fact that you're quoting (the quotation marks will do that for you.) That means, don't quote like this:

There's a quote that comes from Amelia Smith's research. In this quote, she says, "[insert quote here]". What this quote means is . . .

Deliver the quote

After introducing the author and text, you will deliver the quote. This is often as simple as copying and pasting the relevant material from the original text. Direct quotes need to have quotation marks (“”) around them, the first quotation mark just before the first word of the quote and the end quotation mark just after the last word of the quote.

The only exception to the requirement of quotation marks is when using a block quote. A block quote is quoted material that takes up space on four or more consecutive lines of your paper. This kind of quote has a significantly different set of formatting rules, but should also be used very sparingly because it takes up so much valuable space in your paper. If you're interested in learning more about what block quotes do differently, have a look at the “[MLA Formatting Quotations](#)” article from the Purdue OWL (at owl.english.purdue.edu); scroll down a bit to find the section titled “Long Quotations”.

Cite

Include a parenthetical citation (if appropriate) at the end of the quote. (To learn how to do this correctly, see the discussion of in-text citations later in this section.)

Add your thoughts

After delivering and citing the quote, you need to offer some sort of explanation that connects that the quote to your overall purpose in the essay and makes clear for a reader why you choose to use this quote at all. Make sure to explain

- What you want readers to understand about the words and ideas in the quote.
- How the quote helps you to make your argument.

Pro Tip: Quote or Paraphrase?

When you write that sentence after a quote that tries to explain the quote, you will often find that you've just paraphrased the quote. If that happens, just cut the quote. Either take it out entirely, or just incorporate the important phrases into your paraphrase

Reflection

- Do you ever use air quotes or scare quotes? Try to develop an explanation of how they are similar to the use of quotes in academic writing?

[Adapted from The Word on College Reading and Writing (Babin, et al)]

2.4: Quote to emphasize the writerly choices made in a text is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

2.5: Make writerly choices when quoting texts

(800 words)

Breaking Up and Changing Quotes

As mentioned, you should quote the smallest possible unit necessary to make your point. Consider this passage from Lindsey Grace's article "[Designing games that change perceptions, opinions and even players' real-life actions](#)"

"Games offer a unique opportunity to persuade their audiences, because players are not simply listening, reading or interpreting the game's message – they are subscribing to it. To play a game, players must accept its rules and then operate within the designed experience. As a result, games can change our perceptions, and ultimately our actions."

If you only need part of a quote, it is very important to make sure that the part of the quote you are using doesn't change the meaning of the quote. Be careful to retain the parts of the quote that accurately represent what the author was originally saying. For example, it would be confusing if you quoted in this way:

Grace believes that "players are not simply listening, reading or interpreting the game's message."

If you don't need an entire sentence as a quote, but you do need two parts of that sentence, you can use ellipses to show that you've removed part of the quote. Or, you can embed those parts of the quote within your own sentence: a kind of hybrid quote/paraphrase.

Grace believes that "Games . . . persuade their audiences, because players are not simply listening, reading or interpreting the game's message."

OR

Grace believes that "Games offer a unique opportunity to persuade their audience," which means that we can use games to "change our perceptions, and ultimately our actions."

If you have to change the form of a word, use brackets to show that you've changed the word.

Grace considers games "persua[sive]" because "players must accept [a game's] rules and then operate within the designed experience."

You don't need to go out of your way to use these tips. In fact, they often take more time than it would to just use the quote as it is. Most often, these tips are most useful when you are including quotes in a summary or paraphrase.

Special Cases: Songs and Poems

When you quote a sentence from an essay or a story, it doesn't matter if you change the line breaks. But, songs and poems have special rules for quoting because the line breaks are so important. Make sure that your quotes show the line breaks and your in-text citations show the line numbers.

If you wanted to quote several lines from Kendrick Lamar's song "Swimming Pools," you could format them as a block quote by using a double indent. In general, whenever you are quoting more than 3 lines, you should use a block quote).

Now I done grew up round some people living their life in bottles
Granddaddy had the golden flask back stroke every day in Chicago
Some people like the way it feels
Some people wanna kill their sorrows (lines 5-8)

If you want to quote two lines, you can show the line break with a slash.

In "Swimming Pools," Kendrick Lamar compares bottles of alcohol to swimming pools in the lines "Now I done grew up round some people living their life in bottles / Granddaddy had the golden flask back stroke every day in Chicago" (5-6).

Special Cases: Quoting a Quote

Sometimes you will want to quote something that already contains a quote, or you'll want to quote a quote from a text. There are special rules to follow to make sure you provide proper attribution to both the the author the text and the author of the quote. Consider this sentence from the Sarah Boxer article quoted before.

As the art historian Claire Bishop notes in *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, one paradox of this sort of participatory work "is that in intensifying convivial relations for a small group of people ... it produces greater exclusivity vis-à-vis the general public."

If you wanted to quote this whole sentence as is, you would need to change the quotation marks inside the quote to single quotation marks.

Boxer relies on other art critics, as when she makes the point that "As the art historian Claire Bishop notes in *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, one paradox of this sort of participatory work 'is that in intensifying convivial relations for a small group of people ... it produces greater exclusivity vis-à-vis the general public.'"

Or, you could just reuse the quote and give Boxer credit for finding it for you.

Boxer cites the work of another art critic to make the point that "in intensifying convivial relations for a small group of people ... it produces greater exclusivity vis-à-vis the general public" (Claire Bishop, quoted in Boxer).

2.5: Make writerly choices when quoting texts is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

2.6: Correct citation builds trust and authority

(1800 words)

When my son started figuring out how to do things (open the child locks on the cabinet, for example, or make his own toast), I would tease him by asking "Who taught you how to do that? Or did you just wake up and know it?" Now, he teases me whenever I ask him where he learned some fact about animals or when he comes home showing off a Fortnite dance, telling me "I just woke up and I knew it."

In college, no one expects you to just wake up and know things. You are expected to read texts and know things, and you are expected to know from which text you learned things. I didn't realize it at the time, but what I was trying to teach my son was the importance of citation.

What is Citation?

For college-level work, this generally means two things: in-text or parenthetical citation and a "Works Cited" or "References" page. What these two things look like will be a little different for different types of classes (for example, it's likely your writing class will use MLA—Modern Language Association—format, while a psychology class is more likely to use APA—American Psychological Association—format). The specific details required and the order in which they appear changes a little between different formats, but practicing one of them will give you a general idea of what most of them are looking for. All of the information we are looking at here is specific to MLA, which is the format you will use for your writing classes.

In-Text and Parenthetical Citations

Once you have brought source material into your writing (via quotation, summary, or paraphrase), you must cite it. This is essential because giving credit to the creator of the source material helps you avoid plagiarism. Properly used citations also help your reader understand which written content is from a source and which represents your ideas. Sometimes you can accomplish this simply by mentioning the author or title of a source in the body of your writing, but other times you'll handle in-text citation differently, with a parenthetical citation (Parenthetical means that the citation appears in parentheses in the text of your essay).

A starting point for parenthetical citations is that they include the author's last name and the page number where the borrowed information came from. For example, let's say I'm using material from an article written by Lisa Smith. It's in a physical magazine and spans pages 38-42. If, on page 41, she says something like, "While most studies have shown that Expo dry erase markers have superior lasting power, erasability, and color saturation than other brands on the market, their higher cost is a concern for some consumers," I might incorporate that into a paper like this:

According to Lisa Smith, Expo markers are clearly the favored option by most measurable standards (41).

The first time that you mention a source in your writing, you should introduce the speaker and, if possible, the title of the source as well. Use the speaker's full name (e.g. "According to Jonas Fogbottom . . .") the first time you introduce them; if you mention them again in the paper, use their last name only (e.g. "Fogbottom goes on to discuss . . .").

Or you could incorporate it like this:

By most measurable standards, Expo markers are clearly the favored option (Smith 41).

If there are **two authors**, list both (with a page number, if available). If there are **three or more authors**, list the first author only and add "et al."* (with a page number, if available):

(Smith and Jones 24)

(Smith et al. 62)

If you are using an electronic source or another kind of source with no page numbers, just leave the page number out:

(Fogbottom)

If a source doesn't have an author (because many useful documents, like government publications, organizational reports, and surveys, don't list their authors) simply use the title of the source (article, chapter, graph, film, etc.) in the place where you would

have used the author's name. If the title is long, you should abbreviate by listing the first one or two words of it (with a page number, if available). Let's imagine you're working with a newspaper article entitled, "What's New in Technology," enclosed in quotation marks to indicate that this is an article title, and with no known author. Here's what that would look in a parenthetical citation:

("What's New" B6)

On rare occasions you will need to use both the author and the title. For example, if you have two different sources by the same author, you would distinguish between them by using the name and the title:

(Smith "Archetypes" 56)

(Smith "Star Wars")

The parenthetical citation should be added at the end of the sentence that contains the source material.

"Poodle grooming is a labor of love. It takes years of practice to be good at it, but once learned, it's a fun and worthwhile career" (Fogbottom).

Or

Although it takes a long time to become a skilled poodle groomer, it's well worth the effort and leads to a good career (Fogbottom).

If using parenthetical citations is easy, why would we bother with using introduction or linking language to identify sources?

Good question! There would be nothing wrong with only using parenthetical citations all the way through your writing—it would absolutely do the job of citing the material. But, it wouldn't read smoothly and would feel somewhat rough because every time a parenthetical citation popped up, the reader would be "stopped" in place for a moment. Using a combination of introduction, linking language, and parenthetical citation, as needed, makes the writing smoother and easier to read. It also integrates the source material with the writer's ideas. We call this synthesis, and it's part of the craft of writing.

Attributive Language and Signal Phrases

This simply means using words that show the reader you are still talking about a source that you just mentioned. For example, you might use linking language that looks something like this:

Fogbottom also explains . . .

Fogbottom continues . . .

By using this kind of language, you make it clear to the reader that you're still talking about a source. And while you'll use this type of language throughout any researched essay whether you're also using parenthetical citations or not, as we mentioned above, sometimes this linking language will be all you need for in-text citation.

In the article, "Grooming Poodles for Fun and Profit," Jonas Fogbottom says that although it takes a long time to become a skilled poodle groomer, it's well worth the effort and leads to a good career. Fogbottom goes on to explain how one is trained in the art of dog and poodle grooming, and he provides a set of resources for people who want to know more about a dog grooming career.

Using the linking language makes it absolutely clear to your reader that you are still talking about a source.

Works Cited Entries

At the end of texts that have drawn from existing sources, you will often find a Works Cited page. This page gives more information than the parenthetical citations do about what kinds of sources were referenced in this work and where they can be found if the reader would like to know more about them. These entries all follow a specific and consistent format so that it is easy for readers to find the information they are looking for and so the shape and type of that information is consistent no matter who is writing the entries.

Until recently, the MLA required a slightly different format for every type of source—an entry for a Youtube video required certain information that was different from an entry for a book that was different from an entry for an online article. The most recent version of MLA, though—MLA 8—has simplified this so there is just one format rather than many. Include as much of the information as is relevant for your particular source.

Author. "Title of Source." *Container*, contributors, volume and issue numbers, publisher, publication date, location.

For more information on Citation and Works Cited, please visit a page like the [University of North Carolina Library's Citation Guide](#)

Here are a few basic rules for formatting titles:

- "Article" and "chapter titles" are placed in quotation marks. So are "song titles", "television episode titles", "poems", and "short stories".
- *Containers* are always italicized. Anything that holds other sources is a container: a *website*, a *book of poems or essays*, an *music album*, a *television series*. *Movies* and *video games* are also italicized because they are not held in a container, so they are considered containers.
- Whenever possible, follow the capitalization of the source in its original form. In general (but not always), every word in a title is capitalized except for conjunctions (small joining words like and, but, or if), articles (a, an, and the), and prepositions (words that show position, like above, on, and between). Also, don't capitalize "to" when it's part of a verb (to Learn, to Practice, etc.).
- If a colon is used within the title, the word after the colon is always capitalized, e.g., *Raising Golden Retrievers: An Exercise in Power Vacuuming*.

Citation Generators

A citation generator is a piece of software that creates a Works Cited list for the writer. The writer types in the details about the source, and the citation generator creates the citations and the Works Cited list. Some of them also create in-text (parenthetical) citations.

Sounds too good to be true, yes? That's because it is.

Citation generators are always improving, but I have yet to find a citation generator that works correctly all of the time for every source. Most make at least a couple of errors—often more—which means you end up having to go back and manually correct the source. And this means that if you would have just created your own source citation in the beginning, you would have saved time!

I always suggest that students stay away from citation generators for the above reason. I also feel that it's important to learn to do this skill on your own before turning to a piece of software: it's much like learning your multiplication tables before using a calculator to do it for you. Plus, the newest version of MLA (version 8) is so simple that creating citations is quick and easy.

That said, if you are lucky enough to find a citation generator that works, it may save you some time. But be wary. Remember what I said above: "I have yet to find a citation generator that works correctly all of the time for every source."

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2.7: Learn how to avoid plagiarism

(600 words)

What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is using another writer's words or ideas without giving them credit. In most literature essays, this means you use someone else's words or ideas without citing them. Other examples of plagiarism include:

- Submitting an essay written by someone else, in whole or in part
- Copying and pasting from another source
- Attempting to cite sources, but doing so incorrectly or in a way where it is unclear which ideas came from your mind and which came from other sources
- Correctly citing all sources, but most of your essay is made up of the words and ideas of others with very little of your own ideas
- Re-using an essay you wrote in a previous class without instructor permission

HOW TO AVOID PLAGIARISM

Video format not supported.

 Reuse  Embed

H-P

What are the Consequences of Plagiarism?

Most academics consider plagiarism a serious violation of academic honesty. Basically, by plagiarizing, you are betraying the trust of your instructor, peers, and institution. Consequences for plagiarism can include:

- Having to rewrite an assignment
- Receiving a 0 on the assignment
- Receiving an F in the class

- Being kicked out of the class
- Being kicked out of school
- Having a permanent mark on your transcript
- Being stripped of your degree
- Public admonishment
- Being sued for copyright infringement, which, in extreme cases, can cost millions of dollars (!!!). For example, [Marvin Gaye's family was able to win over 5 million dollars when singers Pharrell Williams and Robin Thicke plagiarized one of Marvin Gaye's songs!](#)

In most cases, copyright holders will not go after students because students tend not to have a lot of money laying around. That being said, plagiarism can still have serious consequences. Students should avoid plagiarism at all costs.

The consequences of plagiarism depend on many factors, including:

- The severity of the plagiarism
- Repeated plagiarism behavior
- Your instructor
- The course syllabus, which often describes the class policies and consequences for plagiarism
- Your college
- Your college's student handbook, which often describes the campus policies and consequences for plagiarism

Be sure to consult with your instructor and college about their policies on plagiarism.

What is Ethical Attribution?

Ethical attribution is giving credit to those whose words and ideas you use in your essays. In literature essays, ethical attribution has three parts: attributive tags, in-text parenthetical citations, and a Works Cited page to give credit.

Attributive Tags signal to the reader that material from a source is about to appear in the essay.

Example: According to literary critic Harold Bloom....

In-Text Parenthetical Citations tell the reader that the words or ideas from the source have ended. It also tells the reader where to find the original source information on the Works Cited page so they can see the original source themselves

Example: According to the literary critic Harold Bloom, "we are certain from the start that he is indeed King Hamlet's spirit," and not a demon as Horatio seems to suggest (Bloom 4).

Works Cited page

The Works Cited page gives more in-depth bibliographical information so that readers can find the original source. It appears at the end of the essay, on the last page. It should include all sources referenced in the essay.

Example:

Works Cited

Bloom, Harold. *Hamlet: Poem Unlimited*. New York: Riverhead, 2003.

Why Use Ethical Attribution?

There are several reasons to use ethical attribution

- **Helps You Avoid Plagiarism.** By citing sources correctly, you avoid plagiarism and its consequences.
- **Helps You Refine Your Own Ideas.** By clearly defining which ideas are your original ideas and which belong to other authors, you are better able to refine your ideas.
- **Builds Ethos.** By citing sources, you build credibility and trust with your audience. You also improve your essay's scholarly tone by using the formal conventions used by literary scholars, which include in-text and Works Cited citations.

Activity: Check Your Understanding of Plagiarism

Quiz from *Excelsior OWL*

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

3: Essential Essay Strategies

- 3.1: Brainstorming helps you develop your ideas
- 3.2: Topic + Stance + Reasons + Importance = Thesis
- 3.3: There is no one-size-fits-all essay structure, but there are useful patterns
- 3.4: Strong paragraphs start with good evidence
- 3.5: Writing Introductions
- 3.6: A conclusion should explain "So What" or "Now What"

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3.1: Brainstorming helps you develop your ideas

(1300 words)

Whether you are assigned a particular topic or are allowed to choose your own topic within certain guidelines, the next step is to explore the ideas that you might write about in more detail. This process is called “brainstorming,” though some instructors and textbooks might refer to similar techniques as “invention” or “pre-writing.” Regardless of what it’s called, the goal is the same: to lay the foundation for focusing in on a particular topic and the working thesis of a research-writing project.

I recommend you keep three general concepts in mind when trying any approach to brainstorming with your writing:

- ***Not all of these approaches to brainstorming will work equally well for everyone or work equally well for all topics.*** Your results will vary and that’s okay. If one of these techniques doesn’t work for you, try another and see how that goes.
- ***When trying any of these techniques, you can’t censor yourself.*** Allow yourself the freedom to brainstorm about some things that you think are bad or even silly ideas. Getting out the “bad” or “silly” ideas has a way of allowing the good ideas to come through. Besides, you might be surprised about how some topics that initially seem bad or silly turn out to actually be good with a little brainstorming.
- ***Even if you know what topic you want to write about, brainstorm.*** Even if you know you want to write about a particular topic, you should try to consider some other topics in brainstorming because you never know what other things you could have written about if you don’t consider the possibilities. Besides, you still should do some brainstorming to shape your idea into a topic and then focus it into a working thesis.

Freewriting

One of the most common and effective brainstorming techniques for writing classes, freewriting, is also easy to master. All you do is write about anything that comes into your head without stopping for a short time—five minutes or so. The key part of this activity though is **you cannot stop for any reason!** Even if you don’t know what to write about, write “I don’t know what to write about” until something else comes to mind. And don’t worry—something else usually does come to mind.

Looping or Targeted Freewriting

Looping is similar to freewriting in that you write without stopping, but the difference is you are trying to be more focused in your writing. You can use a more specific topic to “loop” back to if you would like, or, if you do the more open-ended freewriting first, you can do a more targeted freewriting about one of the things you found to be a potentially workable idea. For example, you might freewrite with something general and abstract in mind, perhaps the question “what would make a good idea for a research project?” For a more targeted freewriting exercise, you would consider a more specific questions, such as “How could I explore and write about the research idea I have on computer crime?”

Group Idea Bouncing

One of the best ways we all get different ideas is to talk with others. The same is true for finding a topic for research: sometimes, “bouncing” ideas off of each other in small groups is a great place to start, and it can be a lot of fun.

Here’s one way to do it: name someone in a small group as the recorder. Each person in turn should give an idea for a potential topic, and the recorder should write it down. Every person should take a turn quickly “bouncing” an idea out for the others—no “I don’t know” or “come back to me!” Remember: no ideas are bad or silly or stupid at this point, so do not censor yourself or your group members.

Clustering

Clustering is a visual technique that can often help people see several different angles on their ideas. It can be an especially effective way to explore the details of a topic idea you develop with freewriting or looping. On a blank sheet of paper, write a one or two word description of your idea in the middle and circle it. Around that circle, write down one or two word descriptions of different aspects or characteristics of your main idea. Draw circles around those terms and then connect them to the main idea. Keep building outward, making “clusters” of the main idea as you go. Eventually, you should get a grouping of clusters that looks something like the illustration below.

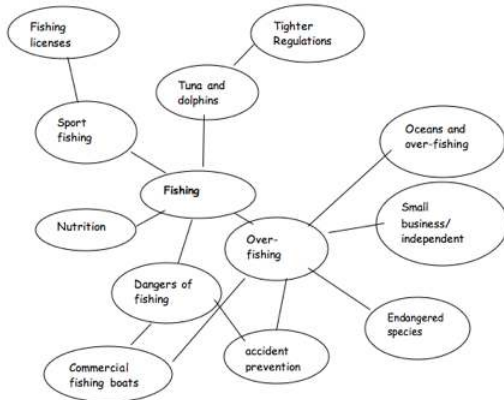


Figure 6.3.16.3.1

Journalist Questions

One of the key elements of journalistic style is that journalists answer the basic questions of “What?” “Who?” “Where?” “When?” “How?” and “Why?” These are all good questions to consider in brainstorming for your idea, though clearly, these questions are not always equally applicable to all ideas. Here are some examples of the sort of journalistic questions you might want to ask yourself about your idea:

- What is my idea? What are the key terms of my idea?
- Who are the people involved in my idea? Who is performing the action of my topic? Who are the people affected by my idea?
- Where does my idea take place? Where did it come from? Is it restricted to a particular time and place?
- When did my idea happen? How does it relate to the other events that might have taken place at a similar time? Are there events that happened before or after my idea that might have effected it?
- How did my idea happen, or how is it still happening?
- Why did my idea happen, or why is it still happening?

Brainstorming with Computers

Computers are a great tool for fostering these and other collaborative brainstorming techniques. For example, group idea bouncing can be used effectively with Internet “chat rooms,” with instant messaging software, or with local area network discussion tools.

You can also collaborate on your brainstorming activities with computers with little more than simple word processing or email; Here are three variations on a similar theme:

- **Email exchange:** This exercise is conducted as an exchange over email. Each person in a small group does a looping/targeted freewriting to discover ideas for things she is interested in doing more research about. Then, each person in the group can post his looping/targeted freewriting to all of the other members of the group simultaneously. Email also allows for members of the group to collaborate with each other while not being in the same place--after all, email messages can be sent over great distances--and not at the same time.
- **“Musical computers:”** This approach is similar to the previous two exercises, but instead of exchanging diskettes or email messages, members of a group of students exchange computer stations in a computer lab. Here’s how it works: a group (up to

an entire class of students) does a looping/targeted freewriting at a computer station for a set period of time. When time is up, everyone needs to find a different computer in the fashion of the children's game "musical chairs." Once at the new computer station, the new writer comments on the original freewriting exercise. The process can be repeated several times until everyone has had a chance to provide feedback on four or five different original freewritings.

Example 5.2

- By yourself, work with at least two of the brainstorming techniques described above or other brainstorming techniques described by your instructor.
- Working with others in a small group, work with at least two of the brainstorming techniques described above or other brainstorming techniques described by your instructor. For example, have all the members of the small group each complete their own freewriting or clustering activity on the topic of her choice. Then, compare results. How do each of you react to different exercises? Are some techniques more useful for some?

1.

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3.2: Topic + Stance + Reasons + Importance = Thesis

(1300 words)

A thesis statement is the controlling idea of your essay. All of the other sentences and paragraph in the essay relate to the thesis. As you plan your essay, you will develop a working thesis: a general idea about what you want to say in your essay in response to the prompt or reason for writing.

As you develop your working thesis, try to incorporate all 4 parts of an effective thesis.

Topic + Stance

At minimum, you need to state a topic and a stance. A topic is a statement of fact or a general category.

(Topic) The military recruits students in high schools.

(Topic + Stance) I would like to discuss what's wrong with military recruitment in high schools.

Topic + Stance + Reasons

Adding reasons to your stance makes your point stronger from the start. You might know all the reasons right away, but you can add them as you go. By being clear from the start, your planning process and your essay itself will be clearer.

(Topic + Stance) We should not allow the military to recruit in high schools

(+Reasons) because recruiters violate privacy, manipulate naïve young people, and target low-income youth. Topic + Stance
+ Reasons + Importance

Topic + Stance + Reasons + Importance

The previous thesis offered 3 clear reasons about the problems with military recruitment of high school students. Yes, each of these things is bad. But are these the only things that made recruitment bad? Or, is the recruitment itself bad, and these are just three consequences of the recruitment?

Imagine you are a high school principal, and you brought these three issues to the military recruiters at your school. Image that they promised to fix these three problems, and then they actually did. Would you let them recruit?

If you said yes, your thesis would be something like this:

(Topic + Stance) We should not allow military recruiters in in high school unless they can promise not **(reasons)** to violate privacy, manipulate naïve young people, and target low-income youth.

With this thesis, you are fundamentally in agreement with the idea of military recruitment, you just have some problems with how it is done. Missing here is the reason why this topic is important: why is military recruitment fundamentally good? Why do these particular problems need to be addressed?

(Importance) Military service is an avenue of success for many young people, **(Topic + Stance + Reasons)** but we should not allow military recruiters in in high school unless they can promise not to violate privacy, manipulate naïve young people, and target low-income youth.

Now, imagine that you are a high school principal opposed to military requirement. You see these three problems as just the most obvious abuses. You believe that even if recruiters change their practices, the act of recruitment in high schools will always be fundamentally discriminatory. In that case, your thesis would be something more like this:

(Stance + Reasons + Importance) We should end the abusive and discriminatory practice of **(Topic)** military recruitment in high schools.

Notice how the list of specific reasons has vanished in this version of the thesis. They are not as important in this essay. They are examples of the large problem, but they themselves are not the problem.

Examples of Weak Thesis Statements

Weak thesis statement: My paper will explain why imagination is more important than knowledge.

It has a topic and a very weak stance. It needs to provide more context through a stronger importance, which will lead to reasons.

Weak thesis statement: Religious radicals across America are trying to legislate their Puritanical beliefs by banning required high school books.

The stance is implied--banning books for religious reasons is wrong. The attack on "Religious radicals" is unnecessary. The thesis needs a stronger importance: other than get angry, what should we do about this?

Weak thesis statement: Advertising companies use sex to sell their products.

This is just a topic.

Weak thesis statement: Abraham Lincoln's long and challenging life can serve as a lesson to all.

It has a topic. The stance and importance are so broad that they almost disappear.

Revise your thesis

Your thesis will probably change as you write, so you will need to modify it to reflect exactly what you have discussed in your essay. Your thesis statement begins as a working thesis statement, an indefinite statement that you make about your topic early in the writing process for the purpose of planning and guiding your writing.

Working thesis statements often become stronger as you gather information and form new opinions and reasons for those opinions. Revision helps you strengthen your thesis so that it matches what you have expressed in the body of the paper.

If you don't have a complete thesis at the beginning, that's OK. You can continue to revise the thesis as your ideas develop. The best way to revise your thesis statement is to ask questions about it and then examine the answers to those questions. By challenging your own ideas and forming definite reasons for those ideas, you grow closer to a more precise point of view, which you can then incorporate into your thesis statement.

Tips for clarifying your thesis

You can revise your thesis by taking the following steps

1) Pinpoint and replace all nonspecific words, such as *people*, *everything*, *society*, or *life*, with more precise words in order to reduce any vagueness.

Working thesis: Young people have to work hard to succeed in life.

Revised thesis: Recent college graduates must have discipline and persistence in order to find and maintain a stable job in which they can use and be appreciated for their talents.

The revised thesis makes a more specific statement about success and what it means to work hard. The original includes too broad a range of people and does not define exactly what success entails. By replacing those general words like *people* and *work hard*, the writer can better focus their research and gain more direction in their writing.

2. Clarify ideas that need explanation by asking yourself questions that narrow your thesis.

Working thesis: The welfare system is a joke.

Revised thesis: The welfare system keeps a socioeconomic class from gaining employment by alluring members of that class with unearned income instead of programs to improve their education and skill sets.

A *joke* means many things to many people. Readers bring all sorts of backgrounds and perspectives to the reading process and would need clarification for a word so vague. This expression may also be too informal for the selected audience. By asking questions, the writer can devise a more precise and appropriate explanation for *joke*. By incorporating the answers to these questions into a thesis statement, the writer more accurately defines his or her stance, which will better guide the writing of the essay.

3. Replace any linking verbs with action verbs. Linking verbs are forms of the verb *to be*, a verb that simply states that a situation exists.

Working thesis: Kansas City schoolteachers are not paid enough.

Revised thesis: Kansas City cannot afford to pay its educators, resulting in job cuts and resignations in a district that sorely needs highly qualified and dedicated teachers.

The linking verb in this working thesis statement is the word *are*. Linking verbs often make thesis statements weak because they do not express action. Rather, they connect words and phrases to the second half of the sentence. Readers might wonder, “Why are they not paid enough?” But this statement does not compel them to ask many more questions. The writer should ask himself or herself questions in order to replace the linking verb with an action verb, thus forming a stronger thesis statement, one that takes a more definitive stance on the issue:

- Who is not paying the teachers enough?
- What is considered “enough”?
- What is the problem?
- What are the results

Discussion

[Adapted from Writing, Reading, and College Success: A First-Year Composition Course for All Learners (Kashyap and Dyquisto)]

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3.3: There is no one-size-fits-all essay structure, but there are useful patterns

(1000 words)

Understand the limits of the #5paragraphessay

You might be familiar with the five-paragraph essay structure, in which you spend the first paragraph introducing your topic, culminating in a thesis that has three distinct parts. That introduction paragraph is followed by three body paragraphs, each one of those going into some detail about one of the parts of the thesis. Finally, the conclusion paragraph summarizes the main ideas discussed in the essay and states the thesis (or a slightly re-worded version of the thesis) again.

This structure has some benefits

- It helps get your thoughts organized
- It is a good introduction to structuring an essay, letting students focus on content rather than wrestling with a more complex structure.
- It familiarizes students with the general shape and components of many essays
- It is an effective structure for in-class essays or timed written exams.

By adding a "But" to statements, we can begin to see alternatives

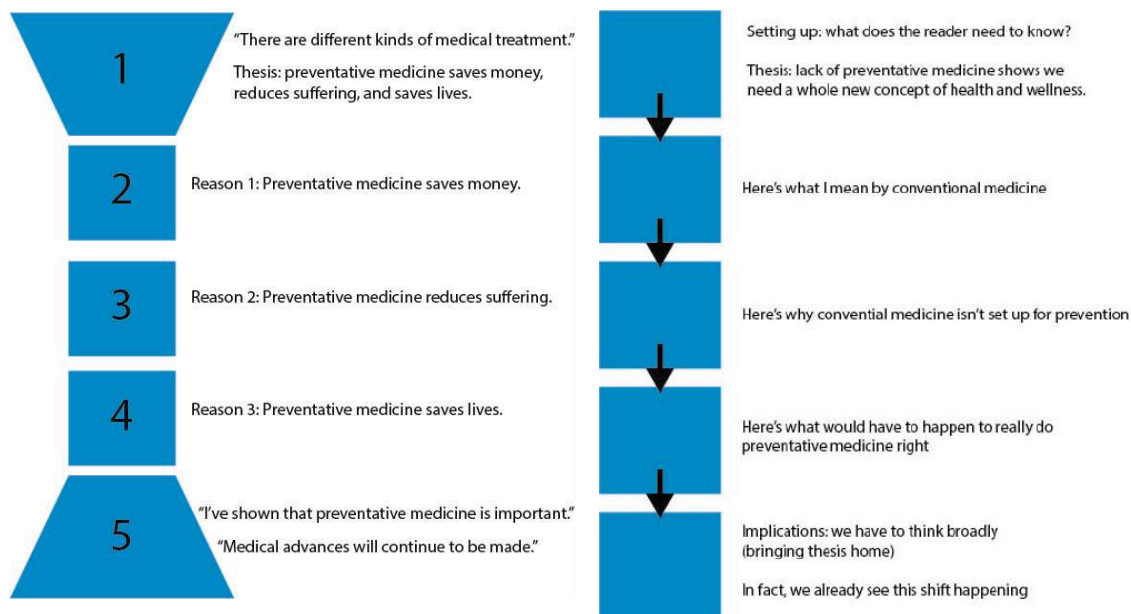
- It helps get your thoughts organized, BUT it also constrains your thinking, forcing you to start on a new idea with each paragraph rather than giving you the time to develop your ideas
- It is a good introduction to structuring an essay, letting students focus on content rather than wrestling with a more complex structure, BUT wrestling with the structure of an essay forces you to understand the relationship between your ideas
- It familiarizes students with the general shape and components of many essays, BUT it lulls students into a false sense of comfort that all essays can follow this pattern
- It is an effective structure for in-class essays or timed written exams, BUT you will NEVER do these kinds of writing again after you graduate

The substantial time you spent mastering the 5paragraphessay form 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.

What follows are some strategies for developing an effective essay structure. In the sections that follow, you'll learn more about the specific parts of essays: introductions, thesis statements, body paragraphs, and conclusions.

Organically structured essays

Compare these two essay formats. One follows the standard 5paragraphessay form. The other shows 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 it hardly matters which of the three reasons you explain first or second. In the more organic structure each paragraph specifically leads to the next.



Yes, But, So: a different kind of 5paragraphessay

Consider the example above again. Imagine writing about about the problem of 5paragraphessays. You could write that essay in the 5paragraphessay format.

Thesis: The three problems with 5paragraphessays are X, Y, Z.

Body Paragraph 1: X is a problem ...

Body Paragraph 2: Y is a problem ...

(you get the idea)

Where does this essay take you? What big idea does it leave you with? Instead, you can use a pattern like Yes, But, So

Body Paragraph 1: Yes, many people like 5paragraphessays because ...

Body Paragraph 2: But, there are problems with 5paragraphessays ...

Body Paragraph 3: So, instead of writing 5paragraphessays, students should...

But wait! What about my thesis? In this paper, the "So" is your thesis. You might not know what your "So" is when you start. Writing a draft of an essay should be an act of discovering your ideas (Composition scholars refer to this as Writing to Learn). Very very very often, even when you start off with a clear sense of your main point, you'll end up having by the end of the essay a much clearer statement of your point than you did when you started.

Thesis: (Reasons and Importance) 5paragraphessays don't encourage critical thinking or prepare students for real world writing situations, (Stance) so instead students should be encouraged to experiment with different essay forms.

Or, Students should be encouraged to write essays that encourage critical thinking and prepare them for real world writing situations.

The Yes, But, So pattern has another advantage: it follows the pattern of stories.

Stories begin by telling you how things are. "Once upon a time, there was a ..."

But, something happens that causes a change

So, the hero of the story has to solve the problem

Consider the example of a rhetorical analysis assignment: Analyze the rhetorical strategies used in a newspaper opinion essay. Last chapter, you were introduced to the three rhetorical appeals (Logos, Ethos, and Pathos). So, you might want to write a 5paragraphessay

Thesis: the opinion essay uses Logos, Pathos, and Ethos to make a good argument

Body Paragraph 1: The opinion essay uses Logos . . .

(you get the idea)

The Yes, But, So pattern can still work here.

Body Paragraph 1: Yes, the essay is effective at times...

Body Paragraph 2: But, it's not as effective when it ...

Body Paragraph 3: So, my overall judgement of the essay is ...

If you look carefully, you will see the Yes, But, So pattern repeated over and over again. Even the organic essay structure follows Yes, But, So.

Finally, it is useful because it can expanded or contracted to fit nearly any size. It can even be a single sentence

I think we should eat pizza, but you think we should eat tacos, so we should go to the combination Pizza Hut and Taco Bell

[adapted from From Competence to Excellence (Guptil) and The Word on College Reading and Writing (Babin, et al)]

3.3: There is no one-size-fits-all essay structure, but there are useful patterns is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

3.4: Strong paragraphs start with good evidence

(1100 words)

Support your thesis with evidence AND analysis

A paragraph is a group of sentences that present, develop, and support a single idea. That's it. There's no prescribed length or number of sentences. In academic writing, body paragraphs need to work together with the thesis to support your main point. If your thesis states where your essay wants to go, then your body paragraphs need to show the reader how you get there. Paragraphs rarely stand alone, so most often the main topic of the paragraph serves the main concept or purpose of a larger whole; for example, the main idea of a paragraph in an essay should serve to develop and support the thesis of the essay.

By reading and annotating your sources, and by responding and analyzing to those sources, you should have developed lots of ideas that can now form the beginnings of your paragraphs. If you don't have ideas about your sources yet, STOP WRITING AND READ AGAIN. When writing with and about sources, you want to have the ideas before you start writing. If you start your paragraphs without evidence with the intention of add the evidence later, you are likely to fall into the trap of [confirmation bias](#): only seeing the evidence you want to see. And, adding the evidence later makes it harder to develop your ideas sufficiently.

Topic Sentence

The job of the topic sentence is to control the development and flow of the information contained in the paragraph. The topic sentence takes control of the more general topic of the paragraph and shapes it in the way that you choose to present it to your readers. It provides a way through a topic that is likely much broader than what you could ever cover in a paragraph, or even in an essay. This more focused idea, your topic sentence, helps you determine the parts of the topic that you want to illuminate for your readers—whether that's a college essay or a thank you letter to your Aunt Martha. The following diagram illustrates how a topic sentence can provide more focus to the general topic at hand.



Select the Most Effective Primary Support for a Thesis Statement

When you support your thesis, you are revealing evidence. Evidence includes anything that can help support your stance. The following are the kinds of evidence you will encounter as you conduct your research:

1. **Facts.** Facts, such as statistics, are the best kind of evidence to use because they often cannot be disputed. They can support your stance by providing background information on or a solid foundation for your point of view. However, facts still need explanation. For example, the sentence "The most populated state in the United States is California" is a pure fact, but it will require some explanation to make it relevant to your specific argument. Always be sure you gather your facts from credible sources.

2. **Judgments.** Judgments are conclusions drawn from the given facts. Judgments are more credible than opinions because they are founded upon careful reasoning and examination of a topic. Use judgments from experts in the field as they are the more credible sources for the topic.
3. **Testimony.** Testimony consists of direct quotations from either an eyewitness or an expert witness. An eyewitness is someone who directly observed an instance of what you are writing about; testimony adds authenticity to an argument based on facts. An expert witness is a person who has extensive experience with a topic. This person studies the facts and provides commentary based on either facts or judgments, or both. An expert witness adds authority and credibility to an argument.
4. **Personal observation.** Personal observation is similar to testimony, but personal observation consists of your testimony. It reflects what you know to be true because you have experiences and have formed either opinions or judgments about them. For instance, if you are one of five children and your thesis states that being part of a large family is beneficial to a child's social development, you could use your own experience to support your thesis.

Include Supporting Detail Sentences for the Topic Sentence

After deciding which primary support points you will use as your topic sentences, you must add details to clarify and demonstrate each of those points. These supporting details provide examples, facts, or evidence that support the topic sentence.

The following paragraph contains supporting detail sentences for the the topic sentence, which is underlined.

J.D. Salinger, a World War II veteran, suffered from posttraumatic stress disorder, a disorder that influenced the themes in many of his works. He did not hide his mental anguish over the horrors of war and once told his daughter, "You never really get the smell of burning flesh out of your nose, no matter how long you live." His short story "A Perfect Day for a Bananafish" details a day in the life of a WWII veteran who was recently released from an army hospital for psychiatric problems. The man acts questionably with a little girl he meets on the beach before he returns to his hotel room and commits suicide. Another short story, "For Esmé – with Love and Squalor," is narrated by a traumatized soldier who sparks an unusual relationship with a young girl he meets before he departs to partake in D-Day. Finally, in Salinger's only novel, The Catcher in the Rye, he continues with the theme of posttraumatic stress, though not directly related to war. From a rest home for the mentally ill, sixteen-year-old Holden Caulfield narrates the story of his nervous breakdown following the death of his younger brother.

Adding Explanation and Elaboration in your Body Paragraphs

In addition to supporting details, college level paragraphs add quite a bit of explanation and elaboration in body paragraphs. Development of explanation and elaboration is one of the big differences between high school and college-level writing. Rather than just appearing in one paragraph all by itself -- possibly in a conclusion -- explanation and elaboration should appear through your essay. Some sentence stems you can use to help you develop your explanation and elaboration appear in the following list.

Sentence Stems for Elaboration

- X matters because _____.
- X is important because _____.
- X is crucial in terms of today's concern over _____ because _____.
- Ultimately, what is at stake here is _____.
- These points have important consequences for the broader discussion about _____.
- The discussion of X is in fact addressing the larger matter of _____.
- These conclusions have significant implications for _____.
- X should in fact concern anyone who cares about _____.

These 4 videos review the paragraph ideas shared on this page



Essay Writing | Body Paragraphs | 07

LeadWriteNow

Body Paragraphs

- Topic Sentence
- Supporting Details
- Analysis & Development
- Closing Sentence

Purpose of a Topic Sentence

- 1) Support your thesis statement.
- 2) Describe what your body paragraph is about.

Watch on  YouTube



Essay Writing | Body Paragraphs | 08

LeadWriteNow

topic sentences with relevant details.

To become a better writer, students must practice regularly.

Facts: A recent survey of best-selling authors shows that 98% of them practiced writing at least one hour each day.

Logic: Writers who practice every day can correct their mistakes and experiment with new styles.

Watch on  YouTube



Essay Writing | Body Paragraphs | 09

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Body Paragraphs

- Topic Sentence
- Supporting Details
- Analysis & Development
- Closing Sentence

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Essay Writing | Body Paragraphs | 09
GoReadWriteNow
Depth to your supporting detail.

A recent survey by the Department of Commerce showed that there are 100 pizzerias per 100,000 people in the United States.

<u>Restatement:</u>	In other words, there is a pizzeria for every one thousand people.
<u>Illustration:</u>	For example, there are about 250 pizzerias in Irvine, California, which has

 Watch on  YouTube

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3.5: Writing Introductions

(1000 words)

“You don’t get a second chance to make a first impression.” This common axiom reminds us just how much weight people place on their first experiences, whether it be with a person, a road trip, or a piece of writing. Catching readers’ attention may be the most important work you do when you write, because if you lose them in the introduction, you don’t get a chance to share your message with them later.

What is the Purpose of an Introduction?

Introductions have two jobs:

- Catch readers’ attention.
- Introduce the focus and purpose of your writing.

How do I accomplish these jobs without giving away all of my essay in the introduction? I mean, how do I know what will hook readers’ attention without sharing all the cool details?

Great questions! You might start by using this simple formula and then choosing a method from the list below.

Formula

A good introduction = new information + ideas that everyone may not agree with. To put it another way, if your piece begins with an idea most people know and agree with, it’s less likely to pull readers in. People are made curious by new ideas and opinions that have multiple perspectives or may be controversial.

In other words, the Yes, But, So pattern is also a good structure for an introduction. If used well, it sets up the structure of the essay far more effectively than a 3-part thesis.

Methods

The following are some methods and examples for introducing a topic and getting your reader’s attention.

Method: Share an interesting, shocking, or little known fact or statistic about your topic. Starting your paper with a fact or statistic that gives your readers insight into your topic right away will peak their curiosity and make them want to know more. It will also help you establish a strong *ethos*, or credibility, from the very beginning.

Example 3.5.1:

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 68% of prison inmates do not have a high school diploma.

Method: Tell an anecdote or story that will help readers connect with your topic on a personal level. Sharing a human interest story right away will help readers connect with your topic on a personal level and will help to illustrate why your topic matters.

Example 3.5.2:

Today, Jimmy Santiago Baca is a well known American poet, but when he was twenty he entered prison illiterate and had to teach himself to read over the five years he spent behind bars.

Method: Ask a question that gets readers curious about the answer. People tend to want to answer questions when they’re presented with them. This provides you with an easy way to catch readers’ attention because they’ll keep reading to discover the answer to any questions you pose in the introduction. Just be sure to answer them at some point in your writing.

Example 3.5.3:

Can prisons rehabilitate prisoners so they’re able to return to their communities, find jobs, and contribute in positive ways?

Exercise: Good or Bad Introduction?



Figure 3.5.2

One way to improve your introduction-writing skills is to look at different choices that other writers make when introducing a topic and to consider what catches your interest as a reader and what doesn't. Read the introductions below about teenagers and decision making. Which ones pull you in? Which ones are less interesting? What's the difference? Work with peers to decide.

1. Throughout history, teenagers have challenged the authority of adults. They do this because they want to be given more freedom and to be treated like adults themselves. This can cause real problems between teens and the adults in their lives.
2. Some days my sixteen-year-old niece, Rachael, does all of her homework, helps friends study after school, and practices her cello, and other days she forgets her books at school, lies about where she's going, and doesn't do her chores. This sporadic behavior seems like it comes out of nowhere, but it turns out teenage brains are different from adult brains, causing teens to sometimes not think about consequences before they act.
3. If teenage brains aren't fully formed, causing them to act before they think about the risks they're taking, should teens be restricted from some adult freedoms like driving, working, and socializing without adult supervision?
4. Teenagers are known to be less responsible than adults, so they should have at least some adult guidance to make sure they stay safe. Without adult supervision, teens will make poor decisions that could put them at unnecessary risk.
5. According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the frontal cortex in the brain, where reasoning and thinking before acting occurs, is not fully formed in teenagers. However, the amygdala, "responsible for immediate reactions including fear and aggressive behavior," is fully formed early in life. This means teens aren't as good at considering the consequences of their behavior before they react, so the adults in their lives should limit the risks in their lives until they're better able to reason through them.

Exercise: Write an Introduction



Figure 3.5.3

Now that you've had an opportunity to think about some different approaches and techniques for writing introductions, let's practice. Find an entry in your journal or a draft of a piece of writing you're working on this term and use what you've learned in this section to write an attention-grabbing introduction to your piece.

If you don't currently have a piece to work with, you can write an introduction using one of the following scenarios. Read through the following list and choose one. One to three sentences is enough.

1. Persuade your local school board members that the elementary school should change the way it teaches sex education.
2. Persuade teens to travel to a foreign country before they graduate from college.
3. Give some tips to new parents that will help lower their stress and make their new baby feel safe and loved.
4. Inform young athletes who may want to play football of the possible risks and benefits.
5. Review a movie, book, product, or trip for someone thinking of making one of these purchases to help them decide that they should or shouldn't do it.

Share your introduction with your classmates and discuss what about it is effective and how it could be improved.

See the discussion about “Writing Beginnings” in the “[Writing a First Draft](#)” section in the “Drafting” portion of this text for more on writing introductions as part of your drafting process.

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3.6: A conclusion should explain "So What" or "Now What"

(1000 words)

Studies have shown that the human brain is more likely to remember items at the beginnings and ends of lists, presentations, and other texts. When people recall the last thing they read or hear, that's called the "recency effect" because they're remembering the most recent information they've encountered. This is why the last thing you write is so important. It's your final chance to make an impression on your readers.

A good conclusion = a call to action and/or a connection between the topic and the reader. In other words, because you're trying to end your piece, you don't want to start making new claims or sharing new research. Instead, you'll want to help readers see how they relate to your subject matter. Sometimes this means suggesting that the reader do something specific. That's a call to action. You can also end by raising questions related to your topic or by making suggestions for how this topic may develop in the future. Leaving readers with interesting ideas to think about is key to a successful conclusion.

Conclusions have two jobs:

- Leave readers with something to think about ("So What?")
- Clarify why your topic matters to them and the larger community, whether that be the class, their neighborhood or the whole wide world (Who should care?)

What Techniques Keep Readers Thinking about the Topic at the End of a Piece of Writing?

Method: Make a call to action. The goal of a call to action is to prompt readers to do something.

Example $\backslash(\backslash\text{PageIndex}\{1\})$:

Citizens who agree that music education should be a part of all public schools in the United States can make a difference by writing their representatives, going to a school board meeting, and when a ballot initiative comes around, voting to fund music education.

Method: Ask a rhetorical question. A rhetorical question is meant to make people think, but not necessarily come to an answer. Often, the answer to rhetorical questions is clear right away, but the deeper significance needs to be pondered.

Example $\backslash(\backslash\text{PageIndex}\{2\})$:

Should schools in the U.S. be concerned with the kind of emotional and cognitive development that music education prompts? If we're interested in educating the whole child, not just the most academic parts of the brain, then the answer is yes, and we have to reconsider our priorities when it comes to school funding.

Method: Share an anecdote or story that will keep the issue in the forefront of the readers' minds. An interesting snapshot of someone's life or story about an intriguing character will help humanize the topic and help the readers remember your message. If you used an anecdote or story in the introduction, this is an opportunity to reconnect with that at the end of your piece.

Example $\backslash(\backslash\text{PageIndex}\{3\})$:

Lin-Manuel Miranda, the creator of the hit Broadway musical *Hamilton*, says that arts education saved his life. He went to an elementary school where the sixth grade put on a famous play every year—everything from *Fiddler on the Roof* to *The Wizard of Oz*—but by the time Miranda's class was in sixth grade, the teachers had run out of plays appropriate for children, so they had the sixth graders write their own musicals in addition to performing all the musicals from the previous years. That four-hour-long musical extravaganza was Miranda's first experience of writing and acting in his own production (Raskauskas). The opportunity that his teachers provided him turned into a lifelong passion. All students should have that same opportunity to connect with the arts in meaningful ways.

(For more of Miranda's story, see the WFMT article, "[Arts Education Saved My Life.](#)")

Method: Share a quote by an expert or historical figure. Choose a quote from someone who is well known in a relevant field and who has expertise on your topic. This will lend your conclusion credibility and leave readers with something powerful to consider.

Example `\PageIndex{4}`:

As Oliver Sacks notes in his book *Musicophilia*, “Rhythm and its entrainment of movement (and often emotion), its power to ‘move’ people, in both senses of the word, may well have had a crucial cultural and economic function in human evolution, bringing people together, producing a sense of collectivity and community” (268). Our schools aim to foster that same sense of community, which is why music must be part of a well rounded education.

Exercise: Good or Bad Conclusion?

One way to improve your conclusion-writing skills is to look at different choices that other writers make when concluding a topic and to consider what feels satisfying or thought-provoking to you as a reader and what doesn’t. Read the conclusions below about teenagers and decision making. Which ones pull you in? Which ones are less interesting? What’s the difference? Work with peers to decide.

1. Should teens be given complete freedom? Probably not, but a measured level of responsibility helps kids of all ages learn to trust themselves to make good decisions. This is especially important for teens since they will be adults very soon.
2. Parents who want to teach their teenagers to be responsible decision makers can start by talking to their teens regularly about the kinds of decisions their teens are being faced with and allowing teens to make decisions about anything that won’t put them in immediate danger. This may be difficult at first, but the reward will come when parents see their teens feeling more confident in the face of difficult decisions and more ready to face the adult world.
3. Now that Rachael has been given the freedom to make some big decisions in her life, she’s more willing to talk to her parents when she needs advice or isn’t sure about something. Even though she sometimes makes mistakes, her parents trust that she will learn important lessons from those mistakes, and they help her feel supported when she experiences a failure. Raising a teenager isn’t easy, but this family has found a method that’s working for this particular teen.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: Essential Grammar Strategies

- 4.1: Understand the level of "correctness" necessary for your writing situation
- 4.2: Master some sentence basics
- 4.3: Whose mistake? Reading like writer
- 4.4: When you're ready, learn the rules that will help you

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4.1: Understand the level of "correctness" necessary for your writing situation

The role of grammar and "correctness" in writing classes like this one is one of the most contentious issues for composition scholars and teachers today. One camp believes that students must be taught standard written english (or standard edited english) because that is the language of the professional world, and not having mastery of that language puts students at a disadvantage versus those students who do. The other camp believes that the supremacy of SWE is at best an arbitrary decision and at worst a kind of white supremacy designed to privilege students for whom that is their normal language. And between these two camps are countless more positions that adopt aspects of both camps.

A good introduction to the debate can be found in *Bad Ideas about Writing*, in the essay "[There is One Correct Way of Writing and Speaking](#)" by Anjali Pattanayak. Here is the introduction to her essay:

People consistently lament that kids today can't speak properly or that people coming to this country need to learn to write correctly. These lamentations are based on the notion that there is a single correct way of speaking and writing. Currently, the general sentiment is that people should just learn to speak and write proper English. This understanding of writing is rooted called current traditional rhetoric, which focuses on a prescriptive and formulaic way of teaching writing that assumes there is only one way to write (or speak) something for it to be correct. However, over the past several decades, scholars in writing studies have examined the ways in which writing has a close dialectical relationship with identity, style genre, and culture. In other words, the rules for writing shift with the people and the community involved as well as the purpose and type of writing.

Most people implicitly understand that the way they communicate changes with different groups of people, from bosses to work colleagues to peers to relatives. They understand that conversations that may be appropriate over a private dinner may not be appropriate at the workplace. These conversational shifts might be subtle, but they are distinct. While most people accept and understand these nuances exist and will adapt to these unspoken rules— and while we have all committed a social faux pas when we didn't understand these unspoken rules—we do not often afford this same benefit of the doubt to people who are new to our communities or who are learning our unspoken rules.

While the idea of arguing whether there is one correct way of communicating or whether writing is culturally situated might seem to be a pedantic exercise, the reality is that espousing the ideology that there is one correct way to speak and write disenfranchises many populations who are already denigrated by society. The writing most valued in this binary is a type of writing that is situated in middle-class white culture. In adhering to so-called correct language, we are devaluing the non-standard dialects, cultures, and therefore identities of people and their communicative situations that do not fit a highly limited mold.

Here's an example from a popular OER, one that this book draws on throughout:

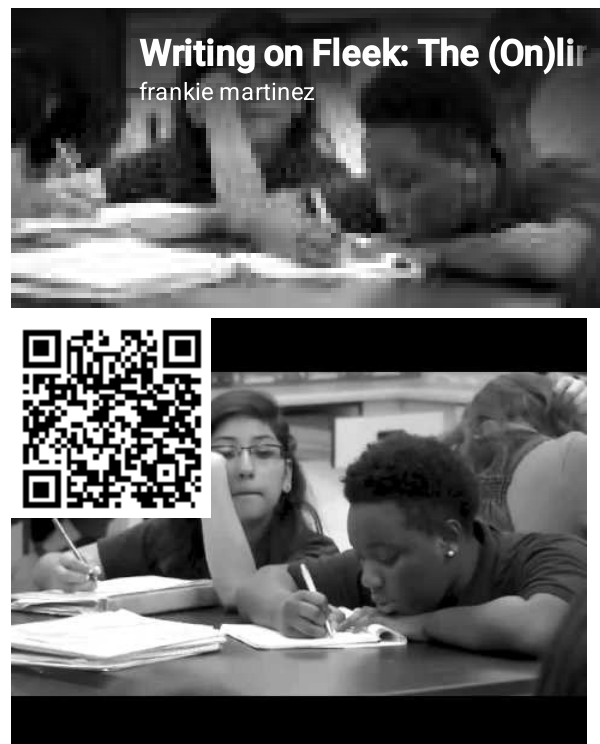
Many students assume—or fear—that college writing is judged primarily on its grammatical correctness. Ideas, evidence, and arguments matter more than the mechanics of grammar and punctuation; however, many of the rules of formal writing exist to

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.

This statement seems harmless enough as it attempts to occupy a middle ground, recognizing that the professional world has a standard, but calling into question the value of correctness for correctness' sake. However, this statement also equates "formal writing" with "clarity and precision" and "more persuasive"; it ignores the rhetorical effectiveness and grammatical rules of other writing traditions; and, worse, it grants permission to judge those who attempt to make rhetorically effective statements in other forms of english.

Recently, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), two of the largest organizations for writing teachers and scholars from K-12 and College, put out a joint statement titled "[This Ain't Another Statement: This is a DEMAND for Black Linguistic Justice](#)". The demands in this statement call for a radical revision of the teaching of and about writing and language to respect users of other forms of English. As one small step in that direction, the book you are reading now will not privilege SWE over other forms. But, as a white cis-male, I will not attempt to teach about other forms of English. What follows, then, are a set of suggestions for creating clarity by following a few basic conventions of SWE that can be merged with other modes of english to create what Patricia Bissel refers to a hybrid discourse and what Vershawn Ashanti Young calls code-meshing.

The video below recognizes that students' authentic voices are hybrid voices that find ways to effectively combine academic and other discourses.



Video 2.1.12.1.1

- Some content Adapted from Reading and Writing for College Success by Athena Kashyap & Erika Dyquist

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4.2: Master some sentence basics

The goal of writing instruction should be to encourage students to develop hybrid modes of communication that can combine the rhetorical relevant aspects of different contexts into students' own authentic voices. To that end, it is helpful to have a strong grasp on some basic structures.

Master the simple sentence

The basic unit of english Subject + Verb or Subject + Verb + Object. Every sentence, no matter how complex, and no matter what form of english it uses, contains within it a simple sentence. Here are some simple sentences

- Phones are tools.
- I lost my phone.
- I can't live without my phone.

Add to simple sentences with introductory elements

- Unfortunately, I lost my phone.
- Packed with features, phones are tools.
- Truth be told, I can't live without my phone.
- [Play with the order](#)
- I lost my phone, unfortunately.
- Phones are tools packed with features.
- I can't live without my phone, truth be told.

Build compound sentences with FANBOYS (For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So)*

*these commas are useful, but the points are still clear without them

- Unfortunately, I lost my phone, but I have AppleCare, so I can get a new phone.
- Phones are tools packed with features, yet they still have the original function of talking to people.
- I can't live without my phone, and I've never had to.

Build compound sentences with other conjunctions

- Because I have AppleCare, I got a new phone when I lost my old one.
 - OR, I got a new phone when I lost my old one because I have AppleCare.
- While phones are tools packed with features, they still have the original function of talking to people.
 - OR, Phones have the original function of talking to people even through they are tools packed with features.

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4.3: Whose mistake? Reading like writer

Read like a writer

When you're reading like a writer, you're more attuned to the ways that writers create meaning. You're also reading with a spirit of generosity: as a writer yourself, you know how hard writing is, and you will find yourself more forgiving those minor lapses in control in writing. You're also reading with the intention of making the words on the page make sense. You know the writer had something important to say, and you want to do your best to figure it out. Sometimes sentences are confusing, but rarely does a writer intent to write a confusing sentence. Consider this headline that confused me at Halloween

Halloween treats kids, adults will want to eat

I was confused by this headline. I was misreading the headline because there were missing words, and I was putting those missing words in the wrong place. I read it as

Halloween treats kids (that) adults will want to eat

When I should have read it as

Halloween treats (that) kids (and) adults will want to eat

So whose error was it? Does it even matter? In the end, I figured out what the headline meant

What is an error?

The most important errors to pay attention to in writing are those that change the meaning. There are a lot of grammar jokes that play on the idea that grammar sometimes changes the meaning. For example,

- Grammar: it's the difference between knowing your shit and knowing you're shit
- Grammar saves lives: Let's eat, Grandma, NOT Let's eat Grandma

One of my favorite grammar jokes is this one



<image "Cats don't care" by Robert Wyckoff CC-BY>

You may have seen a sticker, mug, tshirt or meme with the "correct" version. In this version, the "error" doesn't change the meaning. Instead, it works as a kind of irony. While many people (but not cats) can't help but to judge others' grammar usage, in reality very, very few people know all of the rules and never make mistakes.

Making and Using a Log of Your "Mistakes"

Many writing teachers advocate using a editing log to keep track of your "mistakes". These teachers rightly believe that such a practice creates more autonomy and agency in students. This autonomy is key to students finding their authentic voice.

Traditionally, to make an editing log, create four columns. Label each column: Error Example, Name of Error, Explanation, Correction Example. When you are editing your work and find a mistake, jot down the word, sentence, or phrase that is problematic in the first column. Then use your editing resources to figure out what that kind of error is called, and write that label

in the second column. In the third column, write out what you need to find a solution, whether that's a definition, an explanation, a page number in a book or an online link. Finally, in the last column, write out the corrected word, phrase, or sentence.

Here's an example:

Error Example	Name of Error	Explanation	Correction
Honesty is it's own reward.	Apostrophe error	"It's" means "it is"; use "its" for the possessive.	Honesty is its own reward.

As a variation to the editing log, consider this modification:

Example	Error or Variation?	Explanation	Correction
It be like that sometimes.	Variation	a variation of the phrase "That's the way it is sometimes"	Not needed

Errors that might matter: Use modifiers clearly and precisely

Modifiers are words and phrases that add information to a sentence. They specify the meaning of (that is, they modify) a noun or verb. Sometimes the modifier is misplaced, ambiguous, or not clearly pertaining to a noun or verb (a so-called dangling modifier). These problems can lead the reader to wonder what exactly you're claiming.

MISPLACED: *The ski-jumper looked sleek in his new suit weighing only 140 pounds.*

CORRECT: *The ski-jumper looked sleek wearing a new suit and weighing only 140 pounds.*

The suit didn't weigh 140 pounds (one hopes); the ski-jumper did.

AMBIGUOUS: *When formal rules and day-to-day practices differ, they should be changed.*

CLEAR: *Formal rules should be changed to match day-to-day practices.*

CLEAR: *Day-to-day practices should be changed to match the formal rules.*

In the first version, it's not clear what should be changed. The two clear versions make it obvious what the author is arguing.

DANGLING: *Walking down the street, the houses glowed pink in the sunset.*

CORRECT: *Walking down the street, she saw houses glowing pink in the sunset.*

The first version suggests that the houses were walking down the street. The pronoun to which that first phrase refers ("she") is missing. The second version corrects that by bringing in the needed pronoun.

Errors that might matter: Choose correct words

Many wrong-word errors that I see seem to be artifacts of the spell-checkers built into word-processing programs. For example, I often see "costumers" where students meant "customers," "defiantly" instead of "definitely" and, somewhat comically, "martial" instead of "marital."

Other wrong-word errors come from homonyms, two or more words that sound the same, such as the there/their/they're or your/you're errors. In college writing, another common one is the misuse of effect/affect. Use "effect" if you're talking about the result of a cause as a noun, and "affect" if you mean influence or talking about emotion in psychology (in which case it's pronounced AF-fect).

CORRECT: *The effects of the conflict have been long-lasting.*

| *CORRECT: The conflict has affected everyday life throughout the country.*

| *CORRECT: Research shows that the presence of living plants impact both cognition and affect.*

“Effect” can also be a verb, in which case it means to bring about:

| *CORRECT: The conflict effected major international policy changes.*

That sentence is saying that the conflict *brought about* policy changes. If you wanted to say that the conflict influenced (but did not itself cause) policy changes, you would write that the conflict affected policy changes.

4.3: Whose mistake? Reading like writer is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

4.4: When you're ready, learn the rules that will help you

You may have heard a joke like this before:

A man broke his hand and went to see an orthopedic surgeon. He says, "Doctor, you have to help me. I've been to three other doctors already who couldn't help me. I need to know: will I be able to play the violin when my hand heals." The doctor takes some x-rays and says, "Well, your hand is definitely broken. I'll have to do surgery and you'll be in a cast for at least 6 weeks. But, yes, you'll be able to play the violin when I'm done."

Six weeks later, the man returns to have the cast removed. He says, "Doctor, I'm so excited to have this cast off." The doctor takes off the cast, and the man asks "So now I can play the violin?" The doctor says, "Everything looks perfect. Yes, you will be able to play the violin."

The next day, the man returns, carrying a violin. He is angry. The doctor asks, "What's wrong?". The man says, "You told me I'd be able to play the violin. I've been practicing all night. Listen to this." He begins to play. The doctor looks horrified. The doctor says, "Oh my God. You sound terrible. I don't know what happened." The doctor orders more x-rays and scans, and they don't show any problems. The doctor says, "The bones healed perfectly. There's no nerve damage. The surgery went perfectly. I don't understand why you sound so terrible. Tell me everything that happened. Start at the beginning."

The man says, "Well, I always wanted to play the violin. I tried to play, but I couldn't. So I punched the wall ... "

How to do improve your writing? The same way you improve anything: Practice. Practice. Practice. But that's only part of it. Like the man in the joke, practice alone isn't enough. Writing, like playing music, does rely on certain sets of skills that you can choose to improve through practice.

Once you feel confident enough in your ability to express yourself, you might want to start learning some of the formal rules.

Some rules to start with: Commas

Many writing teachers will confess that it wasn't until they themselves became teachers that they finally began to really understand the rule for writing. My comma usage, for example, improved drastically, as soon as I had to start explaining to other people why I thought their commas might not be in the right place.

1. Use a comma to join two independent clauses with a coordinating conjunction:

CORRECT: *Her misdeed was significant, but the punishment was excessive.*

ALSO CORRECT: *Her misdeed was significant but justified by the circumstances.*

In the first example, the comma is telling the reader that one clause (her misdeed was significant) is ending and another (the punishment was excessive) beginning. The second example does not use a comma, because the words that follow "but" (justified by the circumstances) do not add up to an independent clause; they make a dependent clause that could not stand alone as a sentence.

Note: "Because" is NOT a coordinating conjunction. It's a subordinating conjunction. Therefore, it does not use a comma:

INCORRECT: *Conspiracy theories can be compelling, because many people distrust the government.*

CORRECT: *Conspiracy theories can be compelling because many people distrust the government.*

"Because," like other subordinating conjunctions (such as "although," "unless," or "until"), is meant to knit together one indivisible thought; hence, no comma. Including a comma weakens the connection in the mind of your reader.

2. Use a comma to mark the end of an introductory element

CORRECT: *While we were eating, the baby crawled out of the room.*

CORRECT: Alongside the road, we found the perpetrator's gun.

CORRECT: Because many distrust the government, conspiracy theories can be compelling.

The first example would be comically confusing without the comma. The second example shows how the comma helps your reader separate the introductory element from the part that followed. The third example might be confusing. The sentence from part A, above, beginning with “Conspiracy theories” does not use a comma, but in this example, a dependent clause is serving as an introductory element.

3. Use a comma to set off non-essential information (so-called non-restrictive elements)

Both of these sentences are correct, but they convey different ideas:

EXAMPLE 1: Gathering places vital to their communities are worth the investment.

EXAMPLE 2: Gathering places, vital to their communities, are worth the investment.

The first says that *only* those gathering places that are vital to their communities are worth the investment (implying that some are not vital and therefore not worth investing in). In that first example, “vital to their communities” is a restrictive element. In the second example “vital to their communities” is extra information. The sentence implies that gathering places *in general* are worth the investment (ostensibly because they’re vital to their communities). The commas mark the phrase as non-essential information, which is a non-restrictive element. In writing the second sentence, you might enclose the non-essential information in parentheses instead.

4. Use punctuation and coordinating conjunctions to avoid sentence fragments

At some point, you were probably instructed that all sentences must have a subject (which includes a noun) and a predicate (which includes a verb) and that they must be written to stand alone. Consider this example of [a sentence fragment](#):

INCORRECT: When you go to the supermarket. You don't often think about the work behind the scenes.

It has a subject (you) and predicate (go to the supermarket), but the “when” indicates that the sentence is incomplete. When people write sentence fragments, they usually have the missing elements in the preceding or following sentences, so it's really a punctuation error.

CORRECT: When you go to the supermarket, you don't often think about the work behind the scenes.

ALSO CORRECT: You don't often think about the work behind the scenes when you go to the supermarket.

In the first version the dependent clause (the part that couldn't stand alone) comes first, necessitating a comma. In the second, the main clause (the part that could stand alone) comes first, so no comma is used.

5. Use punctuation and coordinating conjunctions to avoid run-on sentences and comma splices

A run-on sentence (one that smooshes two sentences together) may be incorrectly connected with a comma, which is then called a comma splice. This error is easily corrected with punctuation and some coordinating words.

INCORRECT (run-on): The Epic of Gilgamesh is one of the earliest literary works it had a major influence on Mesopotamian culture.

INCORRECT (comma splice): The Epic of Gilgamesh is one of the earliest literary works, it had a major influence on Mesopotamian culture.

Clearly, the writer wants the reader to see these two sentences as connected. He or she has three options to show their reader how the sentences relate.

CORRECT OPTION 1 (semi-colon): *The Epic of Gilgamesh is one of the earliest literary works; it had a major influence on Mesopotamian culture.*

The semi-colon is an elegant and underutilized option. By joining two sentences with a semi-colon, the writer can subtly tell the reader that the epic's earliness and influence, together, make it important.

CORRECT OPTION 2 (comma and coordinating conjunction): *The Epic of Gilgamesh is one of the earliest literary works, and it had a major influence on Mesopotamian culture.*

The use of "and" in this option also tells the reader to put the two claims together. A more specific conjunction—such as "but," "so", or "yet"—is usually a better choice than "and" or a semi-colon because it would provide more information about how the two claims relate.

CORRECT OPTION 3 (separate sentences): *The Epic of Gilgamesh is one of the earliest literary works. It had a major influence on Mesopotamian culture.*

If you don't want your reader to consider the two sentences closely related, you can convey that by choosing separate sentences. With the Gilgamesh example, you might choose this option if the paragraph is mostly about the influence of the epic on Mesopotamian culture but you have a good reason to include a sentence about how early it is. These two sentences would function well as the first two sentences of an introductory paragraph.

Bonus: Use colons for lists, quotations, and explanatory information

INCORRECT: *We packed: clothes, camping equipment, and a first-aid kit.*

CORRECT: *We packed the essentials: clothes, camping equipment, and a first-aid kit.*

For lists, use a colon when the part before the colon can stand alone as a sentence. Otherwise, leave the colon out ("We packed clothes, camping equipment, and a first-aid kit").

INCORRECT: *Mitchell explains that: "Part of the fascination of Gilgamesh is that, like any great work of literature, it has much to tell us about ourselves."*⁵

CORRECT: *Mitchell explains the power of the epic: "Part of the fascination of Gilgamesh is that, like any great work of literature, it has much to tell us about ourselves."*⁶

You can use a colon to introduce a quote if the parts before and after the colon can stand as complete sentences. A comma is an option here as well. Introducing a quote with your own complete sentence and a colon is another underutilized trick in student writing. Recall from a previous chapter that you have to use source material within your own analytical thread. Introducing a quote with your own complete sentence can make it immediately clear why the quote you choose is important to your argument.

If you want to learn more: [Editing and Grammar Resources \(a Links List\)](#)

If you want to learn the rules, [The Nature of Writing](#) is a great free and open resource for developing your writing. It offers easy to understand explanations of elements of effective writing. And, it has quizzes that give you immediate feedback. Try out a few now:

[Comma Splices and Fused Sentences](#)

[Concise Sentences](#)

Here are some other resources

Grammar Girl: <http://www.quickanddirtytips.com/grammar-girl>

Purdue OWL: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

Grammar Monster: <http://grammar-monster.com>

The New Yorker's Comma Queen (videos): <http://video.newyorker.com/series/comma-queen>

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

5: Revision

- 5.1: Fix the big stuff before you fix the little stuff
- 5.2: Outlining your draft is a good revision tool
- 5.3: Giving and receiving feedback will make you a better writer
- 5.4: It's OK to be anxious or afraid
- 5.5: Triplecheck your essay before turning it in (Spell Check, Grammar Check, Checklist)

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5.1: Fix the big stuff before you fix the little stuff



Figure 5.1.1 - “Cut, Paste and Erase” by Lee is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

After you have written a draft, sometimes you will need to make changes. In a college writing class, your instructor probably has requirements about revising your work. While you may feel that you write best “under pressure” the night before your assignment is due, writing a single draft at the last minute rarely results in your best work. You may also find that in college writing, you have to do more than simply write in correct sentences and organized paragraphs. You may feel that you’ve put a lot of effort into your first draft, and it can be challenging to think about changing your work or even eliminating words that you toiled over. But it’s well worth the pain of revising to produce a polished piece of writing that others can easily understand. Your instructor will expect that you have carefully considered the writing task, possibly done some research, and given considerable thought to your ideas and to the needs of your reader/audience. It’s unlikely that you will be able to do so without taking time in between drafts to reconsider your ideas and then revise your draft.

To revise a piece of writing, it may help you to think of three separate ways to improve your writing even if you combine those three ways or move back and forth between them. You can look at the big picture, check your organization, and also edit and proofread your final draft.

Higher Order Concerns

Revising for higher order concerns means changing and revising sections of your paper and working on the organization of your ideas.

When you revise at the “big picture” stage, you are looking at the most important aspects of the writing tasks, and the ones that require the most thought. Here’s a set of questions to help you revise for these higher order concerns:

- Have I met the purpose and requirements?
- Does my draft say what I mean?
- Have I changed my thinking through writing or researching?
- Are there parts that do not belong here? (For more help with this, see “[Reverse Outlining](#)” later in this section of the text.)
- Are there pieces missing?

- Are there places where the writing does not make sense?
- Is the tone right for my reader?
- Are my sources the right kind for my purpose and reader?
- Are all the pieces in the right place?
- Are sources documented?

Lower Order Concerns

Lower order concerns focus on editing and proofreading.

Perhaps you are the person who proofreads and edits as you write a draft, so when you are done drafting and revising for content and structure, you may not have that much editing or proofreading to do. Or maybe you are the person who pays no attention to grammar and spelling as you draft, saving all of the editing until you are finished writing. Either way, for college work (and professional work), plan to carefully edit and proofread your work. For most people, proofreading on a printed copy is more effective than working entirely on screen. Editing is the act of making changes or indicating what to change; proofreading means checking to make sure those changes were made.

5.1: Fix the big stuff before you fix the little stuff is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.2: Outlining your draft is a good revision tool



Figure 5.2.1 - *Falling Upside Down* is licensed under CC0 Public Domain Image from Mega Pixel

Often, outlining is recommended as an early component of the writing process, a way to organize and connect thoughts so the shape of what you are going to write is clear before you start drafting it. This is a tool many writers use that is probably already familiar to you.

Reverse outlining, though, is different in a few ways. First, it happens later in the process, after a draft is completed rather than before. Second, it gives you an opportunity to review and assess the ideas and connections that are actually present in the completed draft. This is almost an opposite approach from traditional outlining, as the traditional pre-writing outline considers an initial set of ideas, which might shift as the draft is actually being written and new ideas are added or existing ones are moved, changed, or removed entirely. A reverse outline can help you improve the structure and organization of your already-written draft, letting you see where support is missing for a specific point or where ideas don't quite connect on the page as clearly as you wanted them to.

How to Create a Reverse Outline

1. At the top of a fresh sheet of paper, write your primary thesis or claim for the text you want to outline. This should be the thesis exactly as it appears in your draft, not the thesis you know you intended. If you can't find the actual words, write down that you can't find them in this draft of the paper—it's an important note to make!
2. Draw a line down the middle of the page, creating two columns below your thesis.
3. Read, preferably out loud, the first body paragraph of your draft.
4. In the left column, write the single main idea of that paragraph (again, this should be using only the words that are actually on the page, not the ones you want to be on the page). If you find more than one main idea in a paragraph, write down all of them. If you can't find a main idea, write that down, too.
5. In the right column, state how the main idea of that paragraph supports the thesis.
6. Repeat steps 3-5 for each body paragraph of the draft.

Once you have completed these steps, you have a reverse outline! It might look a little something like this (this one is only looking at two paragraphs of a draft for the sake of example; yours will likely be looking at more paragraphs than just two):

Thesis: Katniss Everdeen, the heroine of The Hunger Games, creates as much danger for herself as she faces from others over the course of the film.

Main idea

How it supports the thesis

Body #1: She volunteers to fight in the games.

This is the root of most of the immediate danger she finds herself in, so her directly volunteering to do it definitely helped put her in front of that danger.

Body #2: Shooting the apple out of the pig's mouth.

This draws more attention to her and essentially puts a target on her back the other tributes will very much want to hit.

Working with the Results of Your Reverse Outline

Now what? You've probably already made some observations while completing this. Often students will speak up in class after we create these to tell me that they notice places where they are repeating themselves or that some of their paragraphs have too many points or don't clearly support the thesis.

There are a number of observations that can be made with the aid of a reverse outline, and a number of ways it can help you strengthen your paper. Try considering the following questions as you review yours.

Do Multiple Paragraphs Share the Same Main Idea?

If so, you might try combining them, paring back the information for that specific idea so it doesn't feel imbalanced in how much space it takes up, and/or organizing these paragraphs about the same point so they are next to each other in the paper.

Do Any Paragraphs Have Multiple Main Ideas?

Each paragraph should have only one primary focus. If you notice a paragraph does have more than one main idea, you could look for where some of those ideas might be discussed in other paragraphs and move them into a paragraph already focusing on that point, or select just the one main idea you think is most important to this paragraph and cut the other points out, or you might split that paragraph into multiple paragraphs and expand on each main idea.

Do Any Paragraphs Lack a Clear Main Idea?

If it was hard for you to find the main idea of a paragraph, it will also be hard for your reader to find. For paragraphs that don't yet have a main idea, consider whether the information in that paragraph points to a main idea that just isn't written on the page yet. If the information does all support one main idea, adding that idea to the paragraph might be all that is needed. Alternatively, you may find that some of the ideas fit into other paragraphs to support their ideas, or you may not need some of them in the next draft at all.

Do Any Main Ideas Not Connect Clearly and Directly Back to the Thesis?

Since the point of almost every paper is to support its thesis statement, this one can be critical. It should be clear how the main idea of each paragraph supports the thesis or claim of the paper. If that connection is not directly stated, ask yourself how the main idea of that paragraph furthers your thesis and then write that response.

Do Ideas Flow from Paragraph to Paragraph? Are There Gaps in Reasoning?

If a paper starts out introducing something that is a problem in a community, then presents a solution to the problem, and then talks about why the problem is...well, a problem, this organization is likely to confuse readers. Reorganizing to introduce the problem, discuss why it is a problem, and then move on to proposing a solution would do good work to help strengthen the next draft of this paper.

Note that you may need to move, revise, or add transition statements after moving paragraphs around.

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5.3: Giving and receiving feedback will make you a better writer

In many writing classes, students are expected to learn how to give feedback to their peers. This task is usually called peer review, a concept you will also learn about when you begin to use academic research. At first, this may seem intimidating. Writers may think, “I’m not a teacher—how can I give useful feedback to another writer?” What writers CAN do is give their peers an honest reaction as a reader and give advice based on their own experience. It is ultimately up to the writer to decide if they want to make sure of the feedback given. If you feel unsure of your ability to give feedback, remember that you are learning from the process. In a class, the other students will also receive feedback from the instructor.

This understanding may also help students who don’t feel that other students are qualified to give feedback. If you feel that the advice given to you by a peer isn’t right, you can choose to ignore it or decide to check with your instructor first. Remember that your peers are learning how to give feedback, just as you are.

Giving feedback on writing is a powerful skill that you may use outside of school for work projects, for personal writing, or even to help your children with their homework.

Giving Peer Feedback

When your role in peer review is to give feedback, your job is to help the writer by giving your reaction as a reader to the writing. Think about the kind of feedback you would like to get and also how you would like that feedback to be given. What follows here are some basic rules to follow for responding to someone else’s writing.

First, listen to the writer. What kind of feedback are they asking for? Do they want to know if their thesis is clear? Do they have questions about citing sources? Make a note about what kind of feedback the writer has requested and keep that in mind as you respond.

Be kind. When you are receiving criticism, isn’t it easier to hear if the person giving the criticism is kind and respectful to you? Do the same for your peer.

Comment on the higher order concerns first. That means asking questions about anything that confuses you, checking to see if the writing did what the assignment called for, and considering if the order of the paper makes sense. Sometimes your instructor will give you specific things they want you to comment on; if so, be sure you do so.

Use “I” statements to help stay focused on your reaction to the writing. For example, instead of saying, “You aren’t clear in this paragraph,” try saying, “I’m confused in this paragraph. Did you mean X or Y?”

Be specific. Never say “I liked it” or “It was good” unless you follow up with an explanation of exactly what you liked or thought was good. The same goes for criticism; say exactly what confused you or what was missing.

Ask questions. Use questions to clarify what the writer means, what the resources given are saying, and what the writer is trying to do.

Offer advice based on your own experience. For example, you could say “if this were my paper, the two things I would do next are A and B.” Provide options such as, “If you wanted to expand this, you could do A, B, or C.”

Don’t try to make the writer sound like you. If a word is the wrong word, note that, but if you just think of a word you like better, that’s just a matter of style and voice.

Don’t edit your peer’s writing for them. Only comment on editing when the writing is a final draft or when your instructor has included checking for errors in the instructions for peer review. Correcting errors is important at some point, but it makes no sense to spend time editing a paragraph if that paragraph may need to be deleted or changed. It’s okay to remind the writer to run spell check and grammar check if you notice minor errors. Otherwise, only ask about editing errors if you have trouble understanding the sentence because of the mistakes. If your instructor does want you to comment on editing, be sure to follow the instructions. Remember that the responsibility for correcting the errors lies with the writer, not with you.

When providing peer feedback, it can be helpful to have an understanding of higher order and lower order concerns. See “[Higher vs. Lower Order Concerns](#)” in the “Revising” section to learn more.

Make the Most of Peer Feedback

Now let's consider your role in receiving feedback, not giving it. Are you eager to get feedback? Scared to share your work? If you are receiving feedback from your peers, remember that ultimately you get to decide what feedback to accept. If you don't think the feedback is correct, ask your instructor what they think. And give your peers a break; they are also just learning how to give feedback.

One way to improve the feedback you get is to ask for the kind of feedback you want. Don't be afraid to give your peer reviewer some direction.

Listen to or read the feedback with an open mind. Consider that the peer reviewer is your reader. It's good to know what a real reader got out of your writing.

If you aren't sure about the feedback or feel upset about it, reconsider the suggestions after a break. It's okay to say, "I'll think about that." If you feel that the reviewer is trying to change your style so that the paper doesn't sound like you anymore, consider whether the feedback helps you make the paper better. If not, feel free to set that feedback aside.

Why Meet with a Writing Tutor?

Sometimes your instructor may ask you to visit the Writing Center, or it may even be a requirement for your class. Or you may just be curious about what a writing tutor has to offer. Many colleges have writing centers or subscribe to online services that provide tutoring in writing. What's the benefit?

Writing tutors offer you another perspective on your writing. They serve as a real audience for your words and ideas. In addition to that, they have some additional expertise either because they are more experienced writers or they are writing instructors. Writing tutors also have experience with resources for writing that you may not be aware of.

Preparing to Meet with a Tutor

To prepare for a Writing Center session, print your paper out and consider printing a second copy to make it easier for both you and the tutor to read along at the same time. Be ready to take notes and listen carefully. It's helpful if you bring the assignment or have access to it online. Your tutor will spend a few minutes in the beginning of the session figuring out what you are writing, what the requirements are, and when your work is due. They may ask what you have already done to improve the writing, and they will almost always ask you what you would like help with.

Keep in mind that your tutor will want to focus on a few important things rather than try to catch every little thing in your paper. Tutors won't edit your paper for you, but they can help you learn how to edit your own work better. Don't be surprised if your tutor shows you how to use a writing resource such as a handbook or the Purdue OWL online; part of the tutor's job is to help you learn to navigate resources on your own, so that you eventually have the same tools as the tutor.

At the end of a session, the tutor will probably ask you what you plan to do next with your writing. That's how they check to see that you got what you needed from the session and that you understood the advice given. After you revise your writing, you may want to schedule another tutoring session to work on additional aspects of the assignment.

What about Getting Help from a Friend or Family Member?

Getting feedback from a reader outside of your class can sometimes be a good idea. If you want to ask a friend or family member for feedback, set some ground rules. They should follow the same rules as a peer reviewer. At the very least, asking a friend or family member to read your paper aloud will help you hear how your paper sounds. You will probably catch more errors, too.

Preparing for a Student/Teacher Conference

Getting in-person help from your instructor is one of the best ways to receive feedback. You can prepare for a conference with your instructor so that you get the most out of it. Usually, a conference happens with just you and your instructor. Friends aren't invited, and parents can only attend with your permission due to the Family Educational Rights to Privacy Act (FERPA). See this handy link to "FERPA General Guidance for Students" from the US Department of Education (found at www2.ed.gov).

Bring your best work to the conference. The more effort you have already made means that the instructor won't waste time telling you things you already know you need to fix. Re-read your work before the conference and prepare some questions. What do you

think is working? What do you need help with? During the conference, take notes. If the instructor writes anything down, ask if you can take their notes with you. At the end of the conference, work with your instructor on an action plan to revise your work.

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5.4: It's OK to be anxious or afraid



Figure 5.4.1 - “Overcoming Obstacles” by The U.S. Army is licensed under CC BY 2.0

You may be thinking, “All this advice is good, but sometimes I just get stuck! What I normally do just isn’t working!” That’s a familiar feeling for all writers. Sometimes the writing just seems to flow as if by magic, but then the flow stops cold. Your brain seems to have run out of things to say. If you just wait for the magic to come back, you might wait a long time. What professional writers know is that writing takes consistent effort. Writing comes out of a regular practice—a habit. Professional writers also know that not everything they write ends up in the final draft. Sometimes we have to write what Anne Lamott calls a “shitty rough draft.” One of my favorite writing professors, Duncan Carter, used to say that he was a terrible writer but a great reviser, and that’s what helped him write when inspiration wasn’t available. So how do writers get going when they feel stuck or uninspired? They develop a set of habits and have more than one way to write to get the words flowing again.

You might associate the idea of writing anxiety or writer’s block with procrastination, and procrastination certainly can be either a cause or an effect of writing anxiety. You can learn more about [procrastination](#) later in this section of the text. But writing anxiety or writer’s block is more of a condition. We might even venture to call it an ailment. Uh oh. Do you have it? To aid you in self-diagnosis here, let’s take some time to figure out what it is. Then, if you find that you’re afflicted, we’ll help you to determine the best course of treatment.

What is Writing Anxiety and How Do You Know if You Have It?

Do you worry excessively about writing assignments? Do they make you feel uneasy or agitated? Do you have negative feelings about certain types of writing? If you answered yes to any of these questions, you might suffer from writing anxiety. Writing anxiety simply means that a writer is experiencing negative feelings about a given writing task. The last of the questions above points out something important about this condition that has been afflicting writers everywhere for centuries: writing anxiety is often more about the audience and/or purpose for a given writing task than it is about the mere act of writing itself.

Let’s consider this situational nature of writing anxiety for a moment. Say you just bought a new pair of headphones. You brought them home, removed all the packaging, plugged them into your MP3 player, and they’re amazing! So you decide to visit the company website, and you write a stellar review of the product, giving it a five-star rating and including descriptive details about the headphones’ comfortable fit, excellent sound quality, ability to cancel outside noise, and reasonable price.

Now, let’s say that the next day in biology class your instructor covers the topic of biomes, and you learn about animal habitats and biodiversity and the interrelation and interdependence of species within biomes. You find it fascinating and can’t wait to learn more. But then something terrible happens. Your instructor assigns a term project on the subject. As your instructor begins to describe the length and other specifications for the report, complete with formatting guidelines, citation requirements, and a bibliography at the end, your palms start to sweat, your stomach feels uneasy, and you begin to have trouble focusing on anything else your instructor has to say. You’re experiencing writing anxiety.

Writing anxiety is the condition of feeling uneasy about writing. Writer’s block is what you experience when you can’t manage to put words on the page. But your condition isn’t about the act of writing. Just yesterday you wrote a great review for those cool new headphones. So why do you suddenly feel paralyzed by the thought of writing the biology essay? Let’s consider some possible causes.

What Causes Writing Anxiety?

The causes of writing anxiety are many. Here are just a few:

- Inexperience with the type of writing task
- Previous negative experiences with writing (e.g. someone, maybe a teacher, has given you negative feedback or said negative things about your writing)
- Negative feelings about writing (e.g. “I’m not a good writer”; “I hate writing.”)
- Immediate deadline
- Distant deadline
- Lack of interest in the topic
- Personal problems or life events

Level of experience may explain why you felt comfortable writing the headphone review while you break out in a sweat at the thought of the biology paper. If you’ve never written anything similar to a specific assignment, maybe you’re unsure about whether or not you can meet the assignment requirements or the teacher’s expectations. Or maybe the last time you turned in a written report for school you received negative feedback or a bad grade from the teacher. Maybe you procrastinated most of the term and now the paper is due next week and you feel overwhelmed. Or maybe it’s the second week of the term and the finals week deadline seems so far away that you’re not motivated to write.

Knowing the cause of your writing anxiety can help you move beyond it and get writing, even if you can’t completely eliminate the problem. If the topic doesn’t interest you or if you’re having problems at home, those probably aren’t issues that will just disappear, but if you try some of the following strategies, I think you’ll find that you can at least move forward with even the most anxiety-inducing of writing assignments.

Strategies for Overcoming or Managing Writing Anxiety

There are a number of strategies upon which you can draw to help you move past the feeling of being lost or stuck. Consider if some of the following tactics can help you to get writing again.

Just Start Writing

It might sound like it’s oversimplifying the matter, but it’s true. Half the battle is to just start writing. Try some strategies like freewriting or dialectic notetaking. (For more on freewriting, see “Strategies for Getting Started” in the “Prewriting” section of this text, and for more on [dialectic notetaking](#), refer to the section on “Writing about Texts”). You should also believe in the importance of writing badly. Bruce Ballenger, a well-known writer and professor of English at Boise State explains why writing badly is an important part of the writing process:

Giving myself permission to write badly makes it much more likely that I will write what I don’t expect to write, and from those surprises will come some of my best writing. Writing badly is also a convenient alternative to staring off into space and waiting for inspiration.



Figure 5.4.2 - Unsculpted Pottery Clay, CC0 Public Domain Image

Sometimes the biggest problem writers have with getting started is that they feel like the writing needs to be good, or well organized, or they feel like they need to start at the beginning. None of that is true. All you need to do is start.

Have you ever seen a potter make a clay pot? Before a potter can start shaping or throwing a pot, they have to bring the big wet blob of clay and slap it down on the table. It's heavy and wet and messy, but it's the essential raw material. No clay? No pot. "Bad writing" is a lot like that. You have to dump all the words and ideas onto the table. Just get them out. Only then do you have the raw material you need to start shaping the words into something beautiful and lasting. You can wait until the revision stages to worry about shaping your writing to be its best. For now, just get the ideas on the table.

Create Smaller Tasks and Short-Term Goals

One of the biggest barriers to writing can be that the task just seems too large, and perhaps the due date is weeks away. Each of these conditions can contribute to feelings of being overwhelmed or to the tendency to procrastinate. But the remedy is simple and will help you keep writing something each week toward your deadline and toward the finished product: divide larger writing tasks into smaller, more manageable tasks and set intermediate deadlines.

The process that the authors used for writing this text provides a good example. As authors, we had to divide the text into sections, but we also had to plan the process for a first draft, peer reviews, and revisions, along with adding images, links, and other resources, not to mention the final publication of the text online. Had we not divided up the larger tasks into smaller ones and set short-term goals and deadlines, the process of writing the text would have been overwhelming. We didn't meet every single intermediate deadline right on time, but they helped move us along and helped us to meet the most important deadline—the final one—with a complete text that was ready to publish on schedule.

Imagine that you have a term paper that's assigned during Week 1 of a eleven-week term, and it's due during finals week. Make a list of all the tasks you can think of that need to be completed, from beginning to end, to accomplish all that the assignment requires. List the tasks, and assign yourself due dates for each task. Consider taking it a step further and create a task table that allows you to include a column for additional notes. Here's an example:

Task	Complete by	Notes
Brainstorm topics and select a topic	Wed., Week 2	
Do some preliminary research on the Web to learn about the topic	Wed., Week 3	
Develop list of search terms for some more focused research	Fri., Week 3	Ask instructor to look over my search terms
Spend some time at the library searching library holdings and databases, and do some more focused research on the web	Mon., Week 4	Plan ahead to make sure I have time and transportation
Read sources and take notes	Mon., Week 5	Consult notetaking examples in my textbook
Create an outline for the term paper	Fri., Week 5	
Begin drafting	Mon., Week 6	Remember to try some freewriting
Complete first rough draft	Wed., Week 7	
Ask a couple of classmates to read draft and comment; meet with instructor and ask questions	Fri., Week 7	Ask classmates week before if they want to meet and exchange papers
Do some additional research if needed	Mon., Week 8	
Revise first draft and complete second draft with conclusion	Mon., Week 9	Try revision strategies we learned about in class
Meet with tutor in the Writing Center to go over my essay	Fri., Week 9	Call the Writing Center the week before for appt.
Make final revisions, proofread, make sure formatting is right, citations are in place, and works cited entries are correct	Fri., Week 10	Have someone new give it a final read-through.
Print, staple, and turn in (or save and upload) essay	Mon., Finals Week	Celebrate!

Collaborate

Get support from a friend, family member, or classmate. Talk to your friends or family, or to a tutor in your college writing center, about your ideas for your essay. Sometimes talking about your ideas is the best way to flesh them out and get more ideas flowing. Write down notes during or just after your conversation. Classmates are a great resource because they're studying the same subjects as you, and they're working on the same assignments. Talk to them often, and form study groups. Ask people to look at your ideas or writing and to give you feedback. Set goals and hold each other accountable for meeting deadlines (a little friendly competition can be motivating!).

Talk to other potential readers. Ask them what they would expect from this type of writing. Meet with a tutor in your campus writing center. Be sure to come to the appointment prepared with a printed copy of the assignment and a short list of what you want to work on, along with a printed copy of your essay.

For more about getting help from a tutor see "Why Meet with a Writing Tutor?" and "Preparing to Meet with a Tutor" in the "[Giving and Receiving Feedback](#)" section of this text.

Embrace Reality

Don't imagine the situation of your writing assignment to be any better or worse than it really is. There are some important truths for you to recognize:

- Focus on what you do best rather than fretting about your perceived weaknesses.
- Acknowledge that writing can be difficult and that all you need to do is do your best.
- Recognize what might be new or unfamiliar about the type of writing that you're doing.
- Understand that confusion and frustration is a natural part of experiencing new things, and it's okay; it's part of the learning process.
- Remember that you're a student and that you're supposed to be experiencing things that are new and unfamiliar (new formats, new audiences, new subject matter, new processes, new approaches, etc.).
- Repeat the mantra, "It doesn't have to be perfect; it just has to be DONE."

Seek Out Experts

If you can, find more experienced writers (especially related to the type of writing that you're doing) and ask them questions. Sometimes, this might just mean a friend or family member who's already taken a couple years of college courses. Maybe it's a fellow student who has already taken the class you're taking now. Also, the tutors in your college writing center can be a big help at any stage in the writing process. Give them a call and make an appointment. And don't forget the expert you see all the time throughout any class that you take: your instructor. Ask your instructor for suggestions. That's what she's there for.

Another way to learn from the experience of others is to look at examples of other pieces of writing of the type that you're working on. How is this piece organized? Does it make use of source material? What sort of tone does it use? If you don't know where to find examples, ask your instructor. If he doesn't have them at the ready, he'll likely be able to give you some suggestions about where to find some.

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5.5: Triplecheck your essay before turning it in (Spell Check, Grammar Check, Checklist)

Using Technology to Edit: spell check and grammar check

Computers revolutionized the way that we edit writing. Here are some useful tools to make editing easier and faster.

Spell checkers: Always use spell check. Do understand that spell check cannot find misspellings that are actual words. Spell check should mark “tge” as an error, but if you typed “accept” when you meant “except,” spell check will not help you. Sometimes spellcheck won’t recognize names or technical terms. Double check these spellings from your sources. You might also want to turn off autocorrect if there are words that you frequently see incorrectly corrected (like defiantly, when you meant definitely)

Grammar checkers: Grammar checkers are sometimes correct, sometimes not. If you use a grammar checker and disagree with a suggested correction, use other resources such as dictionaries, grammar handbooks, or websites like [Purdue OWL](#) to determine what is correct. If you find that you often make a certain kind of mistake, it’s worthwhile to study up on the topic and perhaps keep an editing checklist to help you remember to check for that type of error. Whatever you do, don’t start randomly changing things just to make the grammar marks go away!

Bonus Technology Tools: Ctrl+F and screen readers

Sometimes it helps to hear your words aloud. Using a screen reader can do that for you, and it will definitely read a mistake as a mistake, without correcting it. Many word processing programs have a screen reader built in. There are also apps you can purchase, and some schools provide applications to students for free.

Find and Replace: If you know that you frequently make the same spelling or punctuation error, use the Find and Replace function in your word processor (in most, pressing and holding the “CTRL” key and then simultaneous pressing the “F” key will get you to the Find and Replace function). For example, if you know that you often type “though” instead of “through,” you can search for all instances of “though” and replace them, one by one, with “through,” checking each item to be sure you are making the right choice.

Using a Checklist

Your instructors may give you checklists they want you to follow. Or, their assignments themselves can be turned into checklists. Or, you can make and adapt your own checklists. Whatever you do, you want to make sure you follow a process. Don’t just cross your fingers and hope for the best. Feel free to use and adapt these checklist.

Checklist for Academic Essays

MLA format

- Appropriate headings and page numbering are used
- Margins are correct: 1 inch all around
- Spacing is set to double, with no extra line spaces between headings and title, title and body, or between paragraphs
- Within the essay, parenthetical citations are used (Lastname 13).
- A works cited page is included when appropriate, with all necessary information.

Source and Prompt Requirements

- Required sources are used in the essay
- Sources are all cited
- Sources are quoted and given attribution as necessary
- The thesis addresses the topic as described in the prompt
- The essay meets length requirement

Organization and Structure

- Introduction creates interest and provides background
- Thesis addresses the prompt
- Paragraphs have topic sentences
- Paragraphs cite relevant evidence
- Paragraphs are focused and developed
- Paragraphs are connected to the thesis
- Paragraph order is deliberate and effective
- Conclusion provides an ending with a So What? and/or Now What?

Mechanics: Spelling, Punctuation, Grammar, Syntax

- Did I run spell-check?
- Did I check homonyms? (Example: to, too, and two)
- Did I look up difficult words?
- Did I proofread aloud to catch obvious errors?
- Are all sentences complete (subject & verb, complete thought)?
- Have I checked for the specific elements of grammar that my instructor wanted me to check for?

Style and Control

- Is my tone appropriate for the assignment?
- Have I used my authentic voice as much as the assignment allows?
- Does my paper flow when read aloud?
- Do I need to be more concise?
- Do I need to be more clear?
- Do I have necessary transitions?

5.5: Triplecheck your essay before turning it in (Spell Check, Grammar Check, Checklist) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

6: Finding and Using Sources

6.1: Your readers expect you to find and cite reliable sources

6.2: Your readers expect you to use sources that have information your readers don't already know

6.3: Your readers expect you to understand your sources

6.4: Your readers expect you to do interesting things with your sources

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6.1: Your readers expect you to find and cite reliable sources

You want a CRAAP source, not a crap source.

If anyone tries to tell you that librarians don't have a sense of humor, just tell them about CRAAP. This acronym was developed by librarians to help students evaluate sources. Using CRAAP will help you determine which sources are good to use in your essay and which sources are crap.

Currency: the timeliness of the information

The date a source was published or produced tells you how current it is or how contemporaneous it is with the topic you are researching. 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

Relevance: the importance of the information for your needs

When you read through your source, consider how the information might effectively contribute to your paper. You should also consider whether the source provides sufficient coverage of the topic. Sources with broad, shallow coverage mean that you need to find other sources to obtain adequate details about your topic. Sources with a very narrow focus or a distinct bias mean that you need to find additional sources to obtain further information or other viewpoints on your topic. Sources written for experts, and requiring the expertise of experts to understand, might not always be the best sources if you yourself can't understand them. Likewise, sources written at too simple a level might be intended as introductions to the topic, and thus not relevant to the kinds of more nuanced arguments that you will be making. Some sources merely summarize a lot of other sources, for example an article that offers "12 Tips For Better Sleep." You would be better off following the sources for just 1 or 2 of these tips.

You also want to know if a source helps you to meet any source requirements. If your assignment requires a "Peer-Reviewed Journal Article" or an "Academic Source from a library database", then you want to make sure that's what your source is. If your assignment says "use only two sources", then you want to be very particular about the sources you use.

Some questions to consider are:

- Does the information relate to my topic or answer my question?
- Does this source meet any source requirements?
- Is the information at an appropriate level (i.e. not too simple or advanced)

Authority: the source of the information

Determining the knowledge and expertise of the author(s) and the organization that sponsors or publishes the work is an important aspect of evaluating the reliability of a source. Anyone can make an assertion or a statement about some thing, event, or idea, but only someone who studies or understands what that thing, event, or idea is can make a reasonably reliable statement or assertion about it. And, as discussed in Relevance, you're better off with a source that does in depth into 1 topic that it has the authority to speak to rather than a source that gives you "12 tips to ..." Look for

- a formal academic degree in a subject area
- professional or work-related experience—business professionals, 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

Accuracy: the reliability, truthfulness, and correctness of the information

Establishing the accuracy, or relative accuracy, of information is an important part of evaluating the reliability of a source. Students are familiar with double-checking the facts in a source. Good sources will be transparent and open about where their information comes from. It is also important to consider the relative accuracy of opinions, interpretations, and ideas, that is, the intellectual integrity of the source. Always look at a range of sources. If you find a source that contains ideas that can't be found in any other sources, then the source is either incredibly creative and important to your work OR it is irrelevant information that no other sources have bothered to talk about because of its irrelevance. Consider these questions:

- Are 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? (Note that 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.)
- Do other sources share the evidence and general conclusions of this source?

Purpose: The reason the source exists

Identifying the intended audience and purpose of the source is another aspect of evaluating information. The intended audience generally determines the style of presentation, the level of technical detail, and the depth of coverage.

You should also consider the author's objectivity. Is he/she trying to persuade? Does he/she 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. Be wary of using sources sponsored by companies that benefit from selling the product or services.

Bias is not inherently bad. In fact, most sources are driven by at least some bias. If a source didn't have a bias, it wouldn't have a clear reason for existing. Researchers don't study car safety out of curiosity; rather, they want to make cars safer. That's a bias. What you should be careful about are hidden biases. For example, Planned Parenthood is biased. It clearly states its bias for women's right to choose any birth control option, including abortion. That doesn't mean that an article published by a representative of Planned Parenthood is unreliable. On the other hand, crisis pregnancy centers have a hidden bias. They market themselves as other options for women seeking birth control options for unwanted pregnancies. But, they do not offer any options for terminating unwanted pregnancies.

[Check out this [article about Crisis Pregnancy Centers on the website Blood and Milk](#). What biases do you see here? Compare that to [this article from the American Medical Association](#))]

The following are some indications of the intended audience:

- highly technical language, complex analysis, very sophisticated/technical tools can indicate a technical, professional, or scholarly audience
- how-to information or current practices 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

Adapted from "CRAAP Analysis of Print Sources", published by Lumen Learning, CC-BY-NC-SA

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6.2: Your readers expect you to use sources that have information your readers don't already know

You probably know by now that if you cite [Wikipedia](#) as an authoritative source, the wrath of your professor shall be visited upon you. Why? Many people still debate the legitimacy of Wikipedia. Its army of faithful contributors and their adherence to strict citation rules have made it legitimacy.

So what's the problem with using Wikipedia now? Simply, it's lazy to use Wikipedia. You're not showing any respect for your readers. If they want to know about a topic, what the first place they are going to go? Exactly--Wikipedia. When you are finding and using sources, you have the obligation to give readers new perspectives. And that means finding sources that they might not have found on their own.

If not Wikipedia, what kinds of sources should you be using?

Tier	Type	Content	Uses	How to find them
1	Peer-reviewed academic publications	Rigorous research and analysis	Provide strong evidence for claims and references to other high-quality sources	Google Scholar, library catalogs, and academic article databases
2	Reports, articles, and books from credible non-academic sources	Well researched and even-handed descriptions of an event or state of the world	Initial research on events or trends not yet analyzed in the academic literature; may reference important Tier 1 sources	Websites of relevant agencies, Google searches using (site: *.gov or site: *.org), academic article databases
3	Short pieces from newspapers or credible websites	Simple reporting of events, research findings, or policy changes	Often point to useful Tier 2 or Tier 1 sources, may provide a factoid or two not found anywhere else	Strategic Google searches or article databases including newspapers and magazines
4	Agenda-driven or uncertain pieces	Mostly opinion, varying in thoughtfulness and credibility	May represent a particular position within a debate; more often provide keywords and clues about higher quality sources	Non-specific Google searches

Tier 1: Peer-reviewed academic publications

These are sources from the mainstream academic literature: books and scholarly articles. Academic books generally fall into three categories: (1) textbooks written with students in mind, (2) monographs which give an extended report on a large research project, and (3) edited volumes in which each chapter is authored by different people. Scholarly articles appear in academic journals, which are published multiple times a year in order to share the latest research findings with scholars in the field. They're usually sponsored by some academic society. To get published, these articles and books had to earn favorable anonymous evaluations by qualified scholars. Who are the experts writing, reviewing, and editing these scholarly publications? Your professors. I describe this process below. Learning how to read and use these sources is a fundamental part of being a college student.

Tier 2: Reports, articles and books from credible non-academic sources

Some events and trends are too recent to appear in Tier 1 sources. Also, Tier 1 sources tend to be highly specific, and sometimes you need a more general perspective on a topic. Thus, Tier 2 sources can provide quality information that is more accessible to non-academics. There are three main categories. First, official reports from government agencies or major international institutions like the [World Bank](#) or the [United Nations](#); these institutions generally have research departments staffed with qualified experts who

seek to provide rigorous, even-handed information to decision-makers. Second, feature articles from major newspapers and magazines like the [New York Times](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [London Times](#), or [The Economist](#) are based on original reporting by experienced journalists (not press releases) and are typically 1500+ words in length. Third, there are some great books from non-academic presses that cite their sources; they're often written by journalists. All three of these sources are generally well researched descriptions of an event or state of the world, undertaken by credentialed experts who generally seek to be even-handed. It is still up to you to judge their credibility. Your instructors and campus librarians can advise you on which sources in this category have the most credibility.

Tier 3. Short pieces from periodicals or credible websites

A step below the well-developed reports and feature articles that make up Tier 2 are the short tidbits that one finds in newspapers and magazines or credible websites. How short is a short news article? Usually, they're just a couple paragraphs or less, and they're often reporting on just one thing: an event, an interesting research finding, or a policy change. They don't take extensive research and analysis to write, and many just summarize a press release written and distributed by an organization or business. They may describe things like corporate mergers, newly discovered diet-health links, or important school-funding legislation. You may want to cite Tier 3 sources in your paper if they provide an important factoid or two that isn't provided by a higher-tier piece, but if the Tier 3 article describes a particular study or academic expert, your best bet is to find the journal article or book it is reporting on and use that Tier 1 source instead. If the article mentions which journal the study was published in, you can go right to that journal through your library website. Sometimes you can find the original journal article by putting the scholar's name and some keywords into Google Scholar.

What counts as a credible website in this tier? You may need some guidance from instructors or librarians, but you can learn a lot by examining the person or organization providing the information (look for an "About" link). For example, if the organization is clearly agenda-driven or not up-front about its aims and/or funding sources, then it definitely isn't something you want to cite as a neutral authority. Also look for signs of expertise. A tidbit about a medical research finding written by someone with a science background carries more weight than the same topic written by a policy analyst. These sources are sometimes uncertain, which is all the more reason to follow the trail to a Tier 1 or Tier 2 source whenever possible.

Personally, research papers are my thing! They give me a chance to further explore a topic that I usually am genuinely interested in, and it gives me the opportunity to write down everything I know. Sources are easy to find; they're everywhere. Unfortunately, the useful ones you have to put in a little more effort to find. As much as I love Wikipedia, if I'm going to take the time to write a paper, I want it to be taken seriously. There are so many resources out there to help students find scholarly information. The better the source, the more supported your paper will be. But it doesn't matter how well supported or amazing your paper is if you don't cite your sources! A citing mistake could definitely get you a big fat zero on the paper you worked so hard on, and maybe even kicked out of school. Utilize resources like www.easybib.com for a quick works cited, and Purdue's OWL (english.purdue.edu/owl) for a complete and easy explanation on APA and MLA citing formats.

Aly Button

Tier 4. Agenda-driven or pieces from unknown sources

This tier is essentially everything else, including Wikipedia.⁴ These types of sources—especially Wikipedia—can be hugely helpful in identifying interesting topics, positions within a debate, keywords to search on, and, sometimes, higher-tier sources on the topic. They often play a critically important role in the early part of the research process, but they generally aren't (and shouldn't be) cited

in the final paper. Throwing some keywords into [Google](#) and seeing what you get is a fine way to get started, but don't stop there. Start a list of the people, organizations, sources, and keywords that seem most relevant to your topic. For example, suppose you've been assigned a research paper about the impact of linen production and trade on the ancient world. A quick Google search reveals that (1) linen comes from the flax plant, (2) the scientific name for flax is *Linum usitatissimum*, (3) Egypt dominated linen production at the height of its empire, and (4) Alex J. Warden published a book about ancient linen trade in 1867. Similarly, you found some useful search terms to try instead of "ancient world" (antiquity, Egyptian empire, ancient Egypt, ancient Mediterranean) and some generalizations for linen (fabric, textiles, or weaving). Now you've got a lot to work with as you tap into the library catalog and academic article databases.

1.

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6.3: Your readers expect you to understand your sources

How to read scholarly sources

Most of the Tier 1 sources available are academic articles, also called scholarly articles, scholarly papers, journal articles, academic papers, or peer-reviewed articles. They all mean the same thing: a paper published in an academic periodical after being scrutinized anonymously and judged to be sound by other experts in the subfield. Their origin explains both their basic structure and the high esteem they have in the eyes of your professors.

Many journals are sponsored by academic associations. Most of your professors belong to some big, general one (such as the [Modern Language Association](#), the [American Psychological Association](#), the [National Association for Sport and Physical Education](#), or the [American Physical Society](#)) and one or more smaller ones organized around particular areas of interest and expertise (such as the [Association for the Study of Food and Society](#), the [International Association for Statistical Computing](#), or the [Slavic and East European Folklore Association](#)). There are also generalist organizations organized by region of the country or state, such as the [Eastern Sociological Society](#) or the [Southern Management Association](#). Each of these associations exists to promote the exchange of research findings and collaboration in their disciplines. Towards this end, they organize conferences, sponsor working groups, and publish one or more academic journals. These journals are meant to both publicize and archive the most interesting and important findings of the field.

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.

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.

Scholarly journals use a peer-review process to decide which articles merit publication. 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 outside the interests of the journal or is clearly inadequate, the editor will reject it outright. If it looks appropriate and 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. Is the research question driving the paper timely and important? Does the paper sufficiently and accurately review all of the relevant prior research? Are the information sources believable and the research methods rigorous? Are the stated results fully justified by the findings? Is the significance of the research clear? Is it well written? Overall, does the paper add new, trustworthy, and important knowledge to the field? 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 (again, with no identifying information) 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.

Understanding the academic publication process and 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; however, the reviewers definitely do, and they found the analysis to be well constructed. Thus, you can accept the findings as legitimate and 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.

Research papers, amongst others, are the most common papers a college student will ever write, and as difficult as it may sound, it is not impossible to complete. Research papers are my favorite kind of papers because of sourcing, paraphrasing, and quoting. Naturally as you would in other papers, your own paper should come from yourself, but when you are proving a point about a specific area of your topic, it is always ok to have a credible source explain further. In college, sources are very important for most, if not all papers you will have, and citing those sources is important as well. After you are able to familiarize yourself with citations, it will come natural like it has for many students.

Timothée Pizarro

Students sometimes grumble when they're ordered to use scholarly articles in their research. It seems a lot easier to just Google some terms and find stuff that way. However, academic articles are the most efficient resource out there. They are vetted by experts and structured specifically to help readers zero in on the most important passages.

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6.4: Your readers expect you to do interesting things with your sources

[from "Walk, Talk, Cook, Eat: A Guide to Using Sources" by Cynthia R Haller, in *Writing Spaces, Volume 2*, CC-BY-NC-SA]

College is about learning how to make meaning. You might think about using sources as walking, talking, cooking, and eating. These metaphors can shed some light on writing with sources. Learn how to walk (find the sources you need); talk (converse with source authors); cook (integrate sources to make new meaning); and eat (allow sources to change your life). You won't ever finish using sources to make meaning--not while you're in college, not even after you've been working and living for a long time.

Consider the following assignment:

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.

Walk: Knowing where to go to find sources

Books and articles are good sources. You can also think about sources more generally as “forms of meaning you use to make new meaning.” A source provides information and knowledge that you process to produce new meaning, which other people can then use to make their own meaning. To use sources well, you first have to go where they are. 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 a project on water quality. 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.

Internet search engines can help you find sources, but they aren't always the best route to getting to a good source. There are some ways you can narrow your search to get fewer, more focused results. You can 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. Play around with your search terms to get to what you need.

Internet search engines won't necessarily lead you to the sources considered most valuable for college writing. Professors will often want you to use scholarly (or peer-reviewed) sources. These two terms are often used interchangeably: 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.

Some peer-reviewed articles can be found online. Many peer-reviewed articles are now open-access, meaning that they are freely available online because scholars and researchers want their work to get to as many people as possible. Google has a specialized search engine called Google Scholar, but many of the articles you find there are behind a paywall. The best place to start is your library databases. 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. And 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.

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. The references let the reader know exactly how to find that source as well. In research and in college writing, 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.

Talk: Listen to what sources have to say

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. 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.

You also need to recognize that texts are usually part of an existing conversation. Peer-reviewed articles have extensive citation pages to show their awareness of the existing conversation. Really, any form of citation is meant to do the same. Even Wikipedia articles can show you the existing conversations. Wikipedia articles are often good places to get background info and good places to connect with reliable sources. For example, [the Wikipedia page on "Bottled Water"](#) tells us 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"). 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.

You can look in the library's subject guides or ask the librarian about databases for health. There, you might find an article such as "Health Risks and Benefits of Bottled Water" in the journal *Primary Care Clinical Office Practice* (Napier and Kodner). 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 sources, but sometimes the conversation may be too narrow for your needs and difficult to understand because it's experts talking to experts. As you read more sources, you begin to realize there's not always a simple answer to questions. Not everyone agrees on the answers, either. You 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.

Cooking: Process and combine sources in new ways

As we think about the actual drafting, though, it's helpful to move on to that 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. Consider chili cheese fries? You can taste the flavor of the chili, the cheese, and the fries separately. 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. 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.

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.

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.

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?

Assignment 2: Business Plan (given in an entrepreneurship course) As your major project for this course, your group will develop a business plan for a student-run business that meets some need on this campus. Be sure to include all aspects of a business plan. During the last few weeks of class, each group will present the plan to the class, using appropriate visuals.

Ingredients: Hmm . . . It’s hard to tell the sources I’ll need. Obviously, whatever the teacher teaches us about business plans in the course will be important—hope she goes into detail about this and provides examples. What if she doesn’t? What sources could my group use? Our textbook has a chapter on business plans that will probably help, and maybe we can go to the library and look for books about writing business plans. Some sample business plans would be helpful—I wonder if the Center for Small Business Support on our campus would have some?

Processes: Well, maybe we could have each member of the group look for sources about business plans and then meet together to discuss what we need to do, or talk online. Don’t know how we’ll break down the writing—maybe we could divide up the various sections of the plan, or discuss each section together, then someone could write it up?

Product: It’s clear that we have to include all the information that business owners put in a business plan, and we’ll have to follow the organization of a typical plan. But we can’t tell exactly what that organization should be until we’ve done some research.

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.

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.

Eating: What you learn stays with you

You’ve probably heard the expression, “you are what you eat.” When you eat sources—that is, think about things, experiment, read, write, talk to others—you yourself change. What you learn stays with you. Of course. We all forget a lot of the things we learn, especially those we seldom or never use again; but what you learn and use over a long period of time will affect you deeply and shape the way you see the world. Take a look at this quote from Mark Twain in *Life on the Mississippi*, where the narrator’s talking about his apprenticeship as a steamboat pilot. When he first began his apprenticeship, the Mississippi River looked the same as any other river. But after he made many long trips up and down it, with the captain and others explaining things along the way, he began to see it in all its complexity.

The face of the water, in time, became a wonderful book—a book that was a dead language to the uneducated passenger, but which told its mind to me without reserve, delivering its most cherished secrets as clearly as if it uttered them with a voice. (77–78)

Eventually, the narrator could identify each of the river’s bends, knew how its currents were running, and could estimate how deep it was just by looking at the surface. It was the same river, but he was a different man. Your bottled water project isn’t as involved as learning to pilot a steamship. But once you start reading your sources, your experience of bottled water will shift. It’ll still be the same water you used to drink, but it won’t be the same you.

6.4: Your readers expect you to do interesting things with your sources is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

7: Moving Beyond Essay Basics

- 7.1: Use reasoning to connect claims and evidence
- 7.2: Use patterns of organization and development
- 7.3: Use transitions and signposts to develop relationships between ideas
- 7.4: Your essay should continue the conversation
- 7.5: Reading like a writer can help you develop conversations in your essays

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7.1: Use reasoning to connect claims and evidence

(700 words)

Reasoning connects claims and evidence

You might remember this from a previous chapter.

Consider this hypothetical plea from Zach to his father: “Dad, could you loan me money for gas until I get my paycheck at the end of the week? If you do, I’ll be able to haul your junk pile to the dump as well as drive myself back and forth to work. I’ll pay you back as soon as I get my check!”

Logos appeals to the reader’s intellect. As readers, we test arguments for their soundness. Does the writer make false assumptions? Are there gaps in the argument? Does the writer leap to conclusions without sufficient evidence to back up his claims?

As writers, we have to build a solid, well-explained, sufficiently supported argument.

What about Zach’s argument above? Essentially, he asserts that a loan from his father would benefit both Zach and his dad. Does the argument seem sound? We do not know why Zach is short on cash this week—his father may be aware that Zach spent most of last week’s check on the newest iPhone, so he does not have enough to cover his gas this week. Thus, there may be factors that undermine Zach’s implication that his request is motivated by responsibility. However, he does offer evidence that the loan will allow him to fulfill his obligations.

We can define our reasoning based on the relationship between our evidence and our claims. We can categorize reasoning into two main categories: Inductive and Deductive

Inductive Reasoning: Drawing conclusions from patterns of facts

You likely use inductive reasoning every day. By this kind of logic, we form conclusions based on samples. Lab experiments, for example, must be repeatable in order for scientists to gather a convincing amount of data to prove a hypothesis. If we observe enough examples of an event occurring under similar circumstances, we can employ inductive reasoning to draw a conclusion about the pattern. For example, if we pay less each time we buy apples at Supermart than when we purchase apples at Pete’s Grocery, we will likely conclude, inductively, that apples are less expensive at Supermart.

When making an argument based on inductive reasoning, a writer will need to

1) provide evidence to prove the pattern of facts exists

2) show how the conclusion is valid

Deductive Reasoning: Drawing conclusions from facts applied to principles

Deductive reasoning, on the other hand, is drawing a conclusion based on a *logical equation*. A common example of deductive reasoning is the syllogism: a three part logical statement

1. A **general statement**, or **major principle**: Humans are mortal
2. A **minor premise**, or **observed fact**: Plato is human
3. And a **conclusion**: Therefore Plato is mortal

Persuasion becomes relevant when the issue moves beyond proven facts. As we explore issues of ethics and values, logical reasoning can seem a bit mushy, yet rather than throw up their hands in abandonment of deductive reasoning, humanities scholars generally work hard to establish valid assumptions, or generally agreed-upon notions, that can be used to help humans move closer to reasonable, or logical, social and political beliefs and behaviors.

More frequently, you will see arguments made in incomplete forms, which is called an **enthymeme**. An enthymeme seems to “leaps” to its conclusion because it leaves some part of its logic unstated, and its major principles are not as universally true. Consider the following examples:

Enthymeme: Lisa Harmon would be a good hire for our company; she has a degree from Harvard University.

- Unstated Principle: Anyone with a degree from Harvard University would be a good employee for our company.

- Observed Fact: Lisa has a degree from Harvard University.
- Conclusion: Lisa would be a good employee for our company.

Enthymeme: *Kill Bill* is a chick flick.

- Unstated Principle: Any movie that features a female protagonist is a chick flick.
- Observed Fact: *Kill Bill* features a female protagonist.
- Conclusion: *Kill Bill* is a chick flick.

In both of these arguments, the writer would need to defend the principle used to reach the conclusion.

When making an argument based on deductive reasoning, a writer will need to

1) establish premises that readers can agree on

2) draw reasonable conclusions when applying specific facts to those principles

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7.2: Use patterns of organization and development

Patterns of organization can help your readers follow the ideas within your essay and your paragraphs, but they can also work as methods of development to help you recognize and further develop ideas and relationships in your writing. Here are some strategies that can help you with both organization and development in your essays.

Major Patterns of Organization

Read the following sentences:

1. Now take the pie out of the oven and let it cool on the stovetop.
2. Mix the dry ingredients with the liquid ingredients.
3. Set the pie crust aside while you make the filling.

How did it feel to read the above list? A bit confusing, I would guess. That's because the steps for making a pie were not well organized, and the steps don't include enough detail for us to know exactly what we should do. (Like what are the dry and liquid ingredients?) We all know that starting instructions from the beginning and giving each detailed step in the order it should happen is vital to having a good outcome, in this case a yummy pie! But it's not always so simple to know how to organize or develop ideas, and sometimes there's more than one way, which complicates things even further.

First, let's take a look at a couple of ways to think about organization.

General to Specific or Specific to General

It might be useful to think about organizing your topic like a triangle:

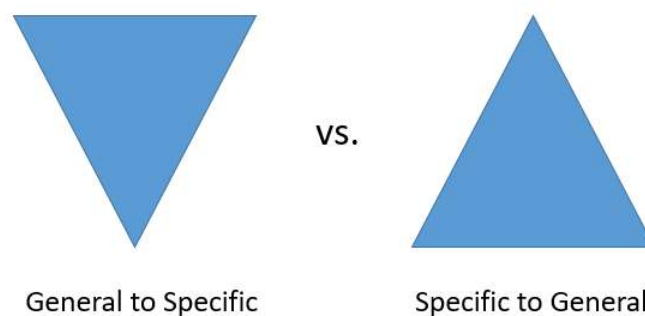


Figure 7.2.1

The first triangle represents starting with the most general, big picture information first, moving then to more detailed and often more personal information later in the paper. The second triangle represents an organizational structure that starts with the specific, small scale information first and then moves to the more global, big picture stuff.

For example, if your topic is air pollution in Portland, Oregon, an essay that uses the general-to-specific organizational structure might begin this way:

Many people consider Portland, Oregon, to be an environmentally friendly, pollution-free place to live. They would be shocked to know how many pollutants are in the air causing a multitude of health problems in Portland's citizens.

An essay that uses the specific-to-general structure might start like this:

When Nancy moved to Portland, Oregon, with her husband and two kids, she expected to find a clean, pollution-free city. She was shocked and angered when her daughter was diagnosed with asthma caused by air pollution.

What's the difference between these two introductions? And how might they appeal to the intended audience for this essay (Portland voters) in different ways? The first introduction is looking at the big picture of the problem and mentions pollution's impact on all citizens in Portland, while the second introduction focuses on one specific family. The first helps readers see how vast the problem really is, and the second helps connect readers to a real family, making an emotional appeal from the very beginning.

Neither introduction is necessarily better. You'll choose one over the other based on the kind of tone you'd like to create and how you'd like to affect your audience. It's completely up to you to make this decision.

Does the Triangle Mean the Essay Keeps Getting More Specific or More Broad until the Very End?

The triangle is kind of a general guide, meaning you're allowed to move around within it all you want. For example, it's possible that each of your paragraphs will be its own triangle, starting with the general or specific and moving out or in. However, if you begin very broadly, it might be effective to end your essay in a more specific, personal way. And if you begin with a personal story, consider ending your essay by touching on the global impact and importance of your topic.

Are There Other Ways to Think about Organizing My Ideas?

Yes! Rather than thinking about which of your ideas are most specific or personal or which are more broad or universal, you might consider one of the following ways of organizing your ideas:

- Most important information first (consider what you want readers to focus on first)
- Chronological order (the order in time that events take place)
- Compare and contrast (ideas are organized together because of their relationship to each other)

The section on Methods of Development, below, offers more detail about some of these organizational patterns, along with some others.

Exercise



Figure 7.2.2

Choose one of the following topics, and practice writing a few opening sentences like we did above, once using the general-to-specific format and once using the specific-to-general. Which do you like better? What audience would be attracted to which one? Share with peers to see how others tackled this challenge. How would you rewrite their sentences? Why? Discuss your changes and listen to how your peers have revised your sentences. Taking in other people's ideas will help you see new ways to approach your own writing and thinking.

Topics:

1. Facing fears
2. Safety in sports
3. Community policing
4. Educating prisoners
5. Sex education
6. A book or movie that impacted you
7. One thing you would change about your community
8. Beauty standards
9. Toxic masculinity
10. How the media affects identity formation
11. Gender roles
12. Race in America
13. The value of art in society
14. Travel as part of a well-rounded education
15. Drugs and alcohol

16. Advice to new parents
17. Advice to teachers
18. The value of making mistakes
19. How you'd spend a million dollars
20. What a tough day at work taught you about yourself or others.

Methods of Development

The methods of development covered here are best used as ways to look at what's already happening in your draft and to consider how you might emphasize or expand on any existing patterns. You might already be familiar with some of these patterns because teachers will sometimes assign them as the purpose for writing an essay. For example, you might have been asked to write a cause-and-effect essay or a comparison-and-contrast essay.

It's important to emphasize here that patterns of organization or methods of developing content usually happen naturally as a consequence of the way the writer engages with and organizes information while writing. That is to say, most writers don't sit down and say, "I think I'll write a cause-and-effect essay today." Instead, a writer might be more likely to be interested in a topic, say, the state of drinking water in the local community, and as the writer begins to explore the topic, certain cause-and-effect relationships between environmental pollutants and the community water supply may begin to emerge.

So if these patterns just occur naturally in writing, what's the use in knowing about them? Well, sometimes you might be revising a draft and notice that some of your paragraphs are a bit underdeveloped. Maybe they lack a clear topic, or maybe they lack support. In either case, you can look to these common methods of development to find ways to sharpen those vague topics or to add support where needed. Do you have a clear cause statement somewhere but you haven't explored the effects? Are you lacking detail somewhere where a narrative story or historical chronology can help build reader interest and add support? Are you struggling to define an idea that might benefit from some comparison or contrast? Read on to consider some of the ways that these strategies can help you in revision. And if you want to learn more, check out what the *New York Times* has to say in their learning blog article, "[Compare-Contrast, Cause-Effect, Problem Solution: Common 'Text Types' in The Times.](#)"

Cause and Effect (or Effect and Cause)

Do you see a potential cause-and-effect relationship developing in your draft? The cause-and-effect pattern may be used to identify one or more causes followed by one or more effects or results. Or you may reverse this sequence and describe effects first and then the cause or causes. For example, the causes of water pollution might be followed by its effects on both humans and animals. You may use obvious transitions to clarify cause and effect, such as "What are the results? Here are some of them..." or you might simply use the words *cause*, *effect*, and *result*, to cue the reader about your about the relationships that you're establishing.

Here's an example article from the New York times, "[Rough Times Take Bloom Off a New Year's Rite, the Rose Parade,](#)" that explores the cause and effect relationship (from 2011) between Pasadena's budgetary challenges and the ability of their Rose Parade floats to deck themselves out in full bloom.

Problem-Solution

At some point does your essay explore a problem or suggest a solution? The problem-solution pattern is commonly used in identifying something that's wrong and in contemplating what might be done to remedy the situation. There are probably more ways to organize a problem-solution approach, but but here are three possibilities:

- Describe the problem, followed by the solution.
- Propose the solution first and then describe the problems that motivated it.
- Or a problem may be followed by several solutions, one of which is selected as the best.

When the solution is stated at the end of the paper, the pattern is sometimes called the delayed proposal. For a hostile audience, it may be effective to describe the problem, show why other solutions do not work, and finally suggest the favored solution. You can emphasize the words *problem* and *solution* to signal these sections of your paper for your reader.

Here's an example article from the New York times, "[Monks Embrace Web to Reach Recruits,](#)" that highlights an unexpected approach by a group of Benedictine monks in Rhode Island; they've turned to social media to grow their dwindling membership. Monks on Facebook? Who knew?

Chronology or Narrative

Do you need to develop support for a topic where telling a story can illustrate some important concept for your readers? Material arranged chronologically is explained as it occurs in time. A chronological or narrative method of development might help you find a way to add both interest and content to your essay. Material arranged chronologically is explained as it occurs in time. This pattern may be used to establish what has happened. Chronology or narrative can be a great way to introduce your essay by providing a background or history behind your topic. Or you may want to tell a story to develop one or more points in the body of your essay. You can use transitional words like *then*, *next*, and *finally* to make the parts of the chronology clear.

Here's an example article from the Center for Media Literacy (originally published in the journal *Media & Values*): "[From Savers to Spenders: How Children Became a Consumer Market](#)." To encourage his readers to think about why and how children are being marketed to by advertisers, the author uses a historical chronology of how the spending habits of children changed over a number of decades.

Comparison and Contrast

Are you trying to define something? Do you need your readers to understand what something is and what it is not? The comparison-and-contrast method of development is particularly useful in extending a definition, or anywhere you need to show how a subject is like or unlike another subject. For example, the statement is often made that drug abuse is a medical problem instead of a criminal justice issue. An author might attempt to prove this point by comparing drug addiction to AIDS, cancer, or heart disease to redefine the term "addiction" as a medical problem. A statement in opposition to this idea could just as easily establish contrast by explaining all the ways that addiction is different from what we traditionally understand as an illness. In seeking to establish comparison or contrast in your writing, some words or terms that might be useful are *by contrast*, *in comparison*, *while*, *some*, and *others*.

Here's an example article from the New York times: "[Who Wants to Shop in a Big Box Store, Anyway?](#)" The author explores some interesting differences between the average American and average Indian consumer to contemplate the potential success of big box stores in India and also to contemplate why these giant big box corporations, like Walmart or Target, might have to rethink their business model.

These four methods of development—cause and effect, problem-solution, chronology or narrative, and comparison and contrast—are just a few ways to organize and develop ideas and content in your essays. It's important to note that they should not be a starting point for writers who want to write something authentic—something that they care deeply about. Instead, they can be a great way to help you look for what's already happening with your topic or in a draft, to help you to write more, or to help you reorganize some parts of an essay that seem to lack connection or feel disjointed. Look for organizational patterns when you're reading work by professional writers. Notice where they combine strategies (e.g a problem-solution pattern that uses cause-and-effect organization, or a comparison-contrast pattern that uses narrative or chronology to develop similarities or differences). Pay attention to how different writers emphasize and develop their main ideas, and use what you find to inspire you in your own writing. Better yet, work on developing completely new patterns of your own.

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7.3: Use transitions and signposts to develop relationships between ideas

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

Why are Transitions Important?

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

When Is the Right Time to Build in Transitions?

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

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

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

Sentence-Level Transitions

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

To Show Similarity

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

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

To Show Contrast

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

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

To Exemplify

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

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

To Show Cause and Effect

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

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

To Show Additional Support

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

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

A Word of Caution

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

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

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

Transitions between Paragraphs and Sections

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

Use Signposts

Signposts are words or phrases that indicate where you are in the process of organizing an idea; for example, signposts might indicate that you are introducing a new concept, that you are summarizing an idea, or that you are concluding your thoughts. Some of the most common signposts include words and phrases like *first*, *then*, *next*, *finally*, *in sum*, and *in conclusion*. Be careful not to overuse these types of transitions in your writing. Your readers will quickly find them tiring or too obvious. Instead, think of more

creative ways to let your readers know where they are situated within the ideas presented in your essay. You might say, “The first problem with this practice is...” Or you might say, “The next thing to consider is...” Or you might say, “Some final thoughts about this topic are....”

Use Forward-Looking Sentences at the End of Paragraphs

Sometimes, as you conclude a paragraph, you might want to give your readers a hint about what’s coming next. For example, imagine that you’re writing an essay about the benefits of trees to the environment and you’ve just wrapped up a paragraph about how trees absorb pollutants and provide oxygen. You might conclude with a forward-looking sentence like this: “Trees benefits to local air quality are important, but surely they have more to offer our communities than clean air.” This might conclude a paragraph (or series of paragraphs) and then prepare your readers for additional paragraphs to come that cover the topics of trees’ shade value and ability to slow water evaporation on hot summer days. This transitional strategy can be tricky to employ smoothly. Make sure that the conclusion of your paragraph doesn’t sound like you’re leaving your readers hanging with the introduction of a completely new or unrelated topic.

Use Backward-Looking Sentences at the Beginning of Paragraphs

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

Evaluate Transitions for Predictability or Conspicuousness

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

Exercise: Try Out Some New Transition Strategies



Figure 7.3.2

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

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7.4: Your essay should continue the conversation

Writing as Conversation

Writing does not happen in a vacuum but within a specific context and time. The process of writing can be better understood if it is viewed as a conversation between writer and reader within a specific context and time, rather than a static text. As a college student, you are expected to engage with, and join, the conversations about myriad topics --not only with classmates, but also writers who are experts in their fields. Imagine you are entering a room buzzing with different conversations...you choose to enter one of the conversations. Most of you have learned the required etiquette needed to not only join the conversation politely, but also to add something of value. Joining the world of written conversations is not much different and has its own set of etiquette and rules.

One of those rules is to acknowledge what has already been said about a topic and who said it. No one likes that person in a conversation who just repeats what someone else said as though it were their own original idea. If you do this without any citation or attribution, then you've plagiarized.

By now, you have already learned how to write cohesive paragraphs and short essays. Now you need to engage critically with texts written by experts by adding your written opinions. You will need to

- hone your research skills to actively seek out the latest conversations in specific subjects,
- practice your reading skills to recognize the ways that sources are taking part in a conversation,
- and fine-tune your methods of presentation to join in the discussion.

Michael Charlton, Professor at Missouri Western State University, writes in his essay, "Understanding How Conversations Change Over Time" that we are surrounded by conversations with which we engage meaningfully. The following excerpt is adapted from his essay:

Writers make their claims in the real world where people with other opinions, values, beliefs, and experiences live. To make a claim is to enter into a conversation with these people. The rhetorician, Kenneth Burke, once famously described this as a parlor or party to which you have come late to find out that people are already in heated discussions about a topic. After you see who is part of the conversation and hear what they are saying, you begin to feel comfortable enough to offer your own take on the subject.

For example, you arrive somewhere to meet two friends and discover that they are discussing where to go to dinner or which movie to see. Each friend presents his or her argument, setting out evidence for why this restaurant or movie is a good choice, and each friend pokes holes in the other person's argument, pointing out why he or she would not enjoy that restaurant or movie. You are expected to take a role in this discussion. Maybe you take a stand with one friend over the other, or maybe you try to reach a compromise and propose a third restaurant or movie that everyone could accept. This can lead to even further discussion.

This discussion between three friends is somewhat like Burke's idea of the parlor, but there are differences. Eventually the conversation between the three friends will reach an end: they will go to dinner or a movie, perhaps, or they will all go home. Everyone entered into the conversation, made his or her claims, responded to other people, and went on with their lives. Burke, however, was talking about the conversations and arguments that take place in the larger culture and the world as a whole. In his metaphor, the conversation never truly ends. A writer enters into it at a particular place and time and tries to react to everything that has come before. He or she may even be influential in changing the direction or tone of the conversation by looking at it from a new angle or focusing on a different aspect of it; for example, maybe the three friends need to consider whether there is a certain type of food or movie one of them dislikes or maybe the three friends need to consider a different activity.

Conversations about important issues do not end

In your writing, you might have the urge to solve all the problems of the world. Sometimes writers who begin an essay with "Since the beginning of time . . ." end their essays with the belief that they've now solved a problem for all time. But for most complex issues, the conversation never truly ends.

One widely discussed social trend that continues to inform American and global discourse is the increasing prominence of women in the workplace during and after the Second World War. At that time, this was a controversial development for many people, who felt that women were leaving traditional gender roles and the home in order to pursue work conventionally identified with men. (Although, as some historians have noted, women have always played an important role in businesses from agriculture to manufacturing, and so this conversation is far older than the mid-twentieth century.)

Most viewers watching an educational film made in 1959 entitled *The Trouble with Women* find its depiction of female workers to be so incredibly dated that it is almost comical. Changes in social values have rendered the film's discussion between two men about female employees ridiculous. Both the "con" side (with his insistence that female workers are inherently inferior) and the "pro" side (with his argument that what he calls "gals" or "girls" can be just as good) have no mainstream place in contemporary discussions of gender in the workplace. The entire question up for discussion (can women fit into the workplace?) is one that has been answered by fifty years of history in which women have fully integrated into the American workplace, and social values around gender issues and equality have changed.

If a writer were seeking to end a conversation, they could argue that things have vastly improved since 1959, and thus the problem has been solved. Of course, as any woman in the workplace can tell you, the conversation has not ended. Rather, the conversation about whether women should be allowed in the workplace has morphed into a discussion of how all genders are treated in the workplace. A writer who wants to join a conversation would instead look for a way to advance the conversation.

Yes, the situation of women in the workplace has improved significantly in the past 60 years, as evidenced by a 1959 video

But, problems like income disparity; the balance between family life, childcare, and the workplace; why certain professions are still dominated by one gender; sexual harassment; all still exist

So, the increased prominence of women and the rise in social movements such as feminism, which gave women a greater voice in the public sphere and a greater ability to steer the conversation, still need to be leveraged to solve the problem

Hopefully you recognized the Yes, But, So pattern. This is a great pattern for conversation because it forces you to continue the conversation and to invite other to join. For example, if someone now wanted to join the conversation with you, but had a different idea about inequality in the workplace, they could structure their conversation in this way

Yes, the increased prominence of women and the rise in social movements such as feminism, which gave women a greater voice in the public sphere and a greater ability to steer the conversation, can be leveraged to solve the problem of inequality in the workplace

But, many of the gains achieved by feminism have benefited primarily white women. But, according to the [Pew Research Center](#), the income disparity for Black men is the same as it is for white women, and Black women suffer from income inequality even more.

So, we need to establish broader coalitions when fighting to end workplace discrimination

Contributors and Attributions

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- Revision and adaptation of the page [Writing Commons: Michael Charlton's Understanding How Conversations Change Over Time](#) . **Authored by:** Susan Oaks. **Provided by:** Empire State College, SUNY OER Services. **Project:** College Writing. **License:** [CC BY-NC: Attribution-NonCommercial](#)

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7.5: Reading like a writer can help you develop conversations in your essays

Returning to the conversation example above, it is important to remember that you are not just having a conversation with and about abstract ideas. Rather, you are having conversations with your sources, and your sources are having conversations with other sources. Your academic writing will be strongest when you

- 1) show the conversations that are happening in your sources
- 2) create new conversations between your sources

Showing the Conversations happening in your sources

Use your active reading strategies to pay attention to what ideas your sources draw on and who they cite. The sciences and social sciences take this strategy very seriously. That's why academic articles begin with a literature review. You want to make sure that your experiment isn't just repeating past experiments. Whenever you are writing with sources, you need to establish what conversation has already happened before you can join it.

If you are using a source that taking part in a conversation, you might find it helpful to describe that conversation. Consider this example from [Vershawn Ashanti Young's essay "Should Writers Use They Own English?"](#). In the essay, Young is having a conversation with another scholar, Stanley Fish. Young begins his essay by paraphrasing and quoting Fish.

Cultural critic Stanley Fish come talkin bout—in his three-piece New York Times “What Should Colleges Teach?” suit—there only one way to speak and write to get ahead in the world, that writin teachers should “clear [they] mind of the orthodoxies that have taken hold in the composition world” (“Part 3”). He say dont no student have a rite to they own language if that language make them “vulnerable to prejudice”; that “it may be true that the standard language is [...] a device for protecting the status quo, but that very truth is a reason for teaching it to students” (Fish “Part 3”).

Then, Young directly responds to Fish

But dont nobody’s language, dialect, or style make them “vulnerable to prejudice.” It’s ATTITUDES. It be the way folks with some power perceive other people’s language. Like the way some view, say, black English when used in school or at work. Black English dont make it own-self oppressed. It be negative views about other people usin they own language, like what Fish expressed in his NYT blog, that make it so.

If you wanted to include Young's ideas in your essay, you would want to summarize or paraphrase the conversation between Young and Fish. Young's statements about where oppression comes from are more powerful BECAUSE they are part of a conversation. So, you might write something like this:

In "Should Writers Use They Own English," Vershawn Ashanti Young describes the discrimination that occurs when writing teachers insist that students only use "standard language." Young responds to Stanley Fish, a prominent scholar in the field of composition studies. Fish claimed that students who don't use standard language are "vulnerable to prejudice," but Young replies that "Black English dont make it own-self oppressed. It be negative views about other people usin they own language, like what Fish expressed in his NYT blog, that make it so."

2) create new conversations between your sources

A second useful strategy is to look for ways to put your sources together in new ways. If your assignment asks you to "synthesize", then you are being asked to put your sources in conversation. As you're taking notes, if you're using a Triple-Entry Journal you can use one of the columns to make connections between sources. Look for places where different sources seem to be talking about the same ideas, using the same terms, or using the same kinds of examples. Here's an example from Young

But, let me be fair to my man Stan. He prolly unaware that he be supportin language discrimination, cuz he appeal to its acceptable form—standard language ideology also called “dominant language ideology” (Lippi-Green). Standard language ideology is the belief that there is one set of dominant language rules that stem from a single dominant discourse (like standard English) that all writers and speakers of English must conform to in order to communicate effectively. Dominant language ideology also say peeps can speak whateva the heck way they want to—BUT AT HOME!

Here Young is combining the ideas from Stanley Fish with the ideas from Lippi-Green. A look at the Works Cited page tells us that Rosina Lippi-Green wrote a book in 1997 titled *English with an Accent: Language, Ideology and Discrimination in the United States*. By citing this book from 1997, Young is showing us that this conversation has a long history, and that he understands the conversation just as well, if not better, than Fish. Combining these sources allows Young to carve out a space in the conversation that is his: by combining these two sources, Young is now in a space where he can add his own new ideas.

Use existing patterns within your essay

By reading as a writer, you can begin to notice the ways that writers use similar patterns to have conversations in essays.

There are many patterns that writers repeatedly use

One the one hand on the other hand....

While I agree with X's point that I disagree with

X makes a good point about, but overlooks

In other words

Whenever you read something interesting, look for ways that you can borrow the sentence structures and paragraphs. Here's an interesting paragraph from Cathy Davidson's book *Now You See It*

Another recent study, this one led by sociologist Clifford Nass at Stanford University, made headlines by pronouncing that even die-hard multitaskers are worse at multitasking than those who concentrate on only one thing at a time. That was the gleeful soundbite (“See!”) that hit the media. But the study itself has a very interesting conclusion that leaves the door open on that exact question. The authors conclude that “heavy media multitaskers . . . performed worse on a test of task-switching ability, likely due to reduced ability to filter out interference from the irrelevant task set.” Translated from psychologese to English, that means that the multitaskers transferred some knowledge from one task (the task the testers deemed irrelevant) to the other task they were performing. Does that make them bad multitaskers—or good ones? Don’t we want to be applying information from one situation to another? Perhaps the “reduced ability to filter out interference” is actually a new mashup style of mental blending that helps one be a good multitasker. Outside a testing situation, in real life, it is precisely your susceptibility to distraction that makes you inclined to switch to another task and then, after a time, to switch back or to another one. But what if in all that switching we’re not just forgetting but we are creating a new, blended cognitive map of what we’re learning, task to task, from the process? In the end, isn’t remixing what all learning should be?

In this paragraph, Davidson presents an idea that she disagrees with. You can use the structures of this paragraph as templates for making a counterargument.

In "title", (author) argues (main point or key conclusion). Many would agree this argument because.... But what if there's another conclusion to draw? What if...?

Perhaps when Author says "quote," we can interpret this as

When author says "quote", does that mean? Or, does it mean that?

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8: Modes and Genres

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The term rhetorical modes refers to the different styles and techniques we use when we write. This chapter will discuss different modes, explaining the specific aspects and techniques involved in these methods of communication. As you read about these, remember that the rhetorical mode a writer chooses depends on his/her purpose for writing. Some assignments ask students to use a specific rhetorical mode, such as writing a descriptive passage or contrasting two concepts, but most essays incorporate several different rhetorical modes to express an idea. Overall, the rhetorical modes are a set of tools that allow you different methods to effectively communicate information to your audience.

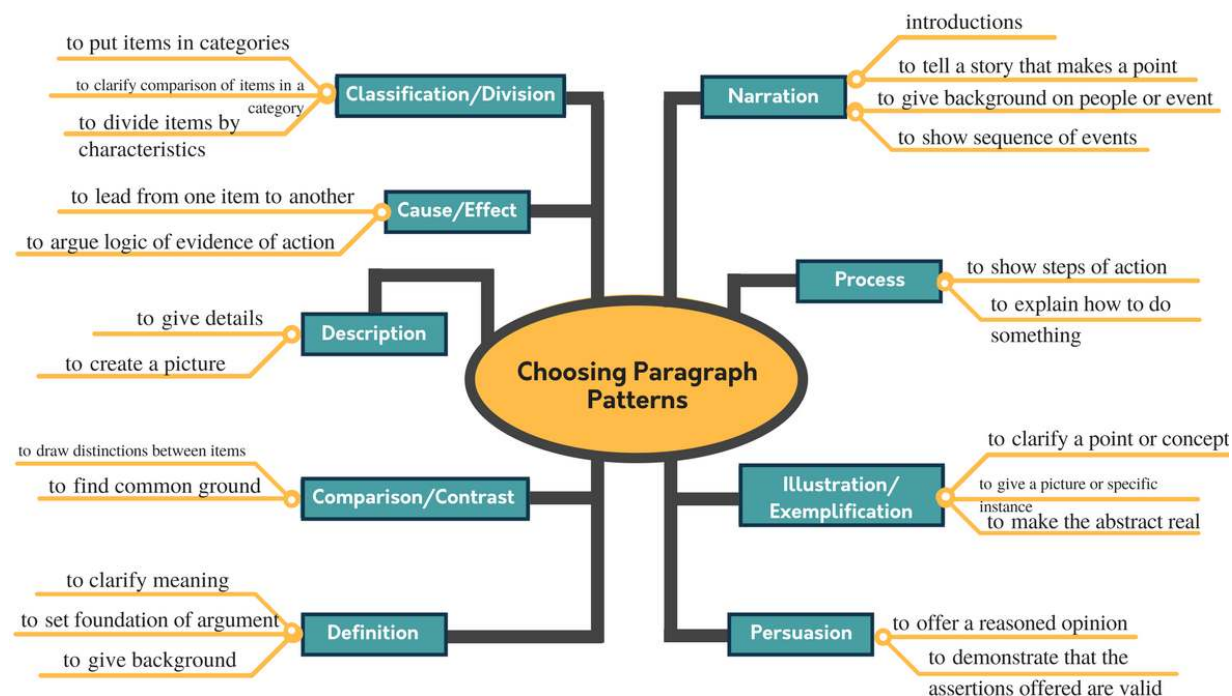


Figure 5.15.1A description of different paragraph patterns

• 5.1: Narrative

The purpose of narrative writing is to tell stories. This is a form we are familiar with, as any time we tell a story about an event or incident in our day, we are engaging in a form of narration.

• 5.2: Description

Description is the tool writers use to make things come alive for their readers, to make sure that their audience is fully immersed in the words on the page. Every time you tell a story to someone, or tell someone about something, you use description even if you don't know it.

• 5.3: Process Analysis

The purpose of a process analysis essay is to explain how to do something or how something works. In either case, the formula for a process analysis essay remains the same. The process is articulated into clear, definitive steps.

• 5.4: Illustration and Exemplification

To illustrate means to show or demonstrate something clearly through the use of evidence. To exemplify means to demonstrate through the use of examples. This is a technique that can stand alone but is most often used within an essay to demonstrate the various points that an essay is offering as it supports its thesis.

- **5.5: Cause and Effect**

It is often considered human nature to ask, “why?” and “how?” We want to know how our child got sick so we can better prevent it from happening in the future, or why our colleague received a pay raise because we want one as well.

- **5.6: Compare and Contrast**

Comparison in writing discusses elements that are similar, while contrast in writing discusses elements that are different. A compare-and-contrast essay, then, analyzes two subjects by comparing them, contrasting them, or both.

- **5.7: Definition**

The purpose of a definition essay may seem self-explanatory, to simply define something. But defining terms in writing is often more complicated than just consulting a dictionary. In fact, the way we define terms can have far-reaching consequences for individuals as well as collective groups.

- **5.8: Classification**

The purpose of classification is to break down broad subjects into smaller, more manageable, more specific parts. We classify things in our daily lives all the time, often without even thinking about it.

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9: Coming Soon- Genres of Real World Writing

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10: Equipment for Writing

- Amy Guptil, *Writing in College: From Competence to Excellence* ([https://human.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Composition/Book%3A_Writing_in_College_-_From_Competence_to_Excellence_\(Guptil\)](https://human.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Composition/Book%3A_Writing_in_College_-_From_Competence_to_Excellence_(Guptil)))
 - Monique Babin, Carol Burnell, and Susan Pesznecker, Nicole Rosevear, and Jaime Wood, *The Word on College Reading and Writing* ([https://human.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Composition/Book%3A_The_Word_on_College_Reading_and_Writing_\(Babin_et_al.\)](https://human.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Composition/Book%3A_The_Word_on_College_Reading_and_Writing_(Babin_et_al.)))
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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

11: Housing Inequality

- 11.1: 1. Separated by Design- How Some of America's Richest Towns Fight Affordable Housing
- 11.2: 2. Separated by Design- Why Affordable Housing Is Built in Areas With High Crime, Few Jobs and Struggling Schools
- 11.3: 3. How Wealthy Towns Keep People With Housing Vouchers Out
- 11.4: 4. One of America's Wealthiest States Might Pass Up an Opportunity to Tackle Housing Segregation
- 11.5: 5. Housing Segregation and Redlining in America- A Short History
- 11.6: 6. Urban planning as a tool of white supremacy – the other lesson from Minneapolis
- 11.7: 7. Opinion- "Joe Biden's disastrous plans for America's suburbs."
- 11.8: 8.realDonaldTrump Tweets

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11.1: 1. Separated by Design- How Some of America's Richest Towns Fight Affordable Housing

Separated by Design: How Some of America's Richest Towns Fight Affordable Housing

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by Jacqueline Rabe Thomas, The Connecticut Mirror

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ProPublica is a Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative newsroom. Sign up for [The Big Story newsletter](#) to receive stories like this one in your inbox.

WESTPORT, Conn. — A dirt field overgrown with weeds is the incongruous entrance to one of America's wealthiest towns, a short walk to a Rodeo Drive-like stretch replete with upscale stores such as Tiffany & Co.

But this sad patch of land is also the physical manifestation of a broader turf war over what type of housing — and ultimately what type of people — to allow within Westport's borders.

It started when a developer known for building large luxury homes envisioned something different back in 2014 for the 2.2 acre property: a mix of single- and multifamily housing that would accommodate up to 12 families. A higher density project is more cost efficient, he said, and would allow him to sell the units for less than the typical Westport home.

But the site was zoned to hold no more than four single-family houses, so he needed approval from a reluctant Westport Planning and Zoning Commission, which denied his plan. Residents erupted in fury each time he made a scaled-back proposal, and it took the developer four years after purchasing the property to win approval to build two duplexes and five single-family homes.

"You are selling out Westport," one resident yelled out as the final plan came up for a commission vote last spring. Other residents picketed commission meetings with signs reading "Zoning is a Promise."

The commission's discussion was couched in what some would regard as code words and never directly addressed race or income. Chip Stephens, a Republican planning and zoning commissioner, voted against the plan, declaring, "To me, it's too much density. It's putting too much in a little area. To me, this is ghettoizing Westport."

Now under construction, these two-bedroom duplexes and single-family homes have a price tag of \$1.2 million, the going rate for a home in this swanky village just outside Bridgeport and Norwalk.

"We spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to get this through. Would I do this all over again? No. Probably not," said the developer, Johnny Schwartz, of Able Construction.

Welcome to Connecticut, a state with more separate — and unequal — housing than nearly everywhere else in the country.

This separation is by design.

Westport is only one example of a wealthy Connecticut suburb that has surrounded itself with invisible walls to block affordable housing and, by extension, the people who need it.

In a liberal state that has provided billions in taxpayer money to create more affordable housing, decisions at local zoning boards, the Connecticut Capitol and state agencies have thwarted court rulings and laws intended to remedy housing segregation. As far back as data has been kept, Connecticut's low-income housing has been concentrated in poor cities and towns, an imbalance that has not budged over the last three decades.

Many zoning boards rely on their finely tuned regulations to keep housing segregation firmly in place. They point to frail public infrastructure, clogged streets, a lack of sidewalks and concerns of overcrowding that would damage what's often referred to as "neighborhood character."

An investigation by the Connecticut Mirror and ProPublica has found that more than three dozen Connecticut towns have blocked construction of any privately developed duplexes and apartments within their borders for the last two decades, often through exclusionary zoning requirements. In 18 of those towns, it's been at least 28 years.

In Westport — where gated residences overlook the Long Island Sound and voters solidly backed Democrats in the most recent state and presidential elections — private developers have been allowed to open just 65 affordable housing units over the last three decades. Public housing rentals operated by the local housing authority have also grown at a snail's pace, with 71 new units opening in this charming small town of 10,400 homes.

The impact of this logjam on families is that the share of housing specifically dedicated for low-income residents has actually decreased by small percentages in one-quarter of Connecticut's municipalities since 1990.

"I think the vestiges of our racial past are far from over," said former Democratic Gov. Dannel P. Malloy, who left office in early 2019 after eight years and regularly butted heads with General Assembly members who wanted local officials to have even more authority over housing decisions. For minority residents striving for safe and affordable housing, the state has "denied the opportunity that we allowed white middle-class aspirants to access," Malloy said.

Meanwhile, state lawmakers and bureaucrats watch from the sidelines, reluctant to intervene.

This doesn't appear likely to change any time soon.

Gov. Ned Lamont, a Democrat from Greenwich who took office this year, declined to be interviewed for this story, but he has said his statewide goal is to "work collaboratively with the locals in terms of what they want and what they are not willing to take. At the end of the day, that community will probably take the lead on making that choice."

Lisa Tepper Bates, Lamont's senior coordinator for housing and transit-oriented development, said in an interview that the administration hopes to bring change by adopting a "different philosophy, which is to go to the communities and try and have this discussion and try and see how far we can get."

The Cunningham family is feeling the brunt of decisions left to local zoning boards.

Ashana Cunningham, a 33-year-old mother of three, lives 9 miles from Westport's posh downtown.

Each workday, she takes a bus from a homeless shelter in Bridgeport, where she lives with her family among a landscape of abandoned factories, run-down houses and trash-lined streets to her job in a suburban cornucopia a few miles away.

She tends to children from privileged families at a pricey day care in Fairfield. Two days a week she works a second job at Family Dollar.

This is not the life Cunningham imagined. She earned an associate degree to become a medical assistant but has never made more than \$14 an hour. She and her wife struggled to pay \$1,200-a-month rent for a small Bridgeport apartment, and then her wife became disabled and could not work.

A car crash further complicated their lives. Cunningham was injured and left without transportation — and, ultimately, out of a job.

By the time she found the day care job, which pays \$12.50 an hour, the family was living in the shelter, where the smell of bleach lingers and bachata music from a neighbor's apartment pulses through the walls. Her second job as a cashier pays \$11 dollars an hour.

She knows that she is trapped, that moving to a town like Westport, Trumbull or Fairfield is impossible.

"There's no other place for us to go. Fairfield or Trumbull? Forget about it," Cunningham said. "You can't afford to pay your rent if you are only making \$707 every two weeks."

"You Build Where You Can"

Racial and economic segregation is not unique to Connecticut, but it is extreme and runs counter to the state's liberal image. Democrats have controlled the state legislature for 22 years and the governor's mansion for eight.

In southwest Connecticut, the gap between rich and poor is wider than anywhere else in the country. Black and Hispanic residents statewide live in some of the nation's most segregated neighborhoods, census data [shows](#).

The repercussions of living in segregated neighborhoods often last a lifetime.

"Neighborhoods matter," researchers at Brown, Harvard and the U.S. Census Bureau [concluded](#).

The "[Opportunity Atlas](#)" they created makes clear just how much it matters by showing the stark differences in where the 20.5 million children they tracked ended up. For example, children who grew up in Cunningham's Bridgeport neighborhood were five times more likely to be imprisoned on April 1, 2010, than those who grew up 2 miles down the road over the Fairfield line. The Bridgeport natives also made half the income of their Fairfield peers.

But the families of low-income children have few housing options in Connecticut's higher-opportunity neighborhoods: 63 of the state's 169 municipalities have no housing authorities to facilitate the creation of public housing and manage it.

In southwest Connecticut, where Cunningham lives with her family, it costs 3.5 times more to live near high-scoring elementary schools than the struggling schools her children attend, the Brookings Institution [reported](#).

"Would-be movers would have to spend about \$25,000 more per year on housing to make that jump," Brookings found.

Malloy, now a visiting professor at Boston College, explained in an interview why such a large share of affordable housing that opened during his tenure was in the poorest neighborhoods.

"You build where you can, where a community is inviting," he said. "I do believe that there is not an openness and willingness to have the people who work in town, live in town. Maybe that's because some towns want everyone to be the same. I don't know why a town wouldn't want a fireman or a policeman or a day care worker who works in their community to be able to live in that community."

During Malloy's years in office, his administration directed \$2.1 billion in public funding to renovate run-down public housing or build new housing so more low-income residents have an affordable place to live. The new housing was disproportionately built in the state's poorest communities, however. Three-quarters of the new units constructed since 2011 were in the state's 10 poorest municipalities, although only 20% of Connecticut's housing stock is located in these communities. Just over 5% opened in the 10 wealthiest towns.

Government subsidies aside, another way to bring down housing costs is to build duplexes or apartments on a lot — but that's not being allowed in many communities, despite [state law](#) requiring local zoning commissions to "encourage" such development in order to "promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing."

While dozens of towns have not permitted any duplexes and apartments to be built in two decades, the multiunit construction in another three dozen towns just replaced similar units that had been demolished. (This new construction data [only includes](#) privately owned residential developments and not public housing, dorms or hotels.)

Local zoning rules are often to blame for the lack of more affordable development.

"You can't even build a duplex. Zoning just kills it," said Sean Ghio, policy director at the Partnership for Strong Communities, an advocacy group that lobbies for more affordable housing. "People often fear the unknown, and as a result try to keep the unknown out of their lives by maintaining the status quo. The status quo in Connecticut is living in segregated communities."

Local officials, however, say there are often legitimate reasons to deny multiunit housing because local infrastructure is not in place or there are environmental concerns.

"Unfortunately, we are limited in what we can provide," said Joyce Stille, who since 1995 has been the administrative officer of Bolton, a small town in central Connecticut that has limited sewer access and where just one duplex has received a permit in 30 years. "Because of our proximity to Vernon and Manchester, we don't really need any [affordable housing]. They have such a wide range of options. People don't come to Bolton because Bolton has a higher cost of living."

Only 19 cities or towns allow housing with three or more units to be built without requiring special permits, according to a 2013 [review](#) by Trinity College's Cities, Suburbs, and Schools Project and the Connecticut Fair Housing Center. Twenty-five municipalities explicitly prohibit such housing and 123 require a special town permit.

In some towns that do allow it, other zoning requirements make it exceedingly difficult for projects to come to fruition since they need more land to build anything besides a single-family home.

For example, Monroe, a high-income town in southwest Connecticut, requires at least 70 acres for multifamily housing construction, and each unit may have no more than two bedrooms. A single-family home requires 1 acre.

In its specially zoned "Housing Opportunity District," 20 acres of land are required to build multifamily housing, but because of density restrictions only 13 apartments or townhomes may be built.

Avon requires 15 acres for a two-unit home, compared with 1/3 acre for a single-family residence.

"A large lot requirement makes it financially infeasible for such housing to be built. That's just logic," said Fionnuala Darby-Hudgens, who did the analysis that Connecticut's Department of Housing used in its mandatory [report](#) to the federal government on exclusionary zoning.

[A Watered-Down Law](#)

All of this comes 30 years after the Connecticut Supreme Court ruled for the first time that exclusionary zoning practices that quash moderate-priced housing are illegal. That groundbreaking case involved a truck driver attempting to build an affordable single-family home in middle-class East Hampton that was smaller than the minimum square feet the town required. The justices [ruled](#) against the town, saying its requirements "are a form of economic discrimination."

In the following months, state lawmakers passed a law that set the stage for the courts to review local zoning decisions in towns with few affordable homes. Most notably, the law — commonly referred to by its statutory reference as [8-30g](#) — outlined the process for developers to bypass local zoning decisions by going through the courts if they set aside 30% of a project's units for poor people.

But the law had limited impact. Just 2% of all the housing developed in Connecticut since then is dedicated to low-income families. Since the law passed, the share of housing for low-income residents has actually decreased in 47 of the state's 169 municipalities, according to state Department of Housing data.

"Any developer who's going to use [this law] has to be ready for the potential of a long, expensive slog, first through the zoning commission and then through the court system," said Timothy Hollister, the land-use attorney who won the East Hampton case. He has been trying since 2005 to win approval for a client to open affordable units in Westport.

Each year, legislators file a slew of bills to weaken the law.

State Rep. Brenda Kupchick, a Republican from Fairfield who served as the ranking member of the legislature's Housing Committee from 2013 to 2018, said her top committee priority is to scale back the law.

"Predatory developers are taking advantage of communities, and we aren't getting much affordable units out of it," she said. "In 30 years, the needle hasn't moved. It's not working. Let's brainstorm and come up with some ideas that may actually work."

Former Senate Minority Leader John McKinney, a Republican from Fairfield, said amending the law was a big issue for his caucus during his 16 years in the state Senate.

"Look, I get the argument that you need it. You can't let the Westports and the Greenwicks off. You have to have something. I just think there is a better way," said McKinney, who left office in 2014 to run for governor, a bid he ultimately lost.

He and Kupchick believe the state should provide financial incentives for towns that allow more affordable housing to be built within their borders.

Otherwise, he said, developers game the system.

“They are not really out to build affordable housing for the community. They are out to build market-rate housing, and if they have to put some affordable units with it to get approval, that’s what happens,” McKinney said. “There are developers who literally come into these meetings with two plans and say, ‘Give us this plan, or you get this affordable housing plan.’”

After years of failed attempts, lawmakers in 2017 finally weakened 8-30g by making it easier for towns to get exemptions from the law’s requirements.

Malloy vetoed the measure, because he said it would “perpetuate the harmful effects of bad economic policy and institutional segregation.” But the General Assembly overrode the veto.

This March, the Department of Housing granted Westport — where 3.4% of the housing is considered affordable — a four-year exemption, which prevents a judge from overriding its zoning decisions.

The exemption protects the town from legal challenges, but it came after the zoning commission had already approved 44 new low-income units, mostly studios or one-bedroom units with monthly rents starting at \$1,400. A commissioner made it clear during project hearings that only the threat of a lawsuit under 8-30g persuaded him to approve the plans. And now that threat is gone.

“The statute requires me as a commissioner to essentially pass this proposal, or give very narrow reasons for denying it, none of which were presented as evidence to this commission. So we don’t have that option. We must pass it,” said then-Commissioner Alan Hodge, a Democrat, before the 2016 vote.

Westport currently has 265 units for low-income individuals that were constructed with public or private funding, though one-third of those units replaced existing affordable housing. For example, the town purchased Westport’s only trailer park and replaced its 60 mobile homes with 93 affordable apartments run by the local housing authority.

What this means is that approximately 1 out of every 30 housing units in Westport is dedicated to low- or moderate-income residents, compared with 1 in 8 next door in Norwalk, or 1 in 5 in Bridgeport 9 miles away.

In May, the commissioners signaled they were prepared to reject a new batch of affordable units. They say they are doing a great job developing affordable housing.

“They are unnecessary,” Danielle Dobin, a Democratic commissioner, said during the panel’s discussion of the proposed units. “This commission and the commission before us have been very successful in creating so much more affordable housing in Westport.”

Just over 4% of Westport residents are considered to be living in poverty — two-and-a half times less than the state’s poverty rate. Just under 1% of those who live in this town are black and 5% are Hispanic, a long way off from the state’s makeup.

The Lamont administration expressed satisfaction with the current law as it stands.

“8-30g is the law in Connecticut and can be one of many important tools we have to ensure that the housing our residents need is available to them,” Bates, the senior coordinator for housing and transit-oriented development, said. “The administration is seeking no changes at this time.”

Asked what happens if minds can’t be changed, Bates declined to talk about next steps.

“I constitutionally don’t believe that in general people’s minds can’t be changed. I think it’s a question of whether there is an effective way to engage them in discussion and conversation. I think sometimes you can go a lot further that way,” Bates said. “You know this is a new administration, so it is hard to come into it and say you are ready to beat somebody with a hammer when you haven’t had that conversation with them.”

Vehement Opposition

Local objections to affordable housing projects run the gamut, with developers typically facing intense zoning board scrutiny about issues like a lack of sidewalks or potential impact to the environment.

Broader concerns, such as preserving a community’s character or the quality of its schools, are also frequently cited.

During his State of the Town Address a few months ago, Westport’s Republican first selectman, Jim Marpe, said high-density developments keep him up at night.

“The challenge to our community is not just to the character of neighborhoods, but also to firefighting and police response, potentially to educational capacity, to human services support and to our tradition as a single-family home community,” Marpe told his audience.

He added, “Within the tri-state region, Westport remains an attractive and desirable location relative to many nearby communities, and we must invest in keeping our town in that position.”

This mindset was on display in March, when a disgruntled Westport board discussed a proposed 187-unit apartment complex, of which 57 units would be available to low-income residents, located a half-mile from the town’s commuter train station. This developer has been trying to break ground since 2005.

At one point, board members became incensed when the developer’s attorney expressed disappointment that town officials declined to meet with officials in neighboring Norwalk to negotiate changes that would need to be made so the gravel road in that city could be used for emergencies at the complex. The pathway is on land adjacent to the proposed apartment complex and would serve as a second exit that Westport officials say is necessary for emergency vehicles to access the property. Board members appeared to resent the suggestion that they take any action that would be interpreted as benefiting the developer.

“I would like to put it on the record, I am vehemently opposed, disappointed and don’t understand why the town of Westport would be involved in a meeting like that,” Stephens, a planning and zoning commissioner, said. Asked why he was opposed, Stephens declined to elaborate during a recent interview, saying it’s an ongoing legal matter.

When unanimously rejecting the proposed development last week, however, commissioners pointed to uncertainty about whether Norwalk would allow its gravel road to be paved and used as a second exit during emergencies.

Sometimes local officials even offer money to keep affordable housing from being built.

Richard Freedman, another developer who has been trying for years to build in Westport, said the town offered to purchase the land on which he proposed building 48 apartments, 29 of which would be for low-income families.

“The town attorney approached my attorney to buy the property. I said: ‘It’s not for sale. We are building affordable housing,’” said Freedman, president of Garden Homes Management.

Email [correspondence](#) from the developer’s attorney to town attorney Ira Bloom in October 2015 specifically rejects the town’s offer to buy the property. Bloom responds the next day with alternative locations that might be more appealing.

Asked about the town’s attempt to purchase the property, Bloom said, “I don’t recall that.” He remembers conversations about finding an alternative building site for the developer, and he said he helped connect the developer with other groups interested in purchasing the property.

In 2001, the town [paid \\$4.2 million](#) to purchase a 4-acre property adjacent to a local elementary school where only 5% of the students come from low-income families. The developer had planned to develop 60 units, of which 15 would have been dedicated for poor residents. The land is now a community garden and parking lot.

Several years later, the town’s first selectman reached out to several potential buyers to facilitate the \$14.5 million purchase of another property where the owner wanted to build 200 apartments by replacing a local hotel, the Westport Inn. Sixty of the units would have been for poor residents.

A hotel remains there today.

Even if elected officials are supportive of affordable housing, the opposition from residents can be intense.

Petition drives are launched. Pamphlets are mailed. Lawn signs go up. Facebook groups are set up to strategize. Fundraising campaigns are created to pay for land-use attorneys and environmental experts. Connecticut has more law firms than any other state specializing in land use, a key indicator of restrictive zoning, the Brookings Institution [reported](#).

In Westport, a political party was [established](#) to help elect zoning commissioners who the party’s leaders believe will preserve the neighborhoods and small-town New England character.

Occasionally, residents voice fear of the type of people they believe affordable housing will bring.

“The drug addicts are going to be here, believe me,” William Woermer, of Branford, [testified](#) in November 2017 about a proposal to demolish a 50-unit, run-down low-income housing project for seniors and replace it with 67 units for poor families. “Retirees, disabled, old people — I have no objection to renovate the whole place and make it nice for them. But don’t get too much of that riffraff in. There will be a lot of riffraff. Then we go onto, with a project like this, you need security guards in the area.” Woermer did not respond to an interview request.

In Greenwich, a public hearing in August 2017 about plans for an apartment complex next to the town’s commuter train station quickly devolved into residents complaining that low-income residents wouldn’t be able to afford to shop locally. “Nobody goes to our restaurants [if you’re] living in affordable housing,” Adam Tooter, a resident who had recently bought a \$1.5 million home, said during the August hearing. Tooter did not respond to messages.

Gayle DePoli, another local resident, said: “Those people won’t be able to afford to live in Old Greenwich. They won’t be able to afford to shop in King’s [gourmet grocery store]. They won’t be able to afford to eat in any restaurant but Dunkin’ Donuts and maybe grab a slice at Arcadia Pizza. They won’t even be able to afford getting a scoop of ice cream at Darlene’s.”

During a recent interview, DePoli said she is opposed to the development because the area is already too congested and it is unfair to have poor people living in such high-cost areas.

“It’s not about not in my neighborhood. It’s: enough in my area. It’s overbuilt with condos,” said DePoli, an independent contractor for media companies in Manhattan. “Your heart’s got to bleed a little bit for people that need low-income housing, and then you are going to put them in the middle of something they can’t afford. They can afford the rent, but what else? They aren’t going to the restaurants down there. Everything they can afford [is a car or bus ride] away. It’s pretty sad.”

In March, the commissioners approved a scaled-back version of this proposed development that will have about half as many affordable apartments. The apartment will be located 2 miles from Greenwich Point, a beach restricted to residents only until the Connecticut Supreme Court in 2001 unanimously [ordered](#) the town to open it to everyone.

During a zoning commission meeting in rural Oxford in 2014 for a proposed affordable housing project, the town’s first selectman expressed concern there would not be enough parking for visitors on holidays, specifically pointing to one that originated in Mexico.

“I’m sure they could have their little parking spaces, but somebody throws a party, or it’s Cinco de Mayo or something else and pretty soon you can’t park there. Well, you also can’t bring an ambulance there and you can’t bring a fire engine there,” said First Selectman George Temple during a public hearing on the project, adding: “I’m not for putting slumlords into Oxford. You know, that’s perhaps an overstatement, and I am sure it is, but I am concerned about these units.”

Malloy has little patience for such concerns.

“Is safety genuinely 100% the fear or is there something else at play and the reason why these projects aren’t moving forward,” he said. “Let’s drill down for a second. Every one of those towns has housing on a street that doesn’t have a sidewalk. The difference being that those are single-family homes which are not affordable.”

All of this pushback is code for not allowing in poor people, says Hollister, the land-use attorney.

“Does anybody say we need to keep blacks and Hispanics out of Westport? No, but they talk about property values, safety and preserving open space — all the things that a town can do to prevent development that would bring up a more economically and racially diverse housing population,” Hollister said. “They don’t use the overt racial terms, but it’s absolutely clear to everybody in the room that’s what they’re talking about.”

[Unmet Demand](#)

Marpe, Westport’s first selectman, disputes the idea that the town has practiced discriminatory zoning.

“I have lived in many communities in the United States and I would argue Westport is as open and welcoming as any community I have ever lived in. So to cast that as an underlying principle, I would disagree,” he said during an interview. “Anyone who asserts that we don’t want anything to do with ‘those people,’ I would strongly disagree.”

Marpe points to the town's commitment to providing emergency housing for men, women and children, such as homeless shelters and halfway houses.

He also points out that decisions on what gets to break ground do not rest with him alone. He cites a proposal he made early in his five and a half years in office for a private developer to build 167 units for senior citizens — 111 dedicated for low-income residents — on a 23-acre town-owned site where an abandoned mansion has sat vacant for years. That proposal was rejected by the town's Planning and Zoning Commission and the Representative Town Meeting, Westport's legislative body, didn't have enough votes to override their decision.

Town officials have designated the site as open space, preventing anything from being developed on the land. Marpe and Mary Young, the town's director of planning and zoning, said there is a path for projects to make their way more easily through zoning approval. That "streamlined process" is only available, however, for those looking to build in one section of town: the highly commercialized Route 1.

Winning approval outside of that zone is hard. That was the case for the developer who waited four years to build multiunit housing on the lot of a former landscaping business, which is a short distance from the high-end shopping district.

"Should it have gone faster? I'm sure from anyone's perspective, it was not streamlined. But it was not one of the processes that was enacted by my Planning and Zoning Commission. That was a developer who took his own path," Young said. "If we've laid out the red carpet and asked you to come, you're more likely to get what you need more quickly."

Stephens, the zoning commissioner, said there were legitimate reasons for the application to take so long, none of which had to do with the type of residents it would attract.

"We have one of the most welcoming communities here," Stephens said. "We go above and beyond. I would be aghast if anyone suggested differently."

Marpe said he must listen to voters.

"I have to respect the fact that people who have moved here, or have grown up here and continue to live here, are here because the nature of the community is what they are looking for," Marpe said. "So to try and change that nature with large structures maybe gets to some goal, but I don't believe [that's why] people who have invested in this community and want to be part of this community ... came here or stayed here."

When asked if the town has, in fact, purchased or arranged for others to purchase property to keep it from being developed as affordable housing, Marpe said it is not a strategy of the town to avoid having more affordable housing.

He facilitated the purchase of the Westport Inn because it's the town's only hotel outside a 12-room inn on the Long Island Sound, he explained.

"When we have had serious storms, the Westport Inn was the one place we could offer somewhat permanent shelter," he said. "I believe there is a need for that as well. That was the motivating factor in my mind."

Several hotels are a few miles down the road in Norwalk or Fairfield.

The new developments that have been built in Westport are not meeting the demand for affordable housing.

The last time the town's housing authority opened its wait list three years ago, 1,000 people applied in 30 days. Then the waitlist closed, and it hasn't been opened since. The housing authority still gets calls every day, including on weekends.

"They come in at all hours," said Carol Martin, the executive director of the Westport Housing Authority. "It is very much at a crisis."

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Separated by Design: Why Affordable Housing Is Built in Areas With High Crime, Few Jobs and Struggling Schools

by Jacqueline Rabe Thomas, The Connecticut Mirror

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HARTFORD, Conn. — The moon pulls 6-year-old Romeo Lugo to the window at night.

The autistic child loves to gaze up at it, howling like a werewolf as it rises like a luminous pearl over the horizon of city buildings and trees he sees from his second-floor apartment.

But on one particular evening four years ago, his mother, Aida, noticed something else as they stood at the window: a man getting out of a gray car in front of their building and walking toward the nearby barber shop, gun drawn.

She grabbed Romeo and ducked.

“Bam, bam, bam,” Aida Lugo recalls hearing seconds later. “I couldn’t move.”

After the incident, the single mother explored moving from Frog Hollow — one of the state’s poorest and toughest areas. She even visited nearby towns. But the only units in her price range were located no more than a few blocks from the gunshots and the drug dealers in her neighborhood, so she remains marooned there — in the same apartment.

That’s because state officials have chosen, year after year, to direct the bulk of public funding for affordable housing to Connecticut’s most impoverished communities.

Since the mid-1980s, almost \$2.2 billion in low-income housing tax credits have been awarded to construct 27,000 affordable housing units in the state. Just 10% were built in prosperous towns, an investigation by The Connecticut Mirror and ProPublica has found. About 80% were located in struggling communities, literally erecting pockets of poverty. The rest fall somewhere in between.

While many state leaders across the country direct those credits to poor areas, arguing that’s where the need is greatest, Connecticut stands out on the national stage. In a recent federal [study](#) of 21 states, it had the second highest concentration of affordable housing in high-poverty neighborhoods, behind only Mississippi.

Today, Lugo’s unit is one of more than 700 apartments funded through the tax-credit program within a six-block area of her home. The neighborhood is host to a homeless shelter, a juvenile jail, public housing and a profusion of unoccupied storefronts and apartments plastered with “for rent” signs. On several utility poles are devices that notify police when gunshots are fired. Surveillance cameras abound.

“You know, you don’t have any other option but to try and get used to it and the things around you,” Lugo said. “I just keep to myself with my kids, and we do what we have to do.”

Most of the funding to build affordable housing in the U.S. comes from the federal government, with states receiving a set amount of low-income housing tax credits, or LIHTC, each year based on their populations. State officials then decide how and where they are used.

Connecticut’s extreme concentration of affordable housing in poor areas owes largely to its selection process. The state requires developers to obtain local zoning approval before they even apply for a tax credit, a practice that has been flagged by federal

regulators as potentially discriminatory. In May, The Connecticut Mirror and ProPublica [reported](#) that many zoning boards in the state rely on their finely tuned regulations to keep housing segregation firmly in place. The news organizations found that more than three dozen towns have blocked construction of any privately developed duplexes and apartments within their borders for the last two decades.

Developers, in turn, look to cities, where local leaders are often more receptive to any development that could help replace blighted properties or vacant lots. In Connecticut, that has meant a deepening racial divide in a state that's home to some of the [most segregated neighborhoods in America](#). According to the Connecticut Economic Resource Center, [at least half](#) of the homes in Lugo's neighborhood are reserved exclusively for the poor. Nearly all of the residents of the area are Hispanic, like Lugo, or black, U.S. Census Bureau data shows.

"We have an affordable housing crisis and a segregated housing crisis. The state has opted to only address the affordable housing crisis," said Erin Boggs, executive director and civil rights attorney with Open Communities Alliance, a nonprofit that advocates for housing reforms.

Gov. Ned Lamont's administration says it favors a balanced approach, encouraging affordable housing both in "high opportunity" communities with good schools and low crime rates, and in more impoverished neighborhoods. "Connecticut recognizes the value of increased opportunity and growth in all of our communities," the governor's office said in a statement.

The numbers, however, tell a different story.

The Connecticut Mirror and ProPublica compared the location of LIHTC-funded units with [so-called opportunity maps](#) developed for the Connecticut Department of Housing by researchers at Ohio State University. Of the nearly \$100 million in tax credits [awarded](#) by the state this spring, 88% of the new apartments will be in "low opportunity" areas. That means high crime, low homeownership rates, little access to working-class jobs and lackluster school performance.

Connecticut's Democratic senators say they are troubled that so many of the tax credits are going to high-poverty areas. The tax credit program, they say, is long overdue for a reevaluation.

"It's concerning, and I want to know why," said [Sen. Richard Blumenthal](#), in response to The Connecticut Mirror and ProPublica's analysis. "I think we have to examine the reasons for it — whether they are economic or discriminatory — and determine whether there are remedies necessary and appropriate."

[Sen. Chris Murphy](#) added: "I think we should be spreading out low-income housing tax credit dollars to projects throughout the state. You've got to give people choice. Folks that have lower incomes or need rental support shouldn't only have a handful of neighborhoods in Connecticut's cities as their only housing options."

Meanwhile, developers say they are just building what the state is most likely to fund. At the same time, they are conflicted about constructing housing reserved for the poor mainly in poor communities.

"To be honest, this system discriminates against poor people. You are forcing these people to live in communities that don't have the level of resources needed to educate their kids," said John McClutchy, founder of JHM Group, which is one of the largest recipients of tax credits in Connecticut. "We are looking to build housing that better reflects the community. ... It shouldn't just be warehousing poor people."

[Housing Segregation by Formula](#)

Created by Congress as part of a massive tax overhaul during the Reagan administration, the low-income housing tax credit was designed to lift the poor amid surging home prices.

By many measures, it was a success. Since 1987, the tax credit has funded the construction and rehabilitation of more than 3 million apartments for the poor — [30%](#) of the country's affordable housing units. Conservatives and liberals alike lauded the program. But over time, housing advocates and civil rights groups say, officials in some states funneled a disproportionate amount of credits to poorer communities.

In 2008, a community group in Texas pressed that case against the state's Housing Department, arguing in a lawsuit that the agency had violated the Fair Housing Act by concentrating low-income housing tax credits in the Dallas metro area. The U.S. Supreme Court [agreed](#), ruling that there are limits to building subsidized housing in mostly impoverished neighborhoods because the practice has a “disparate impact” on minorities.

Questioning how and where credits are awarded “may prevent segregated housing patterns that might otherwise result from covert and illicit stereotyping,” wrote Justice Anthony Kennedy in the majority opinion in 2015.

Meanwhile, the IRS, which oversees the LIHTC program, cautioned states in the waning days of the Obama administration against requiring local approval for affordable housing projects. Giving what is essentially a “local veto” to municipal leaders, the agency [found](#), is “perpetuating residential racial and economic segregation.”

Some states made sweeping changes. In Maryland, for instance, housing officials [settled](#) a long-running dispute with a community group in Baltimore, agreeing to stop requiring local approval and promising to open 1,500 LIHTC-funded apartments in prosperous neighborhoods.

But in Connecticut, efforts to overhaul the system stalled.

State Rep. Jason Rojas, a Democrat from East Hartford and the chair of the House's powerful tax-writing committee, proposed legislation in [2015](#) and [2016](#) that would have reserved at least 60% of the tax credits for developments in wealthier areas. Despite support from the state's Latino and African American commissions and numerous other civil rights organizations, Rojas faced stiff opposition from his own party. Leaders argued that such a monumental change would do nothing to solve the problem of local opposition.

As a compromise, the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority — the agency that administers the tax credit program — tweaked its grading system for LIHTC projects. (The Housing Finance Authority is separate from the Department of Housing.) Evaluated on a point scale, developments in “areas of opportunity,” or ostensibly better-off communities, would now receive additional points in the annual selection process.

The Lamont administration has endorsed that approach. Seila Mosquera-Bruno, the state housing commissioner and chair of the Housing Finance Authority board that awards the credits, says the extra points are “precious when applying.” “I think that the points that are there for building into these high opportunity areas are allowing to do a little more,” she said.

The new formula, however, has not produced much change. Developers must still win local zoning approval before seeking the tax credits. “A lot of developers aren't willing to take on that fight,” said McClutchy, whose developments are primarily located in high-poverty communities. “The roadblocks that the suburban communities put up cost time and money. I do not think there is an incentive to take that on.”

Applicants can still win points by proposing to preserve and expand rundown affordable housing or develop polluted land. Likewise, they are rewarded for proximity to daily public transportation. All are prominent features of urban areas.

Even the newer “opportunity” points are misleading, affordable housing advocates say. For example, a project can win points if it's located within 10 miles of a community college — an incentive intended to place people closer to educational opportunities. In fact, such schools are generally located in struggling communities.

Projects in districts with good schools can also win extra points, but the housing agency's list of such districts includes several that the state Department of Education has labeled as low-performing.

The result: Of the 20 projects awarded federal tax credits in the past three years, just one is in a “high opportunity” community, as defined by the Ohio State researchers. Located in the small shore town of East Lyme, the project of 56 affordable housing units broke ground recently — after six years of local opposition. That pattern seems unlikely to change anytime soon. Of next year's tax-credit applicants, a single development is located in a “high opportunity” neighborhood.

“We are still warehousing low-income people, who are largely women of color with children, and putting them into neighborhoods where people with the ability to choose where to live do not choose to live,” said Cori Mackey, the executive director of the Center

for Leadership and Justice, a grassroots organization that has raised attention to the subpar living conditions in Hartford. “The question is why does everybody but those who are poor have a choice about where to live?”

“We Lack the Political Will to Do Anything”

The consequences of racial and economic isolation are stark.

Research shows people living just a few blocks from each other often have drastically different life outcomes. For example, the life expectancy of those who grow up in Lugo’s neighborhood is 12 years shorter than those living just 1.5 miles down the road in the middle-class town of West Hartford, according to National Center for Health Statistics [data compiled](#) and released by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Separately, a team from Harvard, Brown and the U.S. Census Bureau [found](#) that children in Frog Hollow were four times more likely to be imprisoned on April 1, 2010, than those over the West Hartford line. Nearly every student in Romeo Lugo’s elementary school is a minority and multiple grades behind in math and reading.

Rojas, the Democratic lawmaker, grew up in a similar neighborhood. Becoming friends with middle-class kids in his middle school was life-changing, he said, because it helped him think about his future differently and inspired him to go to college.

“I wouldn’t say success can’t come from places where there is a lack of social capital, or where there is significant racial and economic isolation, but we also know how much harder it can be when you live in a community like that,” Rojas said.

Some of his Democratic colleagues agree, arguing that the administration should diversify the locations of LIHTC developments.

“If you only build more of it in the cities, then you are never really addressing the problem of diversity and integration,” said state Senate President Pro Tem Martin Looney, D-New Haven. “There has to be a push to increase affordable housing in the suburbs.”

Those sentiments, however, are rare in the state legislature, where Democrats have held power for more than two decades.

State Rep. Brandon McGee, a co-chairman of the legislature’s Housing Committee, grew up in public housing and prefers the bulk of funding to go to places like his district in Hartford, where a tax-credit project broke ground this year. “Our people are living in some of the worst conditions I have ever seen in my life,” he said. “I do not subscribe to the mindset that you need to move out of Hartford to have a better life. ... When you are talking about concentration of poverty — well, address poverty. You can’t run from it.”

For their part, GOP legislators are typically resistant to moves that could undermine local control and make it easier to build affordable housing in their districts. Former state Rep. Brenda Kupchick, a Republican from Fairfield who served as the ranking member of the legislature’s Housing Committee from 2013 to 2018, said she would not want to reroute the tax credit funding to build housing in well-off communities like hers. “I wouldn’t want to take money from urban neighborhoods that is helping them,” she said. Recently elected to Fairfield’s top post of first selectmen, she said the town has little land suitable to build and support affordable housing.

As a result, both parties are united in maintaining the status quo. “We lack the political will to do anything,” Rojas said.

Efforts to link unrelated state funding to a town’s openness to affordable housing have gone nowhere. And, in fact, lawmakers have successfully pressed in recent years to weaken one of the few laws that encourages affordable housing — a measure that allows developers to bypass local zoning decisions by going through the courts if they set aside 30% of a project’s units for poor people. In 2017, the legislature passed a bill to make it easier for towns to win state-sanctioned waivers from the law. Support was so strong that lawmakers garnered enough votes to override a veto from then-Gov. Dannel Malloy.

Lamont, the state’s current chief executive, is a Democrat and a multimillionaire who owns a mansion in the wealthy town of Greenwich and multiple other properties in affluent communities. He has defended local control and avoided the politically thorny issue of exclusionary zoning, declining numerous requests over the last 10 months to be interviewed.

Lamont previously told The Connecticut Mirror his goal is to “work collaboratively with the locals in terms of what they want and what they are not willing to take. At the end of the day, that community will probably take the lead on making that choice.”

While some federal lawmakers are calling for a reassessment of the LIHTC program and stricter enforcement of anti-discrimination laws, executive action in Washington seems unlikely.

The Trump administration has [proposed](#) weakening the federal “disparate impact” rule — the legal doctrine at the heart of the landmark Supreme Court case. The change would effectively limit the ability of civil rights groups and others to challenge how states run their tax-credit programs.

“There are a myriad of considerations that go into where housing should be placed,” J. Paul Compton Jr., general counsel for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, told reporters this year. “It is not the department’s role to broadly dictate to the thousands of communities across America [and question] local decisions that are made in good faith.”

Unintended Consequences, Concentrated Poverty

Six years ago, Aaron Gill was looking for a place for his family. The engineer wanted to live close to downtown Hartford. On its face, nearby Frog Hollow seemed perfect. It was within walking distance of the train station, as well as the restaurants and theaters around the state Capitol, and several apartments were open.

There was just one problem. “The only options available had income restrictions on them,” Gill said.

If Connecticut’s distribution of tax credits has kept poor people in poor neighborhoods, it has also kept middle-class and wealthy people out. And housing advocates say that lack of economic diversity can deprive struggling communities of sorely needed investment.

Nearly all of the renovated homes and apartments in Frog Hollow, for instance, are reserved for low-income residents. That creates a barrier for thousands of potential residents working in the immediate area. Among the nearby employers are Trinity College, two hospitals and a host of state government agencies.

“The unintended consequences of some of these policies has been to reinforce the pattern of concentrated poverty,” said Melvyn Colón, executive director of Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance, a nonprofit that builds affordable housing in Hartford.

Each year, he too has to turn away a handful of interested buyers because they make too much money; his group receives state funding, and officials require the homes be sold to those who make below-average income.

The only housing stock left for others are aging properties.

In Gill’s case, he and his wife ultimately purchased a rundown apartment building and renovated it. To make the finances work, they rented out the extra units and leased the ground floor, where entrepreneurs have opened a cafe and ice cream shop.

Gill acknowledges that he is the exception; few have the money or desire to become a developer just to live in the area. “This was a personal interest for our family. Instead of spending money on cars or clothes, we put all our money into this property,” said Gill, who is now a commissioner on the city’s planning and zoning board.

Nothing in the federal requirements for tax credits requires housing developments to be exclusively reserved for the poor; in fact, the rules allow as few as 20% of the units to be marked “affordable.” But developers say demand among middle-class and upper-income renters is weak in these struggling neighborhoods, so that pushes them toward higher concentrations of subsidized units.

“It is a lot easier to build a 100% affordable project than it is to build a mixed-income project,” said Dara Kovel, a former state housing official who oversaw the tax credits and is now a developer.

Connecticut’s point system also rewards projects that devote a large share of units to the poor.

For example, the state recently demolished a rundown and mostly abandoned public housing complex in Hartford’s Blue Hills neighborhood, about three miles from Frog Hollow. Officials awarded development firm JHM Group \$35 million in federal tax credits and \$18 million in state funding to build in its place Willow Creek, a series of smaller apartment buildings. Of the 135 new apartments, 92% are reserved for poor residents. McClutchy, the firm’s founder, says he would have preferred more income diversity, but added: “It’s a competitive process and you want to win, so you adapt.”

U.S. Rep. Jim Himes, a Democrat who represents southwest Connecticut, worked for a nonprofit that helped build affordable housing in Connecticut and elsewhere before he was elected to Congress. States, he said, should tweak their formulas to reward mixed-income developments.

“I think you should get more points for having forward-looking, mixed-use, mixed-income, sustainable projects,” Himes said. “That would be one way to deal with the challenge that in the previous generation you had isolated, concentrated developments. And those just don’t work very well.”

The lack of income diversity in many cities has resulted in a shrinking tax base to pay for schools, law enforcement and other infrastructure. On the verge of bankruptcy in recent years, Hartford scaled back its police force and trash collection of large items, leaving old mattresses and furniture littering Lugo’s neighborhood. Romeo is regularly sent home early from school when staff is stretched too thin, making it impossible for Lugo to keep a job. “School calls me all the time to pick him up. If I don’t pick him up, they see me as an irresponsible parent,” she said.

Some housing authority leaders and state officials defend Connecticut’s practices, arguing that the bevy of tax credits in poor areas have lifted struggling neighborhoods. “It has taken housing that cities have had to actually condemn as unfit for human habitation and transform[ed] a neighborhood,” said Karl Kidruff, who served as the executive director of the Housing Finance Authority during the previous administration.

He cited the city of Norwalk, about 70 miles south of Hartford. There, state officials awarded tax credits to raze old housing and develop new low-income units. A market-rate apartment building later opened across the street, he said. Kidruff doesn’t believe that would have happened without the injection of federal tax credits. He predicts that pattern will emerge in Hartford, too.

Research on the effects of the low-income housing tax credit is limited. One study, largely based on LIHTC properties in California and the country’s largest metropolitan areas, found that these developments can help low-income communities. Home values in struggling neighborhoods adjacent to the new affordable housing increased by 6.5% after 10 years, professors at Stanford University’s business school [concluded](#). These properties also attracted some white homeowners to isolated communities, they found, resulting in “decreased segregation in lower income areas.”

The impact of affordable housing is not absolute, however, says Anika Singh Lemar, a professor at Yale Law School.

“The urban planning answer is that housing doesn’t revitalize,” she said. “It can be part of a larger revitalization strategy — imagine a plan that includes jobs, job training, infrastructure investments in grocery stores and day cares and other neighborhood amenities — but a housing development on its own doesn’t revitalize.”

Nowhere Else to Go

In Frog Hollow, Lugo is still waiting.

A devout Catholic, she’s placed religious symbols around plants and toys in her apartment, as if to protect the family from the violence just beyond her door. Reminders of the threats, however, are everywhere.

A mother whose daughter was killed outside regularly grieves over a makeshift memorial filled with notes, religious mementos and a drooping balloon. Bullet holes pock a neighboring building. The abandoned house next door was recently boarded up after two homeless sisters were raped inside. Police conducted multiple drug raids there, but the dealers haven’t really dispersed. Lugo blames neighborhood addicts for multiple break-ins of her basement storage unit. Someone recently stole Romeo’s bike.

Despite this, Lugo says she’s grateful for the apartment; her last place was infested with rats and roaches. “As a single parent, you struggle. I have to be grateful for what I have,” she said, noting pest control comes to her building monthly.

Lugo is rooting for the neighborhood’s comeback, imagining a time when Romeo can play outside. “I want to feel safe,” she said. “I want to feel that when I go to sleep each night.”

Lately, she’s been thinking about moving. Her older son will graduate high school soon, and she’d like to downsize. She’s eyeing one of the new tax credit-funded apartments greenlighted by the state last year.

They're just around the corner.

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11.3: 3. How Wealthy Towns Keep People With Housing Vouchers Out

How Wealthy Towns Keep People With Housing Vouchers Out

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by Jacqueline Rabe Thomas, The Connecticut Mirror

January 9, 2020

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HARTFORD, Conn. — On a sweltering Saturday afternoon last June, Crystal Carter took a deep breath as she walked toward the red “for rent” sign.

Shaded by tall oak trees, the three-story duplex looked cozy. The first floor siding was painted yellow, with white railings leading to the front door. The windows appeared new, the lawn freshly cut.

Although the property was in Barry Square, on the edge of a struggling area in southern Hartford, the family outside buoyed Carter’s spirits. Four children giggled in a recliner in the front yard, singing along to the radio while their father packed a moving truck. Across the street were Trinity College’s dignified brick pillars, the entry to the elite school’s 100-acre campus.

Carter tried to tamp down her excitement, but this looked like the kind of place the 48-year-old single mother so desperately wanted for her five kids: no mouse traps, no chipped paint trying to camouflage mold.

“You own this place?” she asked the sweat-soaked man. Yes, he said. “Are you renting it out, or has it already been rented?”

He put down a crate and offered her a tour of the first-floor, four-bedroom unit. Inside, she marveled at the modern kitchen, finished hardwood floors and large closets.

“This is a lot of space. When are you putting this on the market?” she asked.

“It’s ready, if you want to do the application,” he told her. Rent was \$1,500 a month.

Carter paused.

“I’ll be paying with a Section 8 voucher,” she said.

“Yeah,” the man shot back. “I don’t do Section 8.”

Officially called Housing Choice Vouchers, Section 8 rent subsidies were supposed to help low-income people find decent housing outside poor communities. But, for the better part of a year, Carter had found the opposite. This was easily the 50th place she had toured since her landlord sold her last apartment and evicted her. Nearly all of them were in poor areas. They had holes in the wall, uncovered electrical outlets, even roaches and mice. When she hit upon something clean, she learned not to ask too many questions. She complimented the landlord, talked about her children and emphasized that she didn’t smoke. None of it seemed to matter, though, once she uttered two words: Section 8.

Now, as Carter showed herself out of the first-floor rental, she felt panic welling within. “There really are no doors open for people that have a voucher,” she said afterward. “It makes you feel ashamed to even have one.” Typically, vouchers come with a time limit to find housing, and Carter had already won three extensions. She wasn’t sure she’d get another.

She had just 40 days left to find a place to live.

As the federal government retreated from building new public housing in the 1970s, it envisioned Section 8 vouchers as a more efficient way of subsidizing housing for the poor in the private market. They now constitute the largest rental assistance program in the country, providing almost \$23 billion in aid each year to 2.2 million households. Local housing authorities administer the

program with an annual budget from Washington and are given wide latitude on how many vouchers they hand out and how much each is worth. The bulk of the vouchers are reserved for families who make 30% or less of an area's median income. That is \$30,300 or less for a family of four in Hartford.

For years, researchers and policymakers have lamented the program's failure to achieve one of its key goals: giving families a chance at living in safer communities with better schools. Low-income people across the country struggle to use their vouchers outside of high-poverty neighborhoods.

In Connecticut, the problem is especially acute. An analysis of federal voucher data by The Connecticut Mirror and ProPublica found that 55% of the state's nearly 35,000 voucher holders live in neighborhoods with concentrated poverty. That's higher than the national average of 49% and the rates in 43 other states.

The segregation results, at least in part, from exclusionary zoning requirements that local officials have long [used to block or limit](#) affordable housing in prosperous areas. As the Mirror and ProPublica [reported](#) in November, state authorities have done little to challenge those practices, instead steering taxpayer money to build more subsidized developments in struggling communities.

Dozens of voucher holders in Connecticut say this concentration has left them with few housing options. Local housing authorities often provide a [blue booklet of Section 8-friendly properties](#), but many of the ones listed are complexes that have a reputation for being rundown and are in struggling communities or have long waitlists. Many recipients call it the "Black Book" because "you are going to the dark side, for real. The apartments in that black book are nasty and disgusting," said Janieka Lewis, a Hartford resident whose home is infested with mice.

Josh Serrano also lives in one of the state's poorest neighborhoods. After landing a voucher in 2018, he tried to find a place in the middle-class town of West Hartford, where his son lives part time with his mother. He also looked in nearby Manchester and Simsbury. At each stop, the rent was higher than his voucher's value or the landlord wouldn't take a voucher.

"There is an invisible wall surrounding Hartford for those of us who are poor and particularly have black or brown skin like myself," he said. "No community wanted me and my son."

Nearly 80% of the state's voucher holders are black or Hispanic and half have children. Their average income is \$17,200 a year and the average amount they pay in rent out of pocket is \$413 a month.

The federal government has taken a mostly hands-off approach to ensuring the Section 8 program is working as it was originally intended. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development typically leaves it up to each housing authority to determine how much a voucher is worth, which essentially determines the type of neighborhood a voucher holder can afford. And when HUD assesses the work of housing authorities — to decide whether to increase federal oversight — only a [tiny fraction](#) is based on whether local officials are "expanding housing opportunities ... outside areas of poverty or minority concentration." (And even at that, nearly all housing authorities receive full credit.)

Moreover, federal law does not make it illegal for a landlord to turn down a prospective tenant if they plan to pay with a voucher, so HUD does not investigate complaints of landlords who won't accept Section 8 vouchers.

Connecticut goes further. It is one of [14 states](#) where it's illegal to deny someone housing because they plan to use a Section 8 voucher. And the state allocated more than \$820,000 in the last fiscal year to help pay for 10 investigators to look into complaints of all types of housing discrimination and provide legal assistance. "There has been an effort to try to change" housing segregation, said Seila Mosquera-Bruno, the commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Housing.

But those efforts have done little to prevent landlords from continuing to reject voucher holders. The groups charged with investigating housing complaints say they lack the resources to be proactive and believe they are only seeing a fraction of what's really going on.

"Housing providers keep coming up with ways to rent to who they want to rent and find ways around housing discrimination laws," said Erin Kemple, executive director of the Connecticut Fair Housing Center, which investigates complaints. "There is a lot more discrimination going on than what we are investigating."

In 2018, fewer than 75 complaints were made that accused the landlord or owner of refusing to accept a voucher or some other legal source of income, such as Social Security. The Connecticut Fair Housing Center said that figure isn't low because

discrimination is scarce but rather because prospective tenants are fearful that complaining could hurt them and know that it will do nothing to help them with their immediate needs; investigations can take longer than the time they have to find a house with their vouchers.

“In order to make it a real priority and address the real effects of discrimination in society, the government should dedicate more resources to ferreting it out,” said Greg Kirschner, the group’s legal director.

A Hartford native, Carter reluctantly moved back to her hometown in 2011 to escape an abusive relationship. She had delayed relocating, she said, because she worried she’d be taking her children from a quiet neighborhood in Florida to a “war zone” in Connecticut.

“They not from the streets. Their heart is trying to be goofy-cool,” she said of her three sons, now 10, 17 and 18, and two daughters, ages 13 and 14. “They don’t have that fight in them. I do.” (Worried about her children’s privacy, Carter asked that they not be named in this story.)

She and her children moved into a homeless shelter and then an extended-stay motel. She saw Section 8 as their path to independence, and she started calling housing authorities around the state to apply for and get on waiting lists for a voucher. At first, Carter limited her search to Connecticut’s middle-class and upper-income towns, hoping to settle in a place with low crime and high-performing schools.

But with each call, she lost hope. She met the income requirements — hers was less than half the state’s average household income — but the waitlists had thousands of families in front of her, if they weren’t closed entirely.

When she found out that the Winchester Housing Authority in Northwest Connecticut had just 67 people on its waitlist, she got excited; among the affluent region’s celebrity residents are Meryl Streep and Ralph Nader. The feeling was quickly dashed. Officials barred her from the list, saying it was open only to those who already lived in the predominantly white towns. The housing authority did not return calls seeking comment.

“That lady told me I would be better off living in Bridgeport,” Carter recalled. The city is one of Connecticut’s most impoverished. “She would not send me out an application for nothing in the world, no matter how many times I called. She kept saying, ‘Go to Bridgeport.’”

Blocking those who don’t live in town from getting a housing subsidy is against the law, but housing authorities are [allowed](#) to prioritize whom they award the vouchers to.

Both ways can effectively shut out minorities. And the Winchester Housing Authority is not alone. The wealthy town of Westport — where just 1% of the residents are black and 5% are Hispanic — until recently [posted](#) on its website that it gave substantial preference to current residents and those with ties to the town for its public housing. After the Connecticut Mirror and ProPublica asked about the policy, officials removed the language from the site and disavowed the practice.

Carter decided to fight back. Her mother had worked for the Hartford Housing Authority for decades, so she was familiar with housing rules. “I pretty much know all my rights,” she said later. She called the Connecticut Fair Housing Center and soon [sued Winchester for housing discrimination](#).

The housing authority [denied any wrongdoing](#), and the case dragged on for more than a year. The parties [settled](#), with Winchester pledging to open its waiting list to those outside its borders. But instead of accepting applications from Carter and others, Winchester stopped participating in the voucher program altogether.

Amid the legal battle, she landed a voucher from the middle-class town of West Hartford. She was jubilant. Then, she started searching. “There were no places no matter how hard I looked,” Carter said. “It’s not a golden ticket.”

Approaching the time limit to find housing with her voucher, she settled for Hartford, where her family ultimately moved into a quaint four-bedroom duplex on a quiet street in the South End. Another bright spot: After a few months in the city’s struggling schools, her children had won coveted spots to attend school in the suburbs of Suffield and Simsbury, which have some of the

highest-performing schools in the state. (The education lottery stemmed from a Connecticut Supreme Court [order](#) in 1996 to correct the inequality inherent in the Hartford region's segregated schools.)

The change was stark. In Simsbury, educators taught smaller classes; the school had a social worker and other staff who helped coordinate transportation for Carter's children and enrolled them in free extracurricular programs. Clubs focused on the stock market, horticulture, mindfulness, fly fishing.

"We was grounded," Carter said, "and didn't have to worry about living."

Carter found the notice under her door. It was the summer of 2018. Her landlord of four years had sold the building, and the new owner had given her just 30 days to leave.

Carter was deflated. It had taken so long to find this apartment, and she had no free time; she worked long hours as a ramp loader at the airport for an Amazon Prime subcontractor. Further, the conditions of the education lottery restricted her options; in order for her children to remain in their current schools, they had to live in either Simsbury or Hartford. So when the deadline to move passed, Carter refused to leave. Her landlord filed for eviction. The legal fight lasted for months.

On a frigid morning in January 2019, Carter saw her children off to school and then headed to Hartford Housing Court, a brown brick building a half-block from the state Capitol.

The courtroom was packed with families facing eviction and their landlords' attorneys, but when the bailiff yelled out her name, she still felt humiliated.

Carter pleaded her case above the squeals of a restless baby in the gallery. She told the judge her choices were bleak: either remain in the duplex and eventually be evicted, or leave and become homeless.

"I just can't find an adequate four-bedroom. It's not like I'm just sitting there. I know the man want me out. It's obvious the man want me out," she told Judge Rupal Shah. "I've been looking in Hartford. I've been looking in Simsbury. ..."

But not having anywhere to go is not a valid defense — the judge gave her 10 days to move.

Eviction rates are [high](#) in Connecticut, with 1 in 18 families in Hartford evicted each year. While some skipped rent or damaged property, others are forced out because of new ownership or rising rents. Landlords will often start the eviction process on tenants in good standing to speed up the move-out process, said Nancy Hronek, a housing attorney with Greater Hartford Legal Aid. Regardless of the circumstances, an eviction stains a tenant's rental record, making it more difficult for them to find a new place. Some housing advocates call it the "Scarlet E."

On the morning of Feb. 7, Carter heard a knock on the door. It was a state marshal. She hadn't finished emptying the apartment, so the marshal began hauling her belongings outside. Within minutes, her furniture was strewn across the front lawn. Her children helped her load everything into a moving van. Fog hung in the air as they drove away in silence.

Her family crammed into a relative's apartment in a nearby city. The whole family slept in one room; the three boys in one bed, Carter and her two girls in another. Often, one of them would sleep on the couch in the family room. Everyone stuffed their clothes into a single dresser. The rest of their things moldered in storage.

The social worker at school tried to get the kids into free camps and after-school clubs, but they started to act out. They resisted getting up for school, and their grades started to suffer. The principal called to express concern.

"Now we shelled in this house," Carter said. "This neighborhood, it ain't really great, so my kids are just stuck in a room all day playing video games or on YouTube."

Then, Carter lost her job; the shipping business where she worked took a hit and the company downsized. She redoubled her housing search.

Carter woke before dawn. Sitting at a half-moon table in the dimly lit kitchen, she opened her phone to review apartment listings on a handful of websites while her children slept. Facebook Market, Craigslist, Trulia, Zillow, Apartments.com. She kept checking her phone for notifications of new offerings in Simsbury and Hartford.

It had been four months since her eviction.

“Every day, I look — and nothing works out,” she said.

Most of the listings were in impoverished communities in Hartford. Carter doesn’t drive, so she would line up tours and then ride the bus for an hour to the city. Many of the units she described as “shitholes.”

The Obama administration had tried to change this dynamic. In 2011, HUD piloted a program in the Dallas area that raised the value of vouchers in high-cost areas and decreased their value in impoverished communities as a result of a legal settlement. The idea was that more money would provide more choice, encouraging voucher holders to seek housing in safer areas with high-performing schools.

The Obama administration [changed federal rules](#) to expand the program, but the Trump administration in 2017 [suspended](#) an expansion of the initiative to poor cities like Hartford.

Carter [sued](#) HUD in 2017 in federal district court in Washington, seeking a court order increasing the value of her voucher in the more affluent neighborhoods of Hartford. The judge ruled in her favor.

Researchers have found that raising the voucher’s value in certain neighborhoods worked to make more housing available within the voucher’s price range. The share of rental units in better-off areas that voucher holders could afford jumped from 18% to 41%, [according to](#) New York University’s Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy.

But now, two years later, Carter often found herself turned away from nicer places. That summer, she saw an ad for an idyllic Cape Cod in a quiet neighborhood, so she called the management company to arrange a tour. But when she disclosed that she planned to pay with a voucher, the firm told her it was no longer available and suggested listings in poorer areas. When Carter passed by a few weeks later, she saw a “for rent” sign on the front lawn.

Frustrated with her online search, Carter sometimes asked friends and family to drive her around the better-off sides of Hartford looking for unlisted apartments. She also relied on her social network to send her tips. She heard about the yellow house in Barry Square from her oldest son, who came across it while he was out with friends.

“There is no place for us,” Carter said. “How can I say this without being too blunt: Everybody don’t want us in their backyard. It’s not a color thing. It’s a voucher thing. Nobody wants us.”

Around the country, the federal government has largely outsourced investigating housing discrimination complaints to watchdogs like the Connecticut Fair Housing Center and the state’s Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities.

After disability discrimination, the second most common type of complaint Connecticut’s watchdogs receive is that a landlord won’t take a voucher or another legal source of income. But only 17% of people who suffer discrimination actually end up filing a complaint, [research shows](#).

Like most apartment hunters, Carter had no time to file complaints. After the Barry Square landlord rejected her, she headed to another open house, which she had found on Craigslist. It was a five-bedroom in the Clay Arsenal neighborhood, a part of Hartford known for drug dealing. Her oldest son had once witnessed his friend being shot in this neighborhood in a carjacking.

“My brain is telling me don’t do this,” she said. “My kids aren’t built for this life”

She pushed her hair into her black duckbill newsboy cap and walked up the stairs. Inside, she scanned the floor and saw glue traps to catch mice. “It’s just as a precaution,” the owner said. Carter thought about her 13-year-old daughter, who has severe asthma; rodent infestations can trigger the condition.

As she made her way into the main bedroom, she looked at the doors. A dog had scratched through the flimsy material. The carpet was worn. And a hallway closet had been turned into a bedroom. The rent: \$1,600.

Carter couldn’t wait to leave. She stepped outside, and the landlord assured her that she would have the carpets cleaned and the doors repaired. An exterminator would come monthly.

“Do you take vouchers?” Carter asked.

“That’s not a problem,” the owner responded.

Time was running out. In late July, Carter's relative heard from their landlord. There were too many people in the apartment.

Carter and three of her children stayed while her two older sons moved in with her brother about 20 miles away. Her grasp on her voucher was also tenuous. It had been set to expire in August but, after attorneys at the Connecticut Fair Housing Center and the civil rights group Open Communities Alliance took up her case, she won a 30-day reprieve.

She'd turned down the apartment with mouse traps. But now she was forced to consider a different place in the same neighborhood; it too had mouse traps. Panicked, she started the process of finalizing a lease by sending paperwork to the Hartford Housing Authority.

Even then, she hit a snag: Housing officials approved the apartment but not the entire rent.

Carter called everyone she thought could help. Among them was Erin Boggs, a civil rights attorney she met years ago during the waiting list lawsuit.

It was a long shot, but Boggs sent emails to her advocacy network, including a Catholic deacon whose parish is in Simsbury. The town is mostly wealthy and white, with a latticework of bike trails and a pedestrian bridge lined with flower pots. Rental stock was sparse. In her note, Boggs described Carter as a "civil rights hero" who needed a hand. Within hours, the deacon called a member of his congregation.

Josh Livingston rented a handful of houses in town and had just purchased a four-bedroom Cape Cod set on a wooded lot, just off the main road. The two talked about how much harder life is for people with fewer resources. The next morning, Livingston emailed Boggs, "I can't stop thinking about the chance to help Crystal and her family live in Simsbury."

Livingston had listed the Cape for \$2,300 a month, plus utilities. But Carter's voucher, adjusted for the area's higher income, would only cover \$2,222. He agreed to the reduced price and to cover utilities.

In mid-August, Boggs called Carter with the news. Carter was shocked. She had roughly two weeks left on her voucher and soon went to tour the house. The Cape was across the street from a "Welcome to Simsbury" sign adorned with purple mums. It was bigger than any place Carter had ever imagined herself living in. Fronted by a lawn peppered with colorful leaves from the tall trees, the two-story house had a detached garage and carport. Inside, there was an eat-in kitchen, a fireplace and a sunroom.

Later, when a housing inspector came to confirm that the property was safe, Livingston glimpsed the prejudice that Carter experienced. "He said to me: 'Oh my gosh, it's a fantastic house. I really hope they don't ruin it,'" the landlord recalled.

Carter and her family moved in just before Halloween. Someone left a welcome pumpkin and leaf wreath on her front stoop.

On a recent Saturday morning, she was busy tidying the kitchen before work; she had found a job at the Stop and Shop grocery store across the street. A roast defrosted on the counter, near a stack of coupon leaflets. On the windowsill above the sink was a homemade blue and red painted welcome plaque given to her by one of her children. Next to the dinner table, a sign reading, "Life is better at the beach."

"It's just so cozy," Carter said.

In the living room, family photos rested on built-in bookshelves, and donations from the nearby Catholic Church were slowly filling the space: pots and pans, firewood, side tables. Upstairs, the children had their own bedrooms.

Carter still marvels at the turnaround. "My story is different only because I had all these people who know people," she said. "If it wasn't for them, I wouldn't be here. I would be in the slums."

Her children are now able to participate in Simsbury's after-school clubs because they can catch the late bus home. Her 14-year-old daughter just joined the fencing team. At night, Carter and her kids spend hours sitting next to the hearth of their fireplace, scanning the woods for the bears that her neighbors talk about.

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One of America's Wealthiest States Might Pass Up an Opportunity to Tackle Housing Segregation

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by Jacqueline Rabe Thomas, The Connecticut Mirror

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On a recent Sunday, protesters marched through the center of Weston, a small, wealthy town in southwest Connecticut. They chanted “no justice, no peace” and raised handwritten signs that read “Black Lives Matter” and “Silence is Violence.”

Somewhere in the crowd, Brian Murray hoisted his own message.

“Fact check: Weston, CT. No Black teachers. No Black police officers. No Black board members. No Black town of Weston government office members.”

Murray, one of the town’s few Black residents, viewed the June 7 protest through a different lens than his white neighbors.

“It was a photo opportunity. That’s all,” said Murray, a limo driver and father of five who moved his family to the town eight years ago.

Eight days after that protest, at which elected officials urged the overwhelmingly white crowd to fight racism, Weston officials turned their attention to housing. With a unanimous vote, they adopted the town’s strategic [plan](#), which recommends keeping most development to single-family homes on lots of at least two acres, a requirement that has resulted in a typical sale price of \$660,000 — and a lack of diversity. Just 1.4% of residents are Black. Local officials rejected a suggestion to convert a vacant property into affordable housing for seniors. Instead, they carved out a small area of land surrounding the town green for potential development.

“Fundamentally, this is who we have been for a long time,” said Ken Edgar, the chairman of Weston’s Planning and Zoning Commission, referring to the town’s large homes. “We are trying to move the ball, but there would have to be demonstrated interest before I think we move the ball further and build diverse housing on small lots.”

Despite its liberal reputation — and Democrats controlling the legislature for the last 23 years and the governor’s mansion for nine — Connecticut is one of the [mostsegregated](#) places in the country. And with thousands of residents pouring into the streets this month to protest racism, housing advocates and progressive Democrats saw an opportunity to change that, calling for an overhaul of the state’s exclusionary housing laws.

That opportunity, however, appears to be fading.

At the state Capitol, Gov. Ned Lamont and legislative leaders have shelved a raft of proposals that could spur more affordable housing, after ending the legislative session early this year because of the coronavirus pandemic. Now, they are expected to return to Hartford next month for a special session to address a single reform in response to the protests: police accountability.

The limited agenda represents a stark retreat for leaders who began the year with bold pledges to tackle Connecticut’s affordable housing crisis.

Lamont in particular seemed poised to shift the debate, publicly criticizing wealthy towns, after [a series of articles published by the Connecticut Mirror and ProPublica](#) showed the lengths to which local jurisdictions have gone to block affordable housing, and by extension the people who need it.

“You know, I think they are nuts not to allow their downtowns to develop a little bit, not to have more multifamily housing, not to have more affordable housing, not to allow more of their community to live where they work,” [he told the Connecticut Mirror’s “Steady Habits” podcast](#) in January.

But this month, after a Juneteenth event billed as “A roundtable on Racial Equality and Social Justice,” Lamont struck a more passive tone, telling reporters he supports leaving zoning decisions up to local officials. Asked whether some towns’ zoning regulations are shutting out minorities, Lamont said, “I’m not as interested as much in changing the laws within these” towns.

Max Reiss, a spokesman for the governor, said in a statement that the administration prefers to work collaboratively over forcing towns to allow projects that they don’t support. The state Department of Housing, he said, is currently building an affordable housing “toolkit” for local officials “to make it easier to communicate the issue to their local communities.”

“By working together toward a common goal, we can be much more successful, and effective,” Reiss said. “Divisive policies which promote conflict and inhibit growth are at the heart of the problems in this country. We do not believe in these kinds of policies in Connecticut, and are actively working against them.”

Any challenge to local control also faces an uphill battle in a legislature dominated by suburban lawmakers who represent communities that have fought changes for years. House Speaker Joe Aresimowicz, D-Berlin, said he doesn’t believe tackling zoning reforms is possible during a special session but is open to considering it.

“To have protracted debate and public input, I don’t believe the time frame will allow it,” he said. “The General Assembly as a whole has been struggling with this issue for years. Having a vote by early July is sort of hopeful and wishful to be honest.”

Other Democrats disagree. On Wednesday, the state House of Representatives’ progressive caucus — representing nearly half of the party’s members in the lower chamber — announced it supports taking aim at exclusionary zoning during the special session.

“We need to take advantage of the moment that we have,” said Senate President Pro Tem Martin M. Looney, D-New Haven.

Urban legislators, many of them Black, say the police killing of George Floyd and the demonstrations that swept the nation exposed the need for systemic reforms in several areas of American life, including housing.

“If we don’t do it now, we will never get it done,” said state Sen. Doug McCrory, D-Hartford, the vice chairman of the Housing Committee who has served in the legislature for 25 years.

“No longer do we chip around the outside and do what I call Novocain legislation,” he added. “That’s what we’ve been doing ever since I’ve been here. Just a little here. Just a little there because we don’t want to offend anybody. We don’t want anybody to be upset. No more. This is the time for the state of Connecticut to step up to the plate and be bold.”

A coalition of land use attorneys, planning and zoning commissioners and architects — named Desegregate CT — is pressing the legislature and governor to change the laws that allow local officials to block affordable housing in small towns. The result of so-called home rule has been a concentration of low-income units in urban areas.

In Hartford, some neighborhoods have as much as [70% of the housing units reserved](#) for low-income residents — which, in turn, puts a strain on the town’s ability to raise enough revenue to pay for things like schools and street repairs. “I think it’s time for Connecticut to ask itself, what will these pandemics mean for our land use regime,” said Sara Bronin, the leader of Hartford’s Planning and Zoning Commission and an expert on land use at UConn Law School. “Segregation is an urgent crisis.”

Town officials say they’re not opposed to affordable housing in principle — but it has to fit in with what’s referred to as the “character” of their small communities. That typically means low-density projects, not multistory apartment buildings.

But civil rights leaders and developers have a name for this type of zoning — “Jim Crow Zoning” — because it allows Connecticut’s wealthier towns to shut out more affordable housing from being built, and the minorities who would live there. Developers argue that smaller projects don’t make financial sense because of the cost of the land and the construction. The rent they could charge would not justify the outlay, they say.

“The irony of BLM protests in white communities is it is these same towns that repeatedly block the development of affordable housing, which we know is an efficient way to promote integration,” said Fionnuala Darby-Hudgens of the Connecticut Fair Housing Center, a nonprofit that advocates for more desegregation.

As the Connecticut Mirror and ProPublica reported last year, more than three dozen towns in the state have blocked construction of any privately developed duplexes and apartments within their borders for the last two decades. That often locks low-income people out of educational and employment opportunities. In southwest Connecticut, for example, it [costs 3.5 times more](#) to live near the

high-scoring elementary schools in Westport, Weston or Wilton than in Bridgeport, one of the most impoverished cities in the state. It is the largest gap in the country, the Brookings Institution [reported](#).

“Segregation is one of the roots of the evil in our society, and it’s perpetuated by exclusionary zoning. Let’s just call it what it is, it’s Jim Crow Zoning,” said Richard Freedman, a developer with a history of fighting local officials to build affordable housing in high-end communities. “It’s a system of social control, an insidious, complicated system of social control, just like the old Jim Crow laws.”

Local officials in towns that have rejected affordable housing have disputed claims of discrimination. They point to frail public infrastructure, clogged streets, a lack of sidewalks and concerns about overcrowding as reasons for denying projects.

“The challenge to our community is not just to the character of neighborhoods, but also to firefighting and police response, potentially to educational capacity, to human services support and to our tradition as a single-family home community,” Jim Marpe, Westport’s Republican first selectman, told residents in his State of the Town Address last year.

Connecticut stands out on the national stage. The suburbs surrounding New Haven are more exclusive than Silicon Valley, which is notorious for its high housing costs, according to [research](#) from Professor Robert C. Ellickson at Yale Law School. The towns of Bethany, Madison, Orange and Woodbridge designate more than 98% of their residentially zoned land solely for single-family dwellings, built on lots of at least 1 acre. In each place, less than 3% of the population is Black. In Guilford, 93% is reserved for single-family homes and requires a 2-acre minimum. Just 1% of the population there is Black.

For people of color, the experience can be isolating — and alienating.

In Weston, where only eight affordable housing units are reserved for low-income residents, Murray said that he and his family have experienced several instances of unequal treatment, such as when school officials expelled his eighth-grade son last year after a disciplinary incident. Murray filed a complaint with the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, alleging his son was treated harshly because he is Black. The commission did not return a call seeking comment. William S. McKersie, superintendent of Weston Public Schools, and Anthony Pesco, the chairman of the Weston board of education, declined to comment on the case, saying they could not discuss individual students. But Pesco said, “The board takes allegations of racial bias and racial injustice very seriously.”

The only way conditions will improve, Murray said, is if the town makes it possible for more people from diverse backgrounds to be able to afford to move there and serve in public office. He pays \$3,300 to rent a three-bedroom home in town.

Edgar, the chairman of the town’s Planning and Zoning Commission, attended Weston’s Black Lives Matter protest and said town officials recognize the need for affordable housing. “We’re looking affirmatively towards having more diversification in our housing,” he said, citing the town’s strategic plan, which designates the town center as a potential area for affordable housing. “You’ve got to start some place.”

He said residents generally oppose allowing homes to be built on smaller lots because it’s never been done. They’re also concerned that more children would move into the community, inflate school rolls and, in turn, lead to higher taxes. “Can we build a new school to accommodate the hypothetical one-quarter acre homes? It hasn’t been on the table in Weston,” Edgar said.

Enrollment in Weston schools has declined by 9% over the last 10 years and is projected to drop by an additional 4% over the next five. The district is now looking at consolidating to three schools from four.

Across Connecticut, the opposition to affordable housing in these wealthy enclaves remains stiff. Karen DuBois-Walton, president of the housing authority in New Haven and a member of the State Board of Education, said critics have hardened in recent years, evolving from being labeled NIMBY (Not in My Back Yard) to BANANA (Build Absolutely Nothing Anywhere Near Anyone).

“If we continue to subscribe to zoning policy that reinforces what we have at this point at the long end of a long history of inequity, then we will be agreeing that we are going to continue to reinforce racist policy,” she said.

Instead of [challenging those zoning practices](#), though, state officials have [steered taxpayer money](#) to build more subsidized developments in struggling communities with high crime, few jobs and struggling schools.

The Connecticut Mirror and ProPublica [reported](#) last year that 80% of the state’s 27,000 subsidized housing units were located in struggling communities, literally erecting pockets of poverty. Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers, designed to help low-income

people find decent housing outside poor areas, have also failed; the bulk are being [used in high-poverty neighborhoods](#) because those are the only places with available rentals for voucher recipients.

Over the past month, Rodney Williams has protested at several Black Lives Matter demonstrations in New Haven in the wake of Floyd's death. He grew up in housing projects in Brooklyn, New York, and has lived in [Newhallville, a poor section of New Haven](#), for years.

"When the man was saying, 'I can't breathe,' the truth is America has had they foot on our neck ever since we was young," he said. "If we had access to opportunities, we could afford to live where we want to live. We should be able to live where we want to live."

Desegregate CT, the coalition of attorneys and local land use officials, is developing proposals to rein in local control and clear the path for more affordable housing.

Some Democrats also want to revive legislation that died during the regular session this year. Among the proposals: expanding the jurisdiction of housing authorities so they could build in surrounding communities and starting a pilot program that would allow children to continue attending their school if they win a housing voucher and decide to move.

Much depends on Lamont, who has tread lightly; in fact, he has deferred to legislative leaders entirely on the agenda for a special session. In January, he floated tying state spending on transportation upgrades in affluent communities — such as new or renovated train stops — to local approval of more affordable housing projects. But the money was set to come from installing toll roads throughout the state, a proposal that died. Now, amid the economic downturn, the state coffers for transportation projects are nearly empty.

Aside from legislation, the governor can still influence the housing debate through the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, where his appointees decide where to direct public funding to construct affordable housing. But even there, officials say they plan to continue using a selection process that hinges on local approval — [a system that critics argue results in the warehousing of poor people](#) in poor communities.

Under the existing system, few developers of affordable housing even propose building in wealthy towns, fearing organized opposition.

That was the case in Waterford, where Harold Foley, owner of Georgia-based HF3 Group LLC, proposed a 40-unit apartment complex on the property where Cohanzie Elementary School closed in 2008. Located in an area of single-family homes, across the street from a baseball field and playground, the proposal drew immediate protests from neighbors. Some said they feared affordable housing would not fit in with the neighborhood. Others worried about crime. Still others cited traffic and the impact on property values. The developer ultimately walked away from the project.

Several local elected officials attended the town's recent Black Lives Matter protest.

Beth Sabilia, a Democrat and selectwoman, said she opposed the project because of the neighbor concerns but she did not weigh in publicly at the time. "I've always been schooled to give the zoning board their lane, let them stay in their lane."

"People want to stay in their lanes," she added, "but I'm not necessarily sure that staying in your lane is the way to move ahead."

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11.6: 6. Urban planning as a tool of white supremacy – the other lesson from Minneapolis

Urban planning as a tool of white supremacy – the other lesson from Minneapolis



Minneapolis, a city still split along racial lines. [Jason Armond/Los Angeles Times via Getty Images](#)

[Julian Agyeman](#), *Tufts University*

The legacy of structural racism in Minneapolis was laid bare to the world at the intersection of [Chicago Avenue and East 38th Street](#), the location where George Floyd’s neck was pinned to the ground by a police officer’s knee. But it is also imprinted in streets, parks and neighborhoods across the city – the result of urban planning that utilized [segregation](#) as a tool of white supremacy.

Today, Minneapolis is seen to be [one of the most liberal cities in the U.S.](#) But if you scratch away the progressive veneer of the U.S.’s [most cyclable city](#), the [city with the best park system](#) and [sixth-highest quality of life](#), you find what [Kirsten Delegard](#), a Minneapolis historian, [describes as](#) “darker truths about the city.”

As co-founder of the University of Minnesota’s [Mapping Prejudice](#) project, Delegard and her colleagues have been shedding new light on the role that racist barriers to home ownership have had on segregation in the city.

'Racial cordon'

Segregation in Minneapolis, like elsewhere in the U.S., is the result of historic practices such as the issuing of racialized real estate covenants that [kept nonwhite people from buying or occupying land](#).

These covenants began appearing in U.S. cities from the early 1900s. Before their [use in Minneapolis](#), the city was “[more or less integrated, with a small but evenly distributed African American population](#).” But covenants changed the cityscape. Racist wording from [the city’s first racially restrictive covenant](#) in 1910 stated bluntly that the premises named “shall not at any time be conveyed, mortgaged or leased to any person or persons of Chinese, Japanese, Moorish, Turkish, Negro, Mongolian or African blood or descent.”

As a result, African Americans, especially, were pushed into a few small areas of the city such as the [Near North](#) neighborhood, leaving large parts of the city predominantly white. Some of the city’s most desirable parks were ringed by white residential districts. The result was an [invisible “racial cordon” around some of the city’s celebrated parks and commons](#).



A Minneapolis police officer in a predominantly black area during unrest in 1967. [AP Photo/Robert Walsh](#)

'By design, not accident'

As a [scholar of urban planning](#), I know that Minneapolis, far from being an outlier in segregation, represents the norm. Across the U.S., urban planning is still used by some as the spatial toolkit, consisting of a set of policies and practices, for maintaining white supremacy. But urban planners of color, especially, are pointing out ways to [reimagine inclusive urban spaces](#) by dismantling the legacy of racist planning, housing and infrastructure policies.

Racial segregation was not the byproduct of urban planning; it was, in many cases, its intention – it was “not by accident, but by design,” Adrien Weibgen, senior policy fellow at the Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development, explained in a 2019 [New York Daily News article](#).

The effect was and still is devastating.

The Urban Institute, an independent think tank, noted in a [2017 report](#) that higher levels of racial segregation were linked to lower incomes for Black residents, as well worse educational outcomes for both white and Black students. Other studies have found that racial segregation leads to Black Americans being excluded from [high-performing schools](#). In Minnesota – which ranks as [the fourth most segregated state](#) – [the gap between the performance of white students and students of color](#) is among the highest in the U.S. Likewise, segregation limits access to [transportation, employment and quality health care](#).

Income and wealth gaps

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in Minneapolis [the median Black family income in 2018 was US\\$36,000, compared to nearly \\$83,000 among white families](#). After Milwaukee, this is the biggest gap of the 100 largest metropolitan areas in the U.S. Mirroring the city's income gap is a huge wealth gap. Minneapolis now has the [lowest rate of homeownership among Black American households of any city](#).

Residential segregation in Minneapolis and elsewhere is still stubbornly high despite more than 50 years since the passing of the [1968 Fair Housing Act](#), which prohibited discrimination in the sale, rental and financing of housing based on race, among other factors. But while some residential segregation is now income-based, [racial segregation across the U.S. is more ingrained and pervasive than economic segregation](#).

Zoning out

Residential racial segregation continues to exist because of specific government policies enacted through urban planning. A key tool is zoning – the process of dividing urban land into areas for specific uses, such as residential or industrial. In the introduction to her 2014 book “[Zoned in the USA](#),” [urban planning professor Sonia Hirt](#) argues that zoning is about government power to shape “ideals” by imposing a “moral geography” on cities. In Minneapolis and elsewhere, this has meant [excluding “undersirables”](#) – namely the poor, immigrants of color and African Americans.

With explicit racialized zoning long outlawed in the U.S. – the U.S. Supreme Court [ended the practice in 1917](#) – many local governments instead turned to “exclusionary” zoning policies, making it illegal to build anything except single-family homes. This

“back door racism” had a similar effect to outright racial exclusions: It kept out most Black and low-income people who could not afford expensive single-family homes.

In Minneapolis, single-family zoning amounted to [70% of residential space](#), compared to [15% in New York](#). Buttressing this, redlining – the denial of mortgages and loans to people of color by government and the private sector – ensured the continuance of segregation.

Anti-racist planning

Minneapolis is trying hard to reverse these racist policies. In 2018, [it became the first large city to vote to end single-family zoning](#), allowing “upzoning”: the conversion of single-family lots into more affordable duplexes and triplexes.

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This, together with “inclusionary zoning” – requiring that new apartment projects hold at least 10% of units for low- to moderate-income households – is part of the Minneapolis 2040 Plan. Central to that vision is a goal to eliminate disparities in wealth, housing and opportunity “[regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, country of origin, religion, or zip code](#)” within 20 years.

In the aftermath of George Floyd’s death, Minneapolis City Council acted quickly in [advancing plans to dismantle the city’s police force](#). Dismantling the legacy of by-design segregation will require the tools of urban planning being utilized to find solutions after decades of being part of the problem.

[Julian Agyeman](#), Professor of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning, [Tufts University](#)

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@realDonaldTrump. "...Your housing prices will go up based on the market, and crime will go down. I have rescinded the Obama-Biden AFFH Rule. Enjoy!" *Twitter*, 29 July 2020, 12:19, <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1288509572223651840>.

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Index

Glossary

Sample Word 1 | Sample Definition 1

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- [ENG 101 OER - Undeclared](#)
 - [Front Matter - Undeclared](#)
 - [TitlePage - Undeclared](#)
 - [InfoPage - Undeclared](#)
 - [Table of Contents - Undeclared](#)
 - [Licensing - Undeclared](#)
 - [Introduction- Equipment for Writing - Undeclared](#)
 - [1: Reading in College - Undeclared](#)
 - [1.1: Develop general reading strategies by reflecting on you as a reader - Undeclared](#)
 - [1.2: Read to study the choices made by other writers - Undeclared](#)
 - [1.3: Understand the difference between responding and analyzing - Undeclared](#)
 - [1.4: Reading for Rhetoric and Reasoning - Undeclared](#)
 - [1.5: Annotation is a system for remembering what you read - CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#)
 - [1.6: Effective reading prepares you for higher order thinking - Undeclared](#)
 - [2: Writing with Sources - Undeclared](#)
 - [2.1: Understand how an assignments wants you to use texts - Undeclared](#)
 - [2.2: Summarize to demonstrate that you've read and understand the whole text - Undeclared](#)
 - [2.3: Paraphrase to demonstrate your understanding of the complex ideas in a text - Undeclared](#)
 - [2.4: Quote to emphasize the writerly choices made in a text - Undeclared](#)
 - [2.5: Make writerly choices when quoting texts - Undeclared](#)
 - [2.6: Correct citation builds trust and authority - Undeclared](#)
 - [2.7: Learn how to avoid plagiarism - Undeclared](#)
 - [3: Essential Essay Strategies - Undeclared](#)
 - [3.1: Brainstorming helps you develop your ideas - Undeclared](#)
 - [3.2: Topic + Stance + Reasons + Importance = Thesis - Undeclared](#)
 - [3.3: There is no one-size-fits-all essay structure, but there are useful patterns - Undeclared](#)
 - [3.4: Strong paragraphs start with good evidence - Undeclared](#)
 - [3.5: Writing Introductions - Undeclared](#)
 - [3.6: A conclusion should explain "So What" or "Now What" - Undeclared](#)
 - [4: Essential Grammar Strategies - Undeclared](#)
 - [4.1: Understand the level of "correctness" necessary for your writing situation - Undeclared](#)
 - [4.2: Master some sentence basics - Undeclared](#)
 - [4.3: Whose mistake? Reading like writer - Undeclared](#)
 - [4.4: When you're ready, learn the rules that will help you - Undeclared](#)
 - [5: Revision - Undeclared](#)
 - [5.1: Fix the big stuff before you fix the little stuff - Undeclared](#)
 - [5.2: Outlining your draft is a good revision tool - Undeclared](#)
 - [5.3: Giving and receiving feedback will make you a better writer - Undeclared](#)
 - [5.4: It's OK to be anxious or afraid - Undeclared](#)
 - [5.5: Triplecheck your essay before turning it in \(Spell Check, Grammar Check, Checklist\) - Undeclared](#)
 - [6: Finding and Using Sources - Undeclared](#)
 - [6.1: Your readers expect you to find and cite reliable sources - Undeclared](#)

- 6.2: Your readers expect you to use sources that have information your readers don't already know - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 6.3: Your readers expect you to understand your sources - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 6.4: Your readers expect you to do interesting things with your sources - *Undeclared*
- 7: Moving Beyond Essay Basics - *Undeclared*
 - 7.1: Use reasoning to connect claims and evidence - *Undeclared*
 - 7.2: Use patterns of organization and development - *Undeclared*
 - 7.3: Use transitions and signposts to develop relationships between ideas - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 7.4: Your essay should continue the conversation - *Undeclared*
 - 7.5: Reading like a writer can help you develop conversations in your essays - *Undeclared*
- 8: Modes and Genres - *Undeclared*
- 9: Coming Soon- Genres of Real World Writing - *Undeclared*
- 10: Equipment for Writing - *Undeclared*
- 11: Housing Inequality - *Undeclared*
 - 11.1: 1. Separated by Design- How Some of America's Richest Towns Fight Affordable Housing - *Undeclared*
 - 11.2: 2. Separated by Design- Why Affordable Housing Is Built in Areas With High Crime, Few Jobs and Struggling Schools - *Undeclared*
 - 11.3: 3. How Wealthy Towns Keep People With Housing Vouchers Out - *Undeclared*
 - 11.4: 4. One of America's Wealthiest States Might Pass Up an Opportunity to Tackle Housing Segregation - *Undeclared*
 - 11.5: 5. Housing Segregation and Redlining in America- A Short History - *Undeclared*
 - 11.6: 6. Urban planning as a tool of white supremacy – the other lesson from Minneapolis - *Undeclared*
 - 11.7: 7. Opinion- "Joe Biden's disastrous plans for America's suburbs." - *Undeclared*
 - 11.8: 8.realDonaldTrump Tweets - *Undeclared*
- Back Matter - *Undeclared*
 - Index - *Undeclared*
 - Glossary - *Undeclared*
 - Detailed Licensing - *Undeclared*