LIGHT BULB: RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION



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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Front Matter

Write Away: Rhetoric and Composition

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1.1: Read Effectively



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Good writing begins with good reading. Every time you read, you're exposed to someone else's ideas and to their way of writing: their word choice, vocabulary, knowledge base, use of language, and so forth.

How do you become a reader, or a better reader?

First, 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!

Second, learn and practice the skills of effective reading (which are explained below in this section).

Third, keep reading. Every day. And use good effective reading skills.

Fourth, learn and practice the skill of reading critically. To learn more, see Reading Critically in the "Writing about Texts" section.

Fifth, keep reading. Yes, every day, putting your skills to work. (Practice makes perfect!)

Sixth, well, you know.

Reading effectively means reading in a way that helps you understand, evaluate, and reflect on a written text. As you might guess, these skills are very important to college students, 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:

- They start by creating an optimal setting for reading. They pick the best time, place, and conditions.
- They engage in pre-reading strategies before starting to read (see pre-reading strategies later in this section)
- They read material efficiently: they pick up a piece of material, engage actively with it, and finish.
- They create a reading environment that helps decrease distraction.
- They annotate written texts (in other words, they write directly *on* the texts) or take notes as they read. By doing this, they enter into a discussion with the text, interacting with it.
- They research or investigate content they don't fully understand.
- They work to discover the central meaning of the piece. They ask themselves
  - What is the author's point?
  - What is the text trying to say?
  - What story is the author telling?
  - How does the author create and build this meaning?
- They reflect on what the text means to them, internalizing the meaning:
  - How am I responding to this text?
  - Why am I responding that way?
  - What does the text make me think about?
  - What does this information mean to me?

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1.2: Use Pre-reading Strategies



***Figure* 1.2.1 -** *Sherlock Holmes Statue, by Juhanson is licensed under CC-BY-SA-3.0 via Wikimedia Commons*

When you're ready to settle in with a text, it's a good idea to begin with "pre-reading." With pre-reading, you'll turn into a temporary sleuth, examining the text for visual clues as to its meaning. Here's how it's done:

Start by Reading and Considering the Title

A good title will inform you about the text's content. It's always nice if titles are also interesting, catchy, or even clever, but the most important job of a title is to let the reader know what's coming and what the text will be about.

For instance, imagine you're reading a magazine article entitled "Three Hundred Sixty-five Properly Poofy Days."*

Reading that, do you have any idea what this article is going to be about?

- It could be written by a meteorologist, reporting on a year of observing cloud formations.
- It might be a biopic (a biographical story) about an eccentric salon that specializes in"big hair" dos, retro-style.
- Or perhaps it's a set of guidelines for using poofy cotton balls to apply cosmetics.

Would you be surprised to discover it's a story about a dog groomer who does show grooms for poodles, the poofiest of dogs?

See my point? The title should, hopefully, give you clues to the article content. (Keep this in mind when you're writing your own titles.)

- **Look at the author's name** Have you heard of the author? Do you know anything about them? Sometimes you'll find a short bio about the author at the beginning or end of a text. You can always Google them to look for more details. Ideally, the author should be an acknowledged expert on the subject or should have degrees, training, or credentials that make them an expert. (Learn more about the CRAP method for evaluating sources in the information literacy section titled "Finding Quality Texts.")
- **Skim through the article, looking for headings or "pull-outs"** (content that is pulled off to one side or highlighted in a box). Headings, if present, will often give you clues as to the text's content as well as showing you how the subject has been divided into sections.
- **Look for any images: photographs, charts, graphs, maps, or other illustrations**. Images—and their captions—will often give you valuable information about the topic.
- **If working with an e-text, you may also find embedded web links.** Follow these: they'll often lead you to resources that will help you better understand the article.
- **Here's a seriously expert level suggestion**: most academic texts and essays follow a fairly similar structure—including beginning every paragraph with a strong, focused topic sentence—you can often get a quick summary or understanding of a written text by simply reading the first sentence in every paragraph. Some authors may use the second sentence as their topic sentence, and if you notice this pattern, reading all of the second sentences in each paragraph will help you follow the text.

After working through the above suggestions, see if you can figure out the main purpose of the text simply by pre-reading. In other words, look for the global or central idea or argument.

Now, you're ready to dive in and actually read the text completely. Your pre-reading has given you an overall picture of what to expect and helped you build a schema of what the author wants you to know at the end of the reading. If the pre-reading has

worked well, giving you clues to the text's content, your actual in-depth reading will be easier and more effective. And, you'll begin reading with your curiosity already aroused, which is a great way to start!

Check Your Understanding: Practicing Your Pre-reading Skills

Now that we've covered some pre-reading practices, let's put those skills to the test.

Find the *Scientific American* article, "U.S. Cracking Down on Brain-Training Games."

1. Before reading the article, work through the above pre-reading skills.
2. Based on what you found in your pre-reading, what do you think the text is about? What position will the article take on the idea of brain-training games? How much do you know about the topic already? What did you already know (before you even looked at the article)?
3. Now, switch to in-depth reading and read the article carefully, taking notes of any questions you have or words you don't understand.
4. If needed, do a bit of quick research on any questions or unknown words you identified.
5. How did the pre-reading affect your ideas of what to expect from the text? How did your understanding of the piece compare between what you learned from pre-reading versus a complete reading? What does this tell you about the relationship between pre-reading and in-depth reading?

See the Appendix, Results for the "Check Your Understanding" Activities, for answers.

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1.3: Annotate and Take Notes

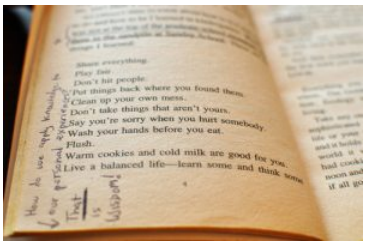


***Figure* 1.3.1** - *Words of Wisdom by Anne CN is licensed under CC by 2.0*

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. You can jot down questions and ideas as they come to you. You might underline important sections, circle words you don't understand, and use your own set of symbols to highlight portions that you feel are important. 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. Note that I say most—if you have questions about your own school and plan to sell back any textbooks, be sure to ask at the bookstore before you annotate.

If you can't write on the text itself, 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. For a strategy that helps you take note of what you see as interesting or important points of a text while also responding to those points with your own ideas, see "Dialectic Note-taking" in the "Writing about Texts" section of this text.

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.

tip

When annotating, choose pencil or ball-point ink rather than gel or permanent marker. 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.

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. Include the author and title, and write out an MLA citation for the source (see the appendix, Creating a Works Cited Page).

Check Your Understanding: Annotation

Print a hard copy* of the New York Times article, "Are We Loving Our National Parks to Death?"

Pre-read the article to gather some first impression ideas. Then read the article completely, annotating as you go.

*If you aren't able to print a hard copy, carry out the following instructions using a piece of paper and a pen or pencil.

1. Double-underline what you believe to be the topic or thesis statement in the article. (The thesis statement is one or two sentences that summarizes the article's main point and tells what it's about. The thesis statement can occur anywhere in the article—even near the end.)
2. As you read, underline points that you find especially interesting. Make notes in the margins as ideas occur to you.

3. Write question marks in the margin where questions occur to you, and make written margin notes about them, too.
4. Circle all words you don't understand. Then look them up! (Dictionary.com is a good online dictionary and even pronounces words so you'll know how they sound.)
5. When you're finished, write a quick summary—several sentences or a short paragraph—that captures the article's main points.

See the Appendix, Results for the "Check Your Understanding" Activities, for answers.

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1.4: Summarizing and Paraphrasing

Learning Objectives

- Summarize a passage of reading
- Paraphrase a passage of reading

Have you ever heard, “the best way to learn something is to teach it to someone else”?

Writing a summary of a source is a very similar process to teaching someone the content—but in this case, the student you’re teaching is yourself.

Summarizing, or condensing someone else’s ideas and putting it into your own shortened form, allows you to be sure that you’ve accurately captured the main idea of the text you’re reading. When reading, summarizing is helpful for checking your understanding of a longer text and remembering the author’s main ideas. When writing, summarizing is critical when reviewing, writing an abstract, preparing notes for a study guide, creating an annotated bibliography, answering essay questions, recording results of an experiment, describing the plot of a fictional work or film, or writing a research paper.

How to Write Summary Statements

Use these processes to help you write summary statements:

- Underline important information and write keywords in the margin.
- Record ideas using a two-column note-taking system. Record questions you have about the text concepts in the left column and answers you find in the reading in the right column.
- Identify how concepts relate to what you already know.
- Add examples and details

For retaining key ideas as you read, write a summary statement at the end of each paragraph or section. For capturing the major ideas of the entire work, write a summary paragraph (or more) that describes the entire text.

Tips for Summary

For longer, overall summary projects that capture an entire reading, consider these guidelines for writing a summary:

- **A summary should contain the main thesis or standpoint of the text, restated in your own words.** (To do this, first find the thesis statement in the original text.)
- **A summary is written in your own words.** It contains few or no quotes.
- **A summary is always shorter than the original text, often about 1/3 as long as the original.** It is the ultimate fat-free writing. An article or paper may be summarized in a few sentences or a couple of paragraphs. A book may be summarized in an article or a short paper. A very large book may be summarized in a smaller book.
- **A summary should contain all the major points of the original text**, and should ignore most of the fine details, examples, illustrations or explanations.
- **The backbone of any summary is formed by crucial details** (key names, dates, events, words and numbers). A summary must never rely on vague generalities.
- If you quote anything from the original text, even an unusual word or a catchy phrase, **you need to put whatever you quote in quotation marks (” “).**
- **A summary must contain only the ideas of the original text.** Do not insert any of your own opinions, interpretations, deductions or comments into a summary.

Watch It

Watch this video to see a walk-through explanation on how to summarize.

A link to an interactive elements can be found at the bottom of this page.

You can view the transcript for “Summarizing” here (opens in new window).

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20213

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is the act of putting an author’s ideas into your own words. When reading, paraphrasing is helpful for checking your understanding of what you read as well as remembering what you read. When writing, paraphrasing is an important skill to have when constructing a research paper and incorporating the ideas of others alongside your own.

WAtch IT

A link to an interactive elements can be found at the bottom of this page.

Click to view the transcript for “Paraphrasing” here (opens in new window).

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20214

Glossary

paraphrasing: rewriting a passage of text in your own words

summarizing: condensing someone else’s ideas and putting it into your own shortened form

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Inferences vs. Guessing

What is an inference? What's the difference between an inference and a guess? And what does any of this have to do with college-level reading and writing?

An inference is a conclusion you reach by applying logic to the evidence you are given. Making inferences while reading is a strategy that will help you learn, remember, and apply what you have read. When you make inferences, you are "reading between the lines". This tactic is similar to what Sherlock Holmes does when he sees that Dr. Watson has a tan and makes a conclusion about where Watson has recently traveled.

You already make inferences all of the time. For example, if you go over to a friend's house and they point at the sofa and say, "Don't sit there; Candy came over with her baby again," what could you logically conclude? First, you know there must be a reason not to sit where your friend is pointing. Further, you know that the reason to not sit there is related to the fact that Cindy just visited with her baby. You don't know what exactly happened, but you can infer enough and don't need to ask any more questions to know that you do not want to sit there.



Figure: Image from Pixabay

Other examples of inferences are when a doctor makes a diagnosis about why you are sick or when a mechanic figures out what is wrong with your car. What can you infer from the image above? Try making some inferences yourself. Imagine you witness each of the following – what can you infer about each situation?

1. You see a woman pushing a baby stroller down the street.
2. You are at a corner and see two cars stopped at an intersection. The rear car starts honking its horn.
3. You are walking down the street, and all of a sudden a dog comes running out of an opened door with its tail between its legs.

For the first example, you probably came up with something simple, such as that there was a baby in the stroller. For the second, you could infer that the first car should have started moving or was waiting too long at the corner and holding up the second car. For the third, you could reasonably guess that the dog had done something wrong and was afraid of being punished. You do not know for certain that these inferences are true.

Just like Sherlock Holmes, you would have to test your theories. If you checked 100 strollers, 99 times you would find a baby, but maybe one time you would find something else, like groceries or a small dog.

Exercise 1.5.1

Write a conclusion you could infer from the following:

1. You see a man running and frantically waving at a bus that is pulling away from a bus stop.
2. You are giving a speech in front of an audience and notice several people laughing and pointing at something on your pants.
3. Your sister comes home from spending the evening with her friends, slams the front door and runs to her room while crying.

Making Inferences from Reading Material

To make inferences from reading material, take two or more details from the reading and see if you can draw a conclusion. Remember, making an inference is not just making a guess even though the answer is not stated in the reading passage. You need to make a judgment that can be supported, just as you could reasonably infer there is a baby in a stroller, because even though you do not know for certain, it is the most likely possibility. For example, at the end of the story "The Five Orange Pips," you are not told what exactly happened to the Lone Star, but you can infer that it was wrecked in a storm based on the other details provided:

- There was a storm.
- The ship did not arrive at its next destination.
- Wreckage with the initials L.S. were seen by other sailors.

You could claim that the ship was taken by pirates, was sunk by a whale, or even that it landed on a deserted island; however, the only reasonable explanation from the facts is the same one implied by Dr. Watson: the ship was destroyed by the storm.

When you are asked to make an inference, go back over the reading and look for hints within the text, such as words that are directly related to the question. Also check for tone: are there words or phrases that indicate whether something is positive or negative? For example, if someone is referred to as being, sharp, friendly, and loyal, you would know that those are positive attributes, whereas if they were referred to as being slovenly, dull, and selfish, those are negative attributes.

In order to make reasonable inferences that help you better comprehend what you read, remember to do the following:

Understand the stated information. You don't necessarily have to identify the main ideas to make a reasonable inference. However, you do need to understand the important vocabulary and facts in the text. So ask yourself, "What do these details seem to show? Is there enough evidence to support my inference?" *"Are there any other possible ways to interpret this?"*

Use your prior knowledge of the situation and your common sense. However, do not ignore the facts in favor of your own personal opinions.

Consider the alternatives so you don't "jump to conclusions." Inferences tend to be "reasonable" when they are the result of "reasoned" thinking, not emotional reactions. When you go to a doctor for advice, he or she will think of different possible diagnoses before settling on the one that is most likely, given your symptoms. If the doctor jumped too quickly to one conclusion, he might give you the wrong treatment. If, as a reader, you jump too quickly to one interpretation of the text, you may not understand what the writer intended to convey.

Example: Imagine that it is a sunny day and you decide to go see a movie. After the movie is over, you step back outside and see that the sky is now cloudy and the streets and sidewalks are all wet. What can we reasonably infer happened?

If you said that it rained while you were in the theater, you're right! But what if you said that everything is wet because a water truck driving down the street was hit by a piano falling from an upper story window, causing the water truck to burst open and spill water all? This is a very unlikely scenario.

Questioning/responding (after you read): After you read a text, or part of a book, you will often be asked to respond to questions about the text. Just as you did when you annotated, you will often be asked to write down main ideas from the text as well as your own personal reactions to the text. **Hint: Read these questions BEFORE you read the text as a pre-reading exercise. This will help you build more SCHEMA (representation of a theory in the form of an outline) about the text.**

? Exercise 1.5.2

Read the following passage, and then determine what you can infer from the passage.

Hybrid cars are good for the environment, but they may not perform as well as cars that run only on gasoline. The Toyota Prius gets great gas mileage and has low emissions, making it a good "green" option. However, many people think that it is unattractive. The Prius also cannot accelerate as quickly as other models and cannot hold as many passengers as larger gas-fueled SUVs. Although they save money on fuel, hybrid cars cost more up front than gas-fueled cars. A new hybrid car can cost almost $3,500 more than the same car configured to run just on gasoline.

Which of the following can you infer from the passage?

1. Hybrid cars are more dangerous than other options.
2. Toyota is making a lot of money from the Prius.

3. Cars that use gasoline are going to destroy the environment.
4. Hybrid cars may not be the best choice for everyone.

Answer

You will notice right away that there is nothing about car safety in the passage at all, so you can eliminate choice A. Choice B could be the answer, since the passage mentions that hybrids cost more to purchase. But is it the most reasonable conclusion?

To be sure, you need to go through all of the answers – don't just stop when you find one that looks okay. You may think that choice C is true; after all, many people want hybrid cars because emissions are harmful to the environment. Although this choice seems accurate, it does not follow from anything in the passage. Choice D could be inferred from the text. If a person had a large family, was short on money or needed a car that could accelerate quickly, then a hybrid might not be the best choice for them.

Now compare choice D with the other possible answer, choice B. Choice B might not be as good an answer because you don't know how much it costs Toyota to make the cars, and you don't know how many they sell, so you can't reasonably infer that they are making a lot of money. Choice D is the correct answer.

? Exercise 1.5.3

Read the following passage, and then determine what you can infer from the passage.

Redwood trees are rare. They are found only on the coastal slopes of Northern California and Oregon, and in China. Redwoods were thought to be extinct in China, but they were rediscovered by a Chinese forester in 1948. These trees can grow hundreds of feet high and live to be thousands of years old. They are endangered due to logging, pollution, and global warming, which is reducing the amount of fog on the coast. Redwoods get their water from the fog.

Which of the following can you infer from the passage:

1. The Chinese logged the Redwoods almost into extinction.
2. Redwood trees will continue to grow taller throughout their whole lives.
3. Using non-recyclable products will kill Redwood trees.
4. Redwoods can only grow in places that get a lot of fog.

Paragraph 2:

Shannelle is a very good baker. Whenever there is a bake sale to raise money for a cause, Shannelle is always asked to make cupcakes or a pie. People say that they only come to the bake sales if they know that Shannelle is making something. She always agreed to bake things because she hated to say no to anyone. One week, her oven broke and she could not bake, so she decided to go for a hike instead. Shannelle enjoyed it so much that she realized she needed to learn to make time for herself, and not just donate all of her free time to charity.

Which of the following can you infer from the passage:

1. Shannelle is a generous person.
2. Shannelle's mother did a good job teaching her how to bake.
3. The people in the community were taking advantage of Shannelle.
4. Shannelle's brother broke her oven so she would get a day off.

Building on Your Knowledge of Inferences

Previously, we covered the basics of **inferences** and **reasonable conclusions**. Now we are going to look at another strategy to help you make valid inferences: the if-then statement. To use an if-then statement, look at the information presented in the reading and see if you could rephrase it into a statement using the words "if" and "then", which establish a cause-and-effect relationship.

For example:

In the 1800s in England, laws were applied differently depending on the gender of the accused. Women could not own land or vote. Women were barred from receiving a death sentence for crimes that a man could be executed for because people thought it would

be too shocking to see a woman hanged publicly. In some places, men could be fined for certain behaviors done in the presence of a woman, such as swearing or spitting, but not if those same behaviors were done only in the presence of men.

What **if-then statements** could we make based on the paragraph above? Let's go through sentence-by-sentence.

1. If we were back in England in the 1800s, then the laws would be applied differently for men and women.
2. If we were back in England in the 1800s, then women could not own land or vote.
3. If a woman committed a capital crime ("capital" meaning one that could earn a death sentence), then she would not be executed.
4. If a woman were hung, then the public would be shocked.
5. If a man swore in the presence of a woman, then he could be fined.

Broken down like this you can see how much easier it is to make logical inferences. Suppose you were asked if a woman who murdered her husband would be executed.

If-then statement #3 would tell you that the answer is "no," even though that information is not directly mentioned in the text. If you were asked if women were involved in government, you would say "no" because you know that they could not vote (#2). If you were asked if men could own real estate, you would say "yes" because #2 indicates that the fact that women could NOT own real estate was different from what men could do.

? Exercise 1.5.4

Now do the same thing with the next paragraph. Write your if-then statements first, then your inferences, and then check your work below.

Many people don't realize that our sun is actually a star. Our sun seems very large because it is so close to us; however, some stars are actually much larger than our sun. Betelguese (pronounced beetle-juice), a star located in the constellation Orion, is much larger than our own sun. In fact, if it were located where our sun is located, its surface would engulf both Earth and Mars. Because other stars are so distant, they appear to be fainter, which is why we cannot see them in the daytime. Betelguese is the 8th brightest star in the night sky. To find Betelguese, first locate the constellation Orion. This star forms his left shoulder.

Answer

These are just examples, but your answers should be similar to them.

If something is far away, then it will appear smaller. If something looks smaller, then it may not be smaller if it is far away.

From here, there are dozens of conclusions you could infer. For example, if you were asked why Star A appears smaller than Star B, you would know it might be because it is actually smaller. Then again, it might also appear smaller because it is farther away. The if-then statement is a useful strategy that can help you make inferences and increase your reading comprehension.

- If a star is much larger than the sun, then it could be Betelguese.
- If a star is fainter than the sun, then it cannot be seen during the day.
- If a star is the 8th brightest in the night sky, then it is Betelguese.
- If you know which constellation a star is in, then it is easier to find.

? Exercise 1.5.5

Write an if-then statement for each sentence in the following paragraphs.

1) Nicaragua is the largest country in Central America. The population in Nicaragua, hovering at approximately 6 million, is multiethnic. Segments of the population include indigenous native tribes from the Mosquito Coast, Europeans, Africans, Asians, and people of Middle East origin. The main language is Spanish although native tribes on the eastern coast speak their native languages, such as Miskito, Sumo, and Rama, as well as English Creole. The mixture of cultural traditions has generated substantial diversity in art, cuisine, literature, and music.

2) Childhood obesity is a condition where excess body fat negatively affects a child's health or well-being. Since methods to directly determine the amount of body fat are difficult, the diagnosis of obesity is often based on the Body Mass Index (BMI).

> Due to the rising prevalence of obesity in children and its many adverse health effects, obesity is being recognized as a serious public health concern. The term "overweight" is often used instead of "obese" for children because it is less stigmatizing.

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1.6: Using Context Clues

Learning Objective

- Identify strategies for using context clues to define words

A **context clue** is a word or phrase in the same sentence or a nearby sentence that can help the reader decipher the meaning of an unfamiliar word.

Context clues consist of all the words and phrases that are near a word. Often, you can define words based on the other words around them. If you're reading a lot of material, you don't have time to look up individual words. Reading words in context helps ensure a high level of focus, whereas breaking your concentration to look up words is distracting.

What is Jabberwocky?

You may be familiar with the poem "Jabberwocky," by Lewis Carroll, written in 1871. Take a look at it here. As you read, or listen to the audio version, consider: how do you know what it means?

"**Jabberwocky**"

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand:
Long time the manxome foe he sought—
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
And stood awhile in thought.

And as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! and through and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

"And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!"
He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

A link to an interactive elements can be found at the bottom of this page.

You can view the transcript for “Jabberwocky by Lewis Carroll- Read by Benedict Cumberbatch” here (opens in new window).

Let’s we share the experience with Alice (of *Alice in Wonderland* fame) after she reads it:

“It seems very pretty,” she said when she had finished it, “but it’s rather hard to understand!” (You see she didn’t like to confess, even to herself, that she couldn’t make it out at all.) “Somehow it seems to fill my head with ideas—only I don’t exactly know what they are! However, somebody killed something: that’s clear, at any rate.”

Even though Lewis Carroll invented many of the words of the poem, we still are able to get a clear sense of the action and adventure in it. There are enough clues around the words, and in the words themselves, for us to envision meaning.

Approaching any new set of vocabulary can be something like reading “Jabberwocky” for the first time. By using context clues, analyzing the structure of the word, and breaking out the trusty dictionary, you’ll soon be master of a whole new range of thoughts —and the words appropriate to express them.

Take a look at the following hotspot activity. You probably already know these three words, but pay attention to how they function in the passage. If you were to come across a much more difficult reading passage, you could use the same method to define unfamiliar words.

? ? Learn by doing

A link to an interactive elements can be found at the bottom of this page.

Context clues can be broken down into six different types, described below. This classification is only one method of thinking about context clues.

Type	Explanation	Example
Definition Clue	A definition clue is a word or phrase that defines the unfamiliar word. Look for words or phrases that introduce a definition for the unfamiliar word, such as is defined as, means, and refers to. Also, look for punctuation marks that set off a definition, such as quotation marks, parentheses, and brackets.	Telepathy is defined as the ability to communicate information to another person without the use of any known senses or communication devices.
Synonym Clue	A synonym clue is a word or phrase that has a similar meaning to the unfamiliar word. Look for words or phrases that introduce a synonym, such as in other words, or, that is to say, and also known as. Also, look for punctuation marks that set off a synonym, such as commas, parentheses, dashes, and brackets.	The cheerleader appeared vapid— spiritless —as he delivered his pitiful performance in front of the stands.
Contrast/Antonym Clue	A contrast clue is a word or phrase that has the opposite meaning of the unfamiliar word. In other words, it's an antonym. Look for words or phrases that introduce a contrast, such as however, but, instead of, on the other hand, on the contrary, whereas, in contrast, unlike, although, and even though.	Lions are solitary creatures that prefer to hunt alone, but hyenas are gregarious creatures that hunt in packs.
Example Clue	An example clue is a word or phrase that provides an example to illustrate the unfamiliar word. Look for words or phrases that introduce examples, such as for example, for instance, to illustrate, like, and such as.	The manager disliked obsequious behavior, such as fawning and kowtowing.
Experience Clue	An experience clue draws upon personal experience or background knowledge to help you infer the meaning of the unfamiliar word. Look for a word, phrase, or sentence that includes a familiar experience or information you already know.	Television audiences are familiar with disingenuous ads that make grand promises.
Adjacent Clue	An adjacent clue is a word or phrase in a nearby sentence that explains the meaning of the unfamiliar word.	Nanotechnology is becoming more widespread in society. As computer chips continue to shrink, manufacturers are placing them in everything from clothing, to building materials, to even the human body.

Let's look at a few more examples:

1. **Definition Clue**
   - The author directly defines the new word within the sentence. This strategy is commonly used in textbook material.

- e.g. “When people contravene – break or violate – a law in Canada, they can expect to face legal consequences.”
- *Explanation:* “Break or violate” is the definition of the word “contravene”.

2. **Synonym Clue**
   - The author uses a word or phrase with a similar meaning to suggest the meaning of the new word.
   - e.g. “Following his death by accidental drug overdose, actor Heath Ledger posthumously received an Oscar for best supporting actor for his portrayal of The Joker in The Dark Knight.”
   - *Explanation:* “Following his death” has a similar meaning to the word “posthumously.”
3. **Antonym Clue**
   - The author uses a word or phrase with an opposite meaning to suggest the meaning of the new word.
   - e.g. “I really don’t appreciate your duplicity. I expect you to give me an honest response from now on.”
   - *Explanation:* “Honest response” has the opposite meaning of “duplicity” since the speaker expects a different behavior from the other person from that point on.
4. **Example Clue**
   - The author provides examples or illustrations of the new word to suggest its meaning.
   - e.g. “Bats, owls, raccoons, and crickets are chiefly nocturnal creatures.”
   - *Explanation:* “Bats, owls, raccoons, and crickets” are examples of “nocturnal creatures” (creatures of the night).
5. **Experience or General Inference Clue**
   - The author provides enough information in a sentence that the word’s meaning can be inferred.
   - e.g. “It would be an egregious mistake to wear a dirty t-shirt and shabby blue jeans to a funeral.”
   - *Explanation:* Although “egregious” is not specifically defined, most people would infer that it is inappropriate or offensive to wear worn-out clothing at a funeral.

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? ? link to Learning

For additional practice using context clues to understand new vocabulary, try these activities from Lethbridge College.

Glossary

context clue: a word or phrase surrounding an unfamiliar word that can help the reader decipher its meaning

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2: Reading - Writing Process

2.1: Steps in the Reading-Writing Process

2.2: Intro to Rhetorical Context (Purpose, Tone, Audience, Content)

2.3: Intro to Rhetorical Modes (Methods of Development)

2.4: The Format of the Academic Essay

2.5: Myths about Writing

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Steps in the Reading-Writing Process

At the end of Chapter 1, we touched briefly on the writing process. Here, we will go into the process in more detail, adding the relevant reading sections as well. Chances are, you have already used this process as a writer. You may also have used it for other types of creative projects, such as developing a sketch into a finished painting or composing a song. The steps listed below apply broadly to any project that involves creative thinking. You come up with ideas (often vague at first), you work to give them some structure, you make a first attempt, you figure out what needs improving, and then you refine it until you are satisfied.

Although the following parts of the process may seem linear, you do have to start somewhere, but expect to go back and forth between the different parts of the process.

- **Reading and Responding:** Here, the student reads, annotating background notes and articles relevant to the topic.
- **Prewriting:** In this step, the writer generates ideas to write about, often by revisiting their annotations, and begins to develop these ideas.
- **Outlining a structure of ideas:** In this step, the writer determines the overall organizational structure of the writing and creates an outline to organize ideas. Usually this step involves some additional fleshing out of the ideas generated in the first step. It's possible that this is done concurrently or after drafting.
- **Writing a rough draft:** In this step, the writer uses the work completed in prewriting to develop a first draft. The draft covers the ideas the writer brainstormed and follows the organizational plan that was laid out in the first step.
- **Revising:** In this step, the writer revisits the draft to review, reorganize, and reshape its content. This stage involves moderate and sometimes major changes: adding or deleting a paragraph, phrasing the main point differently, expanding an important idea, reorganizing content, and so forth.
- **Editing:** In this step, the writer reviews the draft to make editorial changes to the text. Editing involves making changes to improve style, cohesion, and adherence to standard writing conventions—for instance, replacing a vague word with a more precise one or fixing errors in grammar and spelling.
- **Proofreading:** Proofreading is a final check for spelling, punctuation, formatting, and grammar that should be treated separately from the editing process, which is one step before. Once proofreading is complete, the work is a finished piece and ready to share with others.

The table below more fully characterizes these five main processes. As you can see, writing is much more than the actual physical act of sitting at the keyboard and creating a draft.

Table 4.2.1 -- The Writing Process

1. Considering Writing	2. Prewriting	3. Developing Thesis / Topic Sentences / Support	4. Writing the Draft	5. Revising*
may include these components: • identifying purpose • identifying audience • identifying type of writing • identifying context of the writing • ***creating a working thesis for the idea you want to express***	may include these components: • journaling • free writing • brainstorming • mapping • listing • outlining • ***creating a working thesis***	may include these components: • ***creating a working thesis*** • developing ideas with details, examples – additional brainstorming • organizing supporting information into logical groups – developing topic sentences • researching, reading, and verifying sources • Note-takingF	may include these components: • ***creating and/or revising a thesis*** • revising topic sentence • developing paragraphs fully with analysis • organizing and linking paragraphs • writing an introduction • writing a conclusion	may include these components: • **revising thesis for clarity, appropriateness** • **revising for unity between thesis and support** • **revising support: to add/subtract** • **revising for structure: topic sentences, paragraphs, etc.** • **revising in light of writing considerations: purpose, audience, type, context** • **revising for cohesion** • revising for grammatical correctness • revising for language style • revising for appropriate documentation • revising for appropriate layout/ format

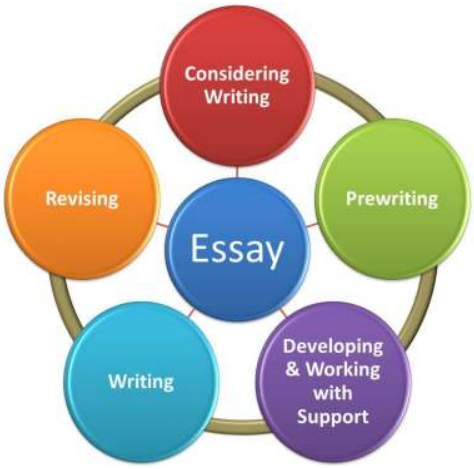


Image from College Writing by Susan Oaks.

One of the first things you may have noticed is the prevalence of that word "**thesis**." Sometimes you start off your writing process with a main idea, argument, or insight (thesis) that you want to write about, and sometimes the main idea or thesis evolves as you

move through the various stages. Know that in any course on college writing, you'll focus consistently on the concept of "thesis" throughout the writing process.

Although the table above implies a sequence to these processes, given that we generally read tables from left to right and from top to bottom, the sequence actually varies from writer to writer, and from writing project to writing project. Often, writing processes are depicted as in the image: a circle that can be accessed at any given point. However you choose to visualize "how writing happens," just remember that it doesn't happen all at once, and it certainly can happen in different ways.

Tip:

Timed Writing

The writing process also applies to timed writing tasks, such as essay exams. Before you begin writing, read the question thoroughly and think about the main points to include in your response. Use scrap paper to sketch out a very brief outline. Keep an eye on the clock as you write your response so you will have time to review it and make any needed changes before turning in your exam.

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Purpose, Audience, Tone, and Content

Imagine reading one long block of text, with each idea blurring into the next. Even if you are reading a thrilling novel or an interesting news article, you will likely lose interest in what the author has to say very quickly. During the writing process, it is helpful to position yourself as a reader. Ask yourself whether you can focus easily on each point you make. One technique that effective writers use is to begin a fresh paragraph for each new idea they introduce. Paragraphs separate ideas into logical, manageable chunks. One paragraph focuses on only one main idea and presents coherent sentences to support that one point. Because all the sentences in one paragraph support the same point, a paragraph may stand on its own. To create longer assignments and to discuss more than one point, writers group together paragraphs. Just like a piece of writing as a whole (see rhetorical analysis), three elements shape the content of each paragraph:

1. **Purpose.** The reason the writer composes the paragraph.
2. **Tone.** The attitude the writer conveys about the paragraph's subject.
3. **Audience.** The individual or group whom the writer intends to address.

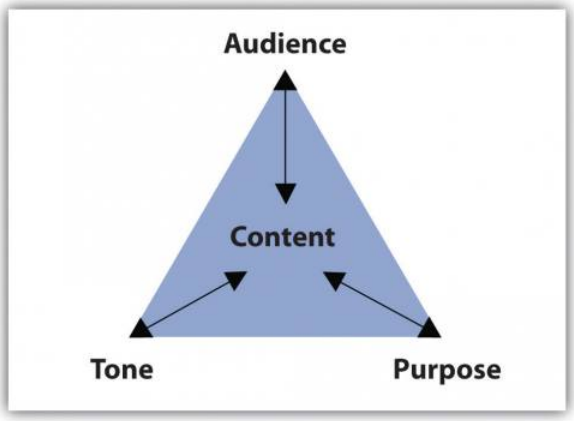


Figure: Amazon.

The assignment's purpose, audience, and tone dictate what the paragraph covers and how it will support one main point. This section covers how purpose, audience, and tone affect reading and writing paragraphs.

Identifying Common Academic Purposes

The purpose for a piece of writing identifies the reason you write a particular document. Basically, the purpose of a piece of writing answers the question "Why?" For example, why write a play? To entertain a packed theater. Why write instructions to the babysitter? To inform them of your schedule and rules. Why write a letter to your congressman? To persuade him to address your community's needs. In academic settings, the reasons for writing fulfill four main purposes: to summarize, to analyze, to synthesize, and to evaluate.

Identifying the Audience

Although the audience for writing assignments—your readers—may not appear in person, they play an equally vital role as does the audience of a play. Even in everyday writing activities, you identify your readers' characteristics, interests, and expectations before making decisions about what you write. In fact, thinking about audience has become so common that you may not even detect the audience-driven decisions. For example, you update your status on a social networking site with the awareness of who will digitally follow the post. If you want to brag about a good grade, you may write the post to please family members. If you want to describe a funny moment, you may write with your friends' senses of humor in mind. Even at work, you send e-mails with an awareness of an unintended receiver who could intercept the message. In other words, being aware of "invisible" readers is a skill you most likely already possess and one you rely on every day.

Selecting an Appropriate Tone

Tone identifies a speaker's attitude toward a subject or another person. You may pick up a person's tone of voice fairly easily in conversation. A friend who tells you about her weekend may speak excitedly about a fun skiing trip. An instructor who means business may speak in a low, slow voice to emphasize her serious mood. Or, a coworker who needs to let off some steam after a

long meeting may crack a sarcastic joke. Just as speakers transmit emotion through voice, writers can transmit through writing a range of attitudes, from excited and humorous to somber and critical. These emotions create connections among the audience, the author, and the subject, ultimately building a relationship between the audience and the text. To stimulate these connections, writers imply their attitudes and feelings with useful devices, such as sentence structure, word choice, punctuation, and formal or informal language. Keep in mind that the writer's attitude should always appropriately match the audience and the purpose. Read the following paragraph and consider the writer's tone. How would you describe the writer's attitude toward wildlife conservation?

> Many species of plants and animals are disappearing right before our eyes. If we don't act fast, it might be too late to save them. Human activities, including pollution, deforestation, hunting, and overpopulation, are devastating the natural environment. Without our help, many species will not survive long enough for our children to see them in the wild. Take the tiger, for example. Today, tigers occupy just 7 percent of their historical range, and many local populations are already extinct. Hunted for their beautiful pelt and other body parts, the tiger population has plummeted from one hundred thousand in 1920 to just a few thousand. Contact your local wildlife conservation society today to find out how you can stop this terrible destruction.

Here, the writer's tone is one of urgency and conveys a call to action. The urgent tone, combined with specific details, makes it more likely that a reader will take action than would a piece of writing that simply gave the facts and did not provide a sense of urgency.

Choosing Appropriate, Interesting Content

Content refers to all the written substance in a document. After selecting an audience and a purpose, you must choose what information will make it to the page. Content may consist of examples, statistics, facts, anecdotes, testimonies, and observations, but no matter the type, the information must be appropriate and interesting for the audience and purpose. An essay written for third graders that summarizes the legislative process, for example, would have to contain succinct and simple content. Content is also shaped by tone. When the tone matches the content, the audience will be more engaged, and you will build a stronger relationship with your readers. Consider that audience of third graders. You would choose simple content that the audience will easily understand, and you would express that content through an enthusiastic tone. The same considerations apply to all audiences and purposes.

Exercise 1

Match the content in the box to the appropriate audience and purpose. On your own sheet of paper, write the correct letter next to the number.

1. Whereas economist Holmes contends that the financial crisis is far from over, the presidential advisor Jones points out that it is vital to catch the first wave of opportunity to increase market share. We can use elements of both experts' visions. Let me explain how.
2. In 2000, foreign money flowed into the United States, contributing to easy credit conditions. People bought larger houses than they could afford, eventually defaulting on their loans as interest rates rose.
3. The Emergency Economic Stabilization Act, known by most of us as the humongous government bailout, caused mixed reactions. Although supported by many political leaders, the statute provoked outrage among grassroots groups. In their opinion, the government was actually rewarding banks for their appalling behavior.

1. Audience: An instructor
    1. Purpose: To analyze the reasons behind the 2007 financial crisis
    2. Content:
2. Audience: Classmates
    1. Purpose: To summarize the effects of the $700 billion government bailout
    2. Content:
3. Audience: An employer
    1. Purpose: To synthesize two articles on preparing businesses for economic recovery
    2. Content:

Collaboration: Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

Exercise 2

Using the assignment, purpose, audience, and tone from Exercise 1, generate a list of content ideas. Remember that content consists of examples, statistics, facts, anecdotes, testimonies, and observations.

My assignment:

My purpose:

My audience:

My tone:

My content ideas:

Managing Your Time

In the first chapter you learned general time-management skills. By combining those skills with what you have learned about the writing process, you can make any writing assignment easier to manage.

When your instructor gives you a writing assignment, write the due date on your calendar. Then work backward from the due date to set aside blocks of time when you will work on the assignment. Always plan at least two sessions of writing time per assignment, so that you are not trying to move from step 1 to step 5 in one evening. Trying to work that fast is stressful, and it does not yield great results. You will plan better, think better, and write better if you space out the steps.

Ideally, you should set aside at least three separate blocks of time to work on a writing assignment: one for prewriting and outlining, one for drafting, and one for revising and editing. Depending on your writing pace and the amount of research you need to do, it may take more. Sometimes those steps may be compressed into just a few days. If you have a couple of weeks to work on a paper, space out the five steps over multiple sessions. Long-term projects, such as research papers, require more time for each step.

Tip:

In certain situations you may not be able to allow time between the different steps of the writing process. For instance, you may be asked to write in class or complete a brief response paper overnight. If the time available is very limited, apply a modified version of the writing process (as you would do for an essay exam). It is still important to give the assignment thought and effort. However, these types of assignments are less formal, and instructors may not expect them to be as polished as formal papers. When in doubt, ask the instructor about expectations, resources that will be available during the writing exam, and if they have any tips to prepare you to effectively demonstrate your writing skills.

Each Monday in Neil's Foundations of Education class, the instructor distributed copies of a current news article on education and assigned students to write a one-and-one-half- to two-page response that was due the following Monday. Together, these weekly assignments counted for 20 percent of the course grade. Although each response took just a few hours to complete, Neil found that he learned more from the reading and got better grades on his writing if he spread the work out as shown in Table 4.5.1.

Table 4.5.1 -- Time-Planning Example

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Article response assigned		Read article, pre-write, and outline response paper		Draft response		Revise and edit response

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SECTION OVERVIEW

2.3: Intro to Rhetorical Modes (Methods of Development)

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.

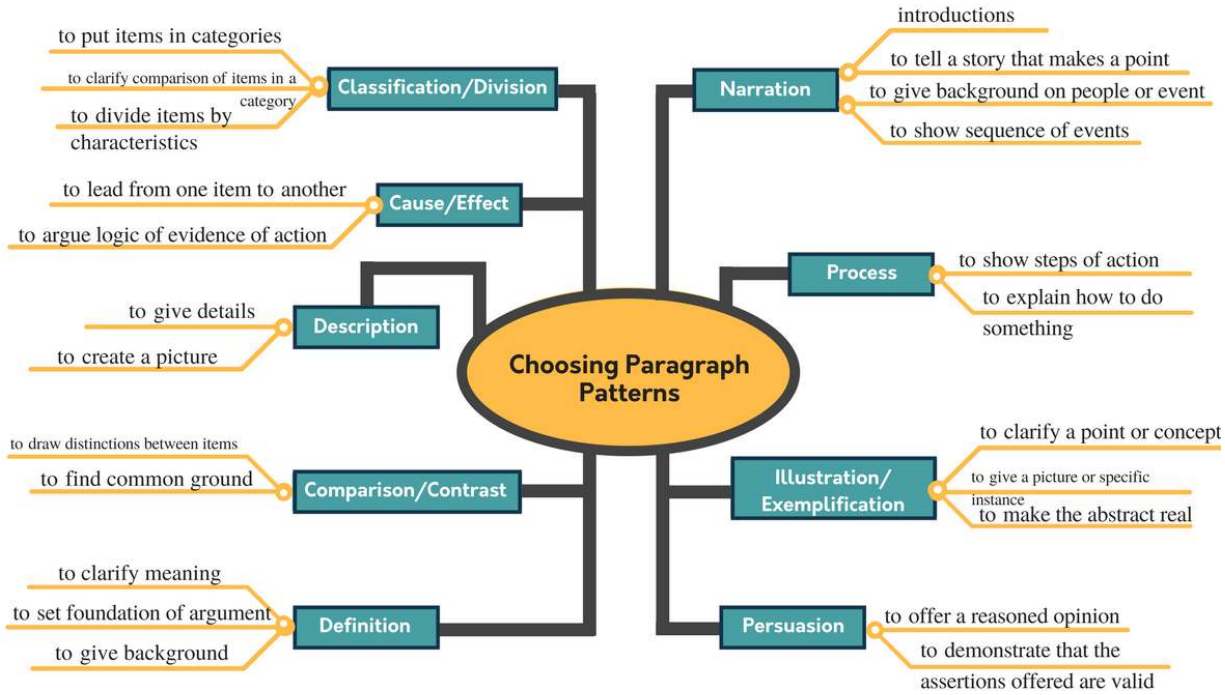


Figure 2.3.1A description of different paragraph patterns

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2.4: The Format of the Academic Essay

Your instructors will also expect you to deliver a paper that contains particular textual features. The following list contains the characteristics of what I have for years called the “critical essay.” Although I can’t claim they will be useful for all essays in college, I hope that these features will help you shape and accomplish successful college essays. Be aware that these characteristics are flexible and not a formula, and any particular assignment might ask for something different.

Characteristics of the Critical Essay

“Critical” here is not used in the sense of “to criticize” as in find fault with. Instead, “critical” is used in the same way “critical thinking” is used. A synonym might be “interpretive” or “analytical.”

1. It is an argument, persuasion essay that in its broadest sense MAKES A POINT and SUPPORTS IT. (We have already discussed this argumentative nature of academic writing at length.)

2. The point (“claim” or “thesis”) of a critical essay is interpretive in nature. That means the point is debatable and open to interpretation, not a statement of the obvious. The thesis statement is a clear, declarative sentence that often works best when it comes at the end of the introduction.

3. Organization: Like any essay, the critical essay should have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion. As you support your point in the body of the essay, you should “divide up the proof,” which means structuring the body around clear primary supports (developed in single paragraphs for short papers or multiple paragraphs for longer papers).

4. Support: (a) The primary source for support in the critical essay is from the text (or sources). The text is the authority, so using quotations is required. (b) The continuous movement of logic in a critical essay is “assert then support; assert then support.” No assertion (general statement that needs proving) should be left without specific support (often from the text(s)). (c) You need enough support to be convincing. In general, that means for each assertion you need at least three supports. This threshold can vary, but invariably one support is not enough.

5. A critical essay will always “document” its sources, distinguishing the use of outside information used inside your text and clarifying where that information came from (following the rules of MLA documentation style or whatever documentation style is required).

6. Whenever the author moves from one main point (primary support) to the next, the author needs to clearly signal to the reader that this movement is happening. This transition sentence works best when it links back to the thesis as it states the topic of that paragraph or section.

7. A critical essay is put into an academic essay format such as the MLA or APA document format.

8. Grammatical correctness: Your essay should have few if any grammatical problems. You’ll want to edit your final draft carefully before turning it in.

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2.5: Myths about Writing

Though I don't imagine an episode of MythBusters will be based on the misconceptions about writing we are about to look at, you'd still be surprised at some of the things people will believe about writing. You may find lurking within you viral elements of these myths—all of these lead to problems in writing.

Myth #1: The "Paint by Numbers" myth

Some writers believe they must perform certain steps in a particular order to write "correctly." Rather than being a lock-step linear process, writing is "recursive." That means we cycle through and repeat the various activities of the writing process many times as we write.

Myth #2: Writers only start writing when they have everything figured out

Writing is not like sending a fax! Writers figure out much of what they want to write as they write it. Rather than waiting, get some writing on the page—even with gaps or problems. You can come back to patch up rough spots.

Myth #3: Perfect first drafts

We put unrealistic expectations on early drafts, either by focusing too much on the impossible task of making them perfect (which can put a cap on the development of our ideas), or by making too little effort because we don't care or know about their inevitable problems. Nobody writes perfect first drafts; polished writing takes lots of revision.

Myth #4: Some got it; I don't—the genius fallacy

When you see your writing ability as something fixed or out of your control (as if it were in your genetic code), then you won't believe you can improve as a writer and are likely not to make any efforts in that direction. With effort and study, though, you can improve as a writer. I promise.

Myth #5: Good grammar is good writing

When people say "I can't write," what they often mean is they have problems with grammatical correctness. Writing, however, is about more than just grammatical correctness. Good writing is a matter of achieving your desired effect upon an intended audience. Plus, as we saw in myth #3, no one writes perfect first drafts.

Myth #6: The Five Paragraph Essay

Some people say to avoid it at all costs, while others believe no other way to write exists. With an introduction, three supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion, the five paragraph essay is a format you should know, but one which you will outgrow. You'll have to gauge the particular writing assignment to see whether and how this format
is useful for you.

Myth #7: Never use "I"

Adopting this formal stance of objectivity implies a distrust (almost fear) of informality and often leads to artificial, puffed-up prose. Although some writing situations will call on you to avoid using "I" (for example, a lab report), much college writing can be done in a middle, semi-formal style where it is ok to use "I."

The Academic Writing Situation

Now that we've dispelled some of the common myths that many writers have as they enter a college classroom, let's take a moment to think about the academic writing situation. The biggest problem I see in freshman writers is a poor sense of the writing situation in general. To illustrate this problem, let's look at the difference between speaking and writing.

When we speak, we inhabit the communication situation bodily in three dimensions, but in writing we are confined within the two-dimensional setting of the flat page (though writing for the web—or multimodal writing—is changing all that). Writing resembles having a blindfold over our eyes and our hands tied behind our backs: we can't see exactly whom we're talking to or where we are. Separated from our audience in place and time, we imaginatively have to create this context. Our words on the page are silent, so we must use punctuation and word choice to communicate our tone. We also can't see our audience to gauge how our

communication is being received or if there will be some kind of response. It's the same space we share right now as you read this essay. Novice writers often write as if they were mumbling to themselves in the corner with no sense that their writing will be read by a reader or any sense of the context within which their communication will be received.

What's the moral here? Developing your "writer's sense" about communicating within the writing situation is the most important thing you should learn in freshman composition.

Figure 1, depicting the writing situation, presents the best image I know of describing all the complexities involved in the writing situation.

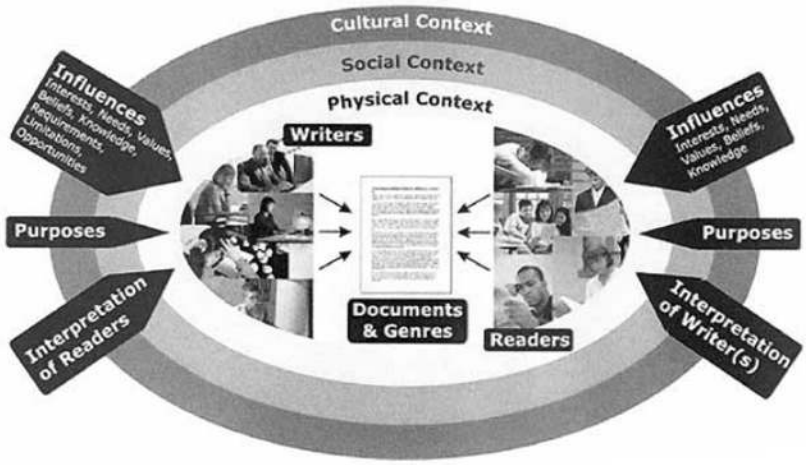


Figure 1. Source: "A Social Model of Writing." Writing@CSU. 2010. Web. 10 March 2010. Used by permission from Mike Palmquist.

Looking More Closely at the "Academic Writing" Situation

Writing in college is a fairly specialized writing situation, and it has developed its own codes and conventions that you need to have a keen awareness of if you are going to write successfully in college. Let's break down the writing situation in college:

Who's your audience?	Primarily the professor and possibly your classmates (though you may be asked to include a secondary outside audience).
What's the occasion or context?	An assignment given by the teacher within a learning context and designed to have you learn and demonstrate your learning.
What's your message?	It will be your learning or the interpretation gained from your study of the subject matter.
What's your purpose?	To show your learning and get a good grade (or to accomplish the goals of the writing assignment).
What documents/ genres are used?	The essay is the most frequent type of document used.

So far, this list looks like nothing new. You've been writing in school toward teachers for years. What's different in college? Lee Ann Carroll, a professor at Pepperdine University, performed a study of student writing in college and had this description of the kind of writing you will be doing in college:

> What are usually called 'writing assignments' in college might more accurately be called 'literacy tasks' because they require much more than the ability to construct correct sentences or compose neatly organized paragraphs with topic sentences. . . . Projects calling for high levels of critical literacy in college typically require knowledge of research skills, ability to read

complex texts, understanding of key disciplinary concepts, and strategies for synthesizing, analyzing, and responding critically to new information, usually within a limited time frame. (3–4)

Academic writing is always a form of evaluation that asks you to demonstrate knowledge and show proficiency with certain disciplinary skills of thinking, interpreting, and presenting. Writing the paper is never "just" the writing part. To be successful in this kind of writing, you must be completely aware of what the professor expects you to do and accomplish with that particular writing task. For a moment, let's explore more deeply the elements of this college writing "literacy task."

Knowledge of Research Skills

Perhaps up to now research has meant going straight to Google and Wikipedia, but college will require you to search for and find more in-depth information. You'll need to know how to find information in the library, especially what is available from online databases which contain scholarly articles. Researching is also a process, so you'll need to learn how to focus and direct a research project and how to keep track of all your source information. Realize that researching represents a crucial component of most all college writing assignments, and you will need to devote lots of work to this researching.

The Ability to Read Complex Texts

Whereas your previous writing in school might have come generally from your experience, college writing typically asks you to write on unfamiliar topics. Whether you're reading your textbook, a short story, or scholarly articles from research, your ability to write well will be based upon the quality of your reading. In addition to the labor of close reading, you'll need to think critically as you read. That means separating fact from opinion, recognizing biases and assumptions, and making inferences. Inferences are how we as readers connect the dots: an inference is a belief (or statement) about something unknown made on the basis of something known. You smell smoke; you infer fire. They are conclusions or interpretations that we arrive at based upon the known factors we discover from our reading. When we, then, write to argue for these interpretations, our job becomes to get our readers to make the same inferences we have made.

The Understanding of Key Disciplinary Concepts

Each discipline whether it is English, Psychology, or History has its own key concepts and language for describing these important ways of understanding the world. Don't fool yourself that your professors' writing assignments are asking for your opinion on the topic from just your experience. They want to see you apply and use these concepts in your writing. Though different from a multiple-choice exam, writing similarly requires you to demonstrate your learning. So whatever writing assignment you receive, inspect it closely for what concepts it asks you to bring into your writing.

Strategies for Synthesizing, Analyzing, and Responding Critically to New Information

You need to develop the skill of a seasoned traveler who can be dropped in any city around the world and get by. Each writing assignment asks you to navigate through a new terrain of information, so you must develop ways for grasping new subject matter in order, then, to use it in your writing. We have already seen the importance of reading and research for these literacy tasks, but beyond laying the information out before you, you will need to learn ways of sorting and finding meaningful patterns in this information.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

3: The Writing Process

If you think that a blank sheet of paper or a blinking cursor on the computer screen is a scary sight, you are not alone. Many writers, students, and employees find that beginning to write can be intimidating. When faced with a blank page, however, experienced writers remind themselves that writing, like other everyday activities, is a process. Every process, from writing to cooking, bike riding, and learning to use a new cell phone, will get significantly easier with practice.

Just as you need a recipe, ingredients, and the proper tools to cook a delicious meal, you also need a plan, resources, and adequate time to create a well-written composition. In other words, writing is a process that requires following steps and using strategies to accomplish your goals.

Effective writing can be simply described as good ideas that are expressed well and arranged in the proper order. This chapter will give you the chance to work on all these important aspects of writing.

3.1: Prewriting
3.2: Outlining
3.3: Drafting Thesis Statements
3.4: Drafting (Part 1)
3.5: Drafting (Part 2)
3.6: Revising and Editing (Part 1)
3.7: Revising and Editing (Part 2)

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3.1: Prewriting

Loosely defined, prewriting includes all the writing strategies employed **before** writing your first draft. Although many more prewriting strategies exist, the following section covers: using experience and observations, reading, freewriting, asking questions, listing, and clustering/idea mapping. Using the strategies in the following section can help you overcome the fear of the blank page and confidently begin the writing process.

Choosing a Topic

In addition to understanding that writing is a process, writers also understand that choosing a good general topic for an assignment is an essential first step. Sometimes your instructor will give you an idea to begin an assignment, and other times your instructor will ask you to come up with a topic on your own. A good topic not only covers what an assignment will be about, but it also fits the assignment's **purpose** and its **audience**.

In the next few sections, you will follow a writer named Mariah as she explores and develops her essay's topic and focus. You will also be planning one of your own. The first important step is for you to tell yourself **why** you are writing (to inform, to explain, or some other purpose) and **for whom** you are writing. Write your purpose and your audience on your own sheet of paper, and keep the paper close by as you read and complete exercises in this chapter and write the first draft.

My purpose: _____

My audience: _____

Prewriting Techniques: Brainstorming

Brainstorming refers to writing techniques used to:

- Generate topic ideas
- Transfer your abstract thoughts on a topic into more concrete ideas on paper (or digitally on a computer screen)
- Organize the ideas you have generated to discover a focus and develop a working thesis

Although brainstorming techniques can be helpful in all stages of the writing process, you will have to find the techniques that are most effective for your writing needs. The following general strategies can be used when initially deciding on a topic, or for narrowing the focus for a topic: **Freewriting, Asking questions, Listing**, and **Clustering/Idea Mapping**.

In the initial stage of the writing process, it is fine if you choose a general topic. Later you can use brainstorming strategies to narrow the focus of the topic.

Experience and Observations

When selecting a topic, you may want to consider something that interests you or something based on your own life and personal experiences. Even everyday observations can lead to interesting topics. After writers think about their experiences and observations, they often take notes on paper to better develop their thoughts. These notes help writers discover what they have to say about their topic.

Reading

Reading plays a vital role in *all* the stages of the writing process, but it first figures in the development of ideas and topics. Different kinds of documents can help you choose and develop a topic. For example, a magazine cover advertising the latest research on the threat of global warming may catch your eye in the supermarket. This subject may interest you, and you may consider global warming as a topic. Or maybe a novel's courtroom drama sparks your curiosity of a particular lawsuit or legal controversy.

After you choose a topic, critical reading is essential to the development of a topic. While reading almost any document, you evaluate the author's point of view by thinking about his main idea and his support. When you judge the author's argument, you discover more about not only the author's opinion but also your own. If this step already seems daunting, remember that even the best writers need to use prewriting strategies to generate ideas.

Prewriting strategies depend on your critical reading skills. Reading, prewriting and brainstorming exercises (and outlines and drafts later in the writing process) will further develop your topic and ideas. As you continue to follow the writing process, you will see how Mariah uses critical reading skills to assess her own prewriting exercises.

Freewriting

Freewriting is an exercise in which you write freely about any topic for a set amount of time (usually five to seven minutes). During the time limit, you may jot down **any** thoughts that come to your mind. Try not to worry about grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Instead, write as quickly as you can without stopping. If you get stuck, just copy the same word or phrase over and over again until you come up with a new thought.

Writing often comes easier when you have a personal connection with the topic you have chosen. Remember, to generate ideas in your freewriting, you may also think about readings that you have enjoyed or that have challenged your thinking. Doing this may lead your thoughts in interesting directions.

Quickly recording your thoughts on paper will help you discover what you have to say about a topic. When writing quickly, try not to doubt or question your ideas. Allow yourself to write freely and unselfconsciously. Once you start writing with few limitations, you may find you have more to say than you first realized. Your flow of thoughts can lead you to discover even more ideas about the topic. **Freewriting** may even lead you to discover another topic that excites you even more.

Look at Mariah's example below. The instructor allowed the members of the class to choose their own topics, and Mariah thought about her experiences as a communications major. She used this freewriting exercise to help her generate more concrete ideas from her own experience.

✔ Example 3.1.1: freewriting

Last semester my favorite class was about mass media. We got to study radio and television. People say we watch too much television, and even though I try not to, I end up watching a few reality shows just to relax. Everyone has to relax! It's too hard to relax when something like the news (my husband watches all the time) is on because it's too scary now. Too much bad news, not enough good news. News. Newspapers I don't read as much anymore. I can get the headlines on my homepage when I check my email. Email could be considered mass media too these days. I used to go to the video store a few times a week before I started school, but now the only way I know what movies are current is to listen for the Oscar nominations. We have cable but we can't afford movie channels, so I sometimes look at older movies late at night. UGH. A few of them get played again and again until you're sick of them. My husband thinks I'm crazy, but sometimes there are old black-and-whites on from the 1930s and '40s. I could never live my life in black-and-white. I like the home decorating shows and love how people use color on their walls. Makes rooms look so bright. When we buy a home, if we ever can, I'll use lots of color. Some of those shows even show you how to do major renovations by yourself. Knock down walls and everything. Not for me--or my husband. I'm handier than he is. I wonder if they could make a reality show about us?

? Exercise 1

Freewrite about one event you have recently experienced. With this event in mind, write without stopping for five minutes. After you finish, read over what you wrote. Does anything stand out to you as a good general topic to write about? One of the following prompts may help you get started:

- A celebration
- The first day of a job or the first day of school
- An illness
- The loss of a friend or relative
- Finding a place to live

Asking Questions

Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?

In everyday situations, you pose these kinds of questions to get more information. **Who** will be my partner for the project? **When** is the next meeting? **Why** is my car making that odd noise? When faced with a writing assignment, you might ask yourself, "How do I begin?"

You seek the answers to these questions to gain knowledge, to better understand your daily experiences, and to plan for the future. Asking these types of questions will also help you with the writing process. As you choose your topic, answering these questions can help you revisit the ideas you already have and generate new ways to think about your topic. You may also discover aspects of the topic that are unfamiliar to you and that you would like to learn more about. All these idea-gathering techniques will help you plan for future work on your assignment.

When Mariah reread her freewriting notes, she found she had rambled and her thoughts were disjointed. She realized that the topic that interested her most was the one she started with, the media. She then decided to explore that topic by asking herself questions about it. Her purpose was to refine media into a topic she felt comfortable writing about. To see how asking questions can help you choose a topic, take a look at the following chart that Mariah completed to record her questions and answers. She asked herself the questions that reporters and journalists use to gather information for their stories. The questions are often called the **5WH** questions, after their initial letters.

✔ Example **3.1.2**: "Asking Questions"

Who? I use media. Students teachers, parents, employers and employees-- almost everyone uses media.

What? The media can be a lot of things-- television, radio, email (I think), newspapers, magazines, books.

Where? The media is almost everywhere now. It's at home, at work, in cars, and even on cell phones.

When? The media has been around for a long time, but it seems a lot more important now.

Why? Hmm. This is a good question. I don't know why there is mass media. Maybe we have it because we have the technology now. Or people live far away from their families and have to stay in touch.

How? Well, media is possible because of the technology inventions, but I don't know how they all work.

? Exercise 2

Using the prompt you chose to practice freewriting in Exercise 1, continue to explore the topic by answering the 5WH questions, as Mariah does in the above example.

Narrowing the focus

After rereading her essay assignment, Mariah realized her general topic, mass media, is too broad for her class's short paper requirement. Three pages are not enough to cover all the concerns in mass media today. Mariah also realized that although her readers are other communications majors who are interested in the topic, they might want to read a paper about a particular issue in mass media.

The prewriting techniques of brainstorming by freewriting and asking questions helped Mariah think more about her topic, but the following prewriting strategies can help her (and you) narrow the focus of the topic:

- Listing
- Clustering/Idea Mapping

Narrowing the focus means breaking up the topic into subtopics, or more specific points. Generating lots of subtopics will help you eventually select the ones that fit the assignment and appeal to you and your audience.

Listing

Listing is a term often applied to describe any prewriting technique writers use to generate ideas on a topic, including freewriting and asking questions. You can make a list on your own or in a group with your classmates. Start with a blank sheet of paper (or a blank computer screen) and write your general topic across the top. Underneath your topic, make a list of more specific ideas. Think of your general topic as a broad category and the list items as things that fit in that category. Often you will find that one

item can lead to the next, creating a flow of ideas that can help you narrow your focus to a more specific paper topic. The following is Mariah's brainstorming list:

Mass Media

Magazines	DVD	Smart Phones
Newspapers	Gaming/Video	Text Messages
Broadcasting	Games	Tiny Cameras
Radio	Internet	GPS
Television	Cell Phones	

From this list, Mariah could narrow her focus to a particular technology under the broad category of "mass media."

Idea Mapping

Idea mapping, sometimes called clustering or webbing, allows you to visualize your ideas on paper using circles, lines, and arrows. This technique is also known as clustering because ideas are broken down and clustered, or grouped together. Many writers like this method because the shapes show how the ideas relate or connect, and writers can find a focused topic from the connections mapped. Using idea mapping, you might discover interesting connections between topics that you had not thought of before.

To create an idea map:

1. Start by writing your general topic in a circle in the center of a blank sheet of paper. Moving out from the main circle, write down as many concepts and terms ideas you can think of related to your general topic in blank areas of the page. Jot down your ideas quickly--do not overthink your responses. Try to fill the page.
2. Once you've filled the page, circle the concepts and terms that are relevant to your topic. Use lines or arrows to categorize and connect closely related ideas. Add and cluster as many ideas as you can think of.

To continue brainstorming, Mariah tried idea mapping. Review the following idea map that Mariah created:

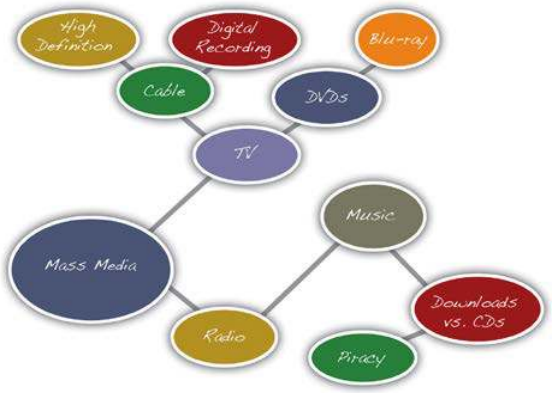


Figure **3.1.1**

Notice Mariah's largest circle contains her general topic, mass media. Then, the general topic branches into two subtopics written in two smaller circles: television and radio. The subtopic television branches into even more specific topics: cable and DVDs. From there, Mariah drew more circles and wrote more specific ideas: high definition and digital recording from cable and Blu-ray from DVDs. The radio topic led Mariah to draw connections between music, downloads versus CDs, and, finally, piracy. From this idea map, Mariah saw she could consider narrowing the focus of her mass media topic to the more specific topic of music piracy.

Topic Checklist: Developing a Good Topic

- Am I interested in this topic?
- Would my audience be interested?

- Do I have prior knowledge or experience with this topic? If so, would I be comfortable exploring this topic and sharing my experience?
- Do I want to learn more about this topic?
- Is this topic specific?
- Does it fit the length of the assignment?

Prewriting strategies are a vital first step in the writing process. First, they help you choose a broad topic, and then they help you narrow the focus of the topic to a more specific idea. An effective topic ensures that you are ready for the next step: Developing a working thesis and planning the organization of your essay by creating an outline.

Exercise 3

Return to the topic explored in Exercise 2 through the prewriting technique of answering questions (5WH). Explore and narrow the topic further by practicing the prewriting techniques of Brainstorming (listing) and Idea Mapping. Allow yourself no more than five to seven minutes for each technique.

Collaboration: Share your results with a classmate or in small groups, and compare answers. Offer feedback to your classmate(s) on what you find interesting about his or her topic.

Key Takeaways

- All writers rely on steps and strategies to begin the writing process.
- The steps in the writing process are prewriting, outlining, writing a rough draft, revising, and editing.
- Writers often choose a general topic first and then narrow the focus to a more specific topic.
- Prewriting includes any brainstorming technique used to generate ideas, narrow the focus of abstract thoughts and ideas, and transfer them into written form.
- A good topic interests the writer, appeals to the audience, and fits the purpose of the writing project.

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3.2: Outlining

Purpose of an Outline

Once your topic has been chosen, your ideas have been generated through brainstorming techniques, and you've developed a working thesis, the next step in the prewriting stage is to create an outline. Sometimes called a "blueprint," or "plan" for your paper, an outline helps writers organize their thoughts and categorize the main points they wish to make in an order that makes sense.

Creating an outline is an important step in the writing process!

The purpose of an outline is to help you organize your paper by checking to see if and how your ideas connect to each other, or whether you need to flesh out a point or two.

No matter the length of the paper, from a three-page weekly assignment to a 50-page senior thesis, outlines can help you see the overall picture.

Having an outline also helps prevent writers from "getting stuck" when writing the first draft of an essay.

A well-developed outline will show the essential elements of an essay:

- thesis of essay
- main idea of each body paragraph
- evidence/support offered in each paragraph to substantiate the main points

A well-developed outline breaks down the parts of your thesis in a clear, hierarchical manner. Writing an outline **before** beginning an essay helps the writer organize ideas generated through brainstorming and/or research. In short, a well-developed outline makes your paper easier to write.

The formatting of any outline is not arbitrary; the system of formatting and number/letter designations creates a visual hierarchy of the ideas, or points, being made in the essay.

Major points, in other words, should not be buried in subtopic levels.

Types of Outlines

Alphanumeric Outlines

This is the most common type of outline used and is usually instantly recognizable to most people. The formatting follows these characters, in this order:

Level 1: Roman Numerals (I, II, III, IV, V, etc.)

Level 2: Capitalized Letters (A, B, C, D, E, etc.)

Level 3: Arabic Numerals (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.)

Level 4: Lowercase Letters (a, b, c, d, e, etc.)

Example 3.2.1:

I. *(Main point)* Lowering the speed limit to 55 mph on Interstate highways is a cost effective way to reduce pollution and greenhouse gases

A. *(Supporting detail)* Gas mileage significantly decreases at speeds over 55 mph

1. *(Supporting detail for sub-point)* Slowing down from 65 mph to 55 mph can increase MPG by as much as 15 percent

a. *(Additional explanation/support for supporting detail)* Each 5 mph driven over 60 mph is like paying an additional $0.21 per gallon for gas (at $3.00 per gallon).

If the outline needs to subdivide beyond these divisions, use Arabic numerals inside parentheses and then lowercase letters inside parentheses.

Decimal Outlines

The decimal outline follows the same levels of indentation when formatting to indicate the hierarchy of ideas/points as the alphanumeric outline. The added benefit of decimal notation, however, is that it clearly shows, through the decimal breakdown, how each progressive level relates to the larger whole.

Example 3.2.2:

1. *(Main point)* Lowering the speed limit on all Interstate highways to 55 mph would create a significant, cost free reduction in air pollution.
    1. *(Supporting detail)* Gas consumption significantly increases at speeds over 55 mph.
        1. (Supporting detail for sub-point) Slowing down from 65 mph to 55 mph can increase your MPG by as much as 15 percent, and thereby eliminate 15 percent of carbon emissions.
            1. *(Additional explanation/support for supporting detail)* According to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), "as a rule of thumb, each 5 mph driven over 60 mph is like paying an additional $0.21 per gallon for gas (at $3.00 per gallon)."

Micro and Macro Outlines

The indentation/formatting of a micro (full sentence) or macro (topic) outline is essentially the same as alphanumeric/decimal outlines. The difference between micro and macro outlines lies in the specificity and depth of the content.

Micro outlines focus on the "micro," the drilled-down specific details of the essay's content. They are particularly useful when the topic you are discussing is complex in nature. When creating a micro outline, it can also be useful to insert the quotations you plan to include in the essay (with citations) and subsequent analyses of quotes. Taking this extra step helps ensure that you have enough support for your ideas, as well as reminding writers to actually analyze and discuss quotations, rather than simply inserting quotes and moving on. While time-consuming to create, micro outlines can be seen as basically creating the first rough draft of an essay.

Macro outlines, in contrast, focus on the "big picture" of an essay's main points and support by using short phrases or keywords to indicate the focus and content at each level of the essay's development. A macro outline is useful when writing about a variety of ideas and issues where the ordering of points is more flexible. Macro outlines are also especially helpful when writing timed essays, or essay exam questions--or any rhetorical situation where writers need to quickly get their ideas down in an organized essay format.

Example 3.2.3: Micro/Full-Sentence Outline

I. *(Main point)* Lowering the speed limit on all Interstate highways to 55 mph would create a significant, cost free reduction in air pollution.

A. *(Supporting detail)* Gas consumption significantly increases at speeds over 55 mph.

1. *(Supporting detail for sub-point)* Slowing down from 65 mph to 55 mph can increase your car's MPG by as much as 15 percent, and thereby eliminate15 percent of carbon emissions.

a. *(Additional explanation/support for supporting detail)* According to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), "as a rule of thumb, each 5 mph driven over 60 mph is like paying an additional $0.21 per gallon for gas (at $3.00 per gallon)".

Example 3.2.4: Macro/Topic Outline

I. *(Main point)* Lowering the speed limit on all Interstate highways to 55 mph would create a significant, cost free reduction in air pollution.

A. *(Supporting detail)* Increase of Consumption over 55 mph

1. *(Supporting detail for sub-point)* Consumption and carbon emissions

a. *(Additional explanation/support for supporting detail)* Amount of money saved

Creating an Outline

Identify your topic: Put the topic in your own words in with a single sentence or phrase to help you stay on topic.

Determine your main points. What are the main points you want to make to convince your audience? Refer back to the prewriting/brainstorming exercise of answering 5WH questions: "why or how is the main topic important?" Using your brainstorming notes, you should be able to create a working thesis.

List your main points/ideas in a logical order. You can always change the order later as you evaluate your outline.

Create sub-points for each major idea. Typically, each time you have a new number or letter, there need to be at least two points (i.e. if you have an A, you need a B; if you have a 1, you need a 2; etc.). Though perhaps frustrating at first, it is indeed useful because it forces you to think hard about each point; if you can't create two points, then reconsider including the first in your paper, as it may be extraneous information that may detract from your argument.

Evaluate: Review your organizational plan, your blueprint for your paper. Does each paragraph have a controlling idea/topic sentence? Is each point adequately supported? Look over what you have written. Does it make logical sense? Is each point suitably fleshed out? Is there anything included that is unnecessary?

Overview: View the YouTube video on "Outlining" from the University of North Carolina's Online Writing Lab:

? Exercise 4

1. Create a sentence outline from the following introductory paragraph in alphanumeric format:

The popularity of knitting is cyclical, rising and falling according to the prevailing opinion of women's places in society. Though internationally a unisex hobby, knitting is pervasively thought of as a woman's hobby in the United States. Knitting is currently enjoying a boost in popularity as traditionally minded women pick up the craft while women who enjoy subverting traditional gender roles have also picked up the needles to reclaim "the lost domestic arts" and give traditionally feminine crafts the proper respect. American men are also picking up the needles in greater numbers, with men's knitting guilds and retreats nationwide. This rise in popularity has made the receiving of hand-knit items special, and many people enjoy receiving these long-lasting, painstakingly crafted items. For any knitters, the perfect gift starts by choosing the perfect yarn. Choosing the perfect yarn for a knitting project relies on the preferences of the person for whom the project is being made, the availability of the yarn, and the type of yarn recommended by the pattern.

What is the thesis? How is the topic introduced? Is there a hierarchy of supporting points?

2. Now create your own outline based on the topic you developed in Exercise 3.

✔ Example 3.2.5: 3-Level Alphanumeric Outline

Outline

Thesis: Making the perfect egg omelet requires proper preparation and skillful cooking technique.

I. Making the perfect egg omelet requires proper preparation.
   A. The cook must have adequate utensils.
      1. A heavy, Teflon-coated frying pan gives even heat and prevents burning.
      2. A plastic spatula prevents the cook from scratching the frying pan.
   B. The cook must select fresh ingredients.
      1. Fresh eggs make a fluffier omelet than eggs that have aged.
      2. Sweet milk blends into the egg batter more evenly than sour milk.
      3. Fresh vegetable oil is necessary to avoid giving the omelet a greasy flavor and texture.
      4. Newly cracked pepper and sea salt add extra zest to the egg batter.

II. Making the perfect egg omelet requires skillful cooking techniques.
   A. The cook must prepare the egg batter quickly.

1. The eggs must be beaten with a whisk until they are fluffy.
2. The milk and seasonings must be whisked into the egg batter before the eggs go flat.

B. The cook must fry the egg batter with care.

1. The egg batter must be poured into the frying pan as soon as the oil is hot.
2. The omelet must be turned in the pan only once as soon as the batter sets on top.

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3.3: Drafting Thesis Statements

To be effective, all support in an essay must work together to convey a central point; otherwise, an essay can fall into the trap of being out of order and confusing. Just as a **topic sentence** focuses and unifies a single paragraph, the **thesis statement** focuses and unifies an entire essay. This statement is like a signpost that signals the essay's destination; it tells the reader the point you want to make in your essay, while the essay itself supports that point.

Because writing is not a linear process, you may find that the best thesis statement develops near the end of your first draft; however, creating a draft or working thesis early in the writing project helps give the drafting process clear direction. You should form your thesis before you begin to organize an essay, but you may find that it needs revision as the essay develops.

A thesis is not just a topic, but rather the writer's comment or interpretation of the question or subject. For whatever topic you select (for example, school uniforms, social networking), you must ask yourself, "What do I want to say about it?" Asking and then answering this question is vital to forming a thesis that is precise, forceful, and confident.

In the majority of essays, a thesis is one sentence long and appears toward the end of the introduction. It is specific and focuses on one to three points of a single idea—points that are able to be demonstrated in the body. It forecasts the content of the essay and suggests how you will organize your information. Remember that a thesis statement does not summarize an issue but rather dissects it.

Working Thesis Statements

A strong thesis statement must have the following qualities:

- **It must be arguable**: A thesis statement must state a point of view or judgment about a topic. An established fact is not considered arguable.
- **It must be supportable**: The thesis statement must contain a point of view that can be supported with evidence (reasons, facts, examples).
- **It must be specific**: A thesis statement must be precise enough to allow for a coherent argument and remain focused on the topic.

Example 3.3.1: Appropriate Thesis Statements

1. Closing all American borders for a period of five years is one solution that will tackle illegal immigration.
2. Compared to an absolute divorce, no-fault divorce is less expensive, promotes fairer settlements, and reflects a more realistic view of the causes for marital breakdown.
3. Exposing children from an early age to the dangers of drug abuse is a sure method of preventing future drug addicts.
4. In today's crumbling job market, a high school diploma is not significant enough education to land a stable, lucrative job.
5. Shakespeare's use of dramatic irony in Romeo and Juliet spoils the outcome for the audience and weakens the plot.
6. J. D. Salinger's character in Catcher in the Rye, Holden Caulfield, is a confused rebel who voices his disgust with phonies, yet acts like a phony on many occasions.
7. The societal and personal struggles of Troy Maxson in the play Fences symbolize the challenge of black males who lived through segregation and integration in the United States.

Pitfalls to Avoid:

- A thesis is weak when it is simply a declaration of your subject or a description of what you will discuss in your essay.
  - **Weak thesis statement**: My paper will explain why imagination is more important than knowledge.
- A thesis is weak when it makes an unreasonable or outrageous claim or insults the opposing side.
  - **Weak thesis statement**: Religious radicals across America are trying to legislate their Puritanical beliefs by banning required high school books.
- A thesis is weak when it contains an obvious fact or something that no one can disagree with or provides a dead end.
  - **Weak thesis statement**: Advertising companies use sex to sell their products.
- A thesis is weak when the statement is too broad.

- **Weak thesis statement**: The life of Abraham Lincoln was long and challenging.

? Exercise 10

Read the following thesis statements. On a separate piece of paper, identify each as weak or strong. For those that are weak, list the reasons why. Then revise the weak statements so that they conform to the requirements of a strong thesis.

1. The subject of this paper is my experience with ferrets as pets.
2. The government must expand its funding for research on renewable energy resources in order to prepare for the impending end of oil.
3. Edgar Allan Poe was a poet who lived in Baltimore during the nineteenth century.
4. In this essay, I will give you lots of reasons why slot machines should not be legalized in Baltimore.
5. Despite his promises during his campaign, President Kennedy took few executive measures to support civil rights legislation.
6. Because many children's toys have potential safety hazards that could lead to injury, it is clear that not all children's toys are safe.
7. My experience with young children has taught me that I want to be a disciplinary parent because I believe that a child without discipline can be a parent's worst nightmare.

Thesis Statement Revision

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.

Ways to Revise Your Thesis:

You can cut down on irrelevant aspects and revise your thesis by taking the following steps:

- **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.
  - **Explanation**: 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 his or her research and gain more direction in his or her writing. The revised thesis makes a more specific statement about success and what it means to work hard.
- **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.
  - **Explanation**: 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* and more accurately defines his or her stance, which will better guide the writing of the essay.
- **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**: The Kansas City legislature cannot afford to pay its educators, resulting in job cuts and resignations in a district that sorely needs highly qualified and dedicated teachers.

- **Explanation**: 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. Asking questions will help you replace the linking verb with an action verb, thus forming a stronger thesis statement 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?

- **Omit any general claims** that are hard to support.
  - **Working thesis**: Today's teenage girls are too sexualized.
  - **Revised thesis**: Teenage girls who are captivated by the sexual images on MTV are conditioned to believe that a woman's worth depends on her sensuality, a feeling that harms their self-esteem and behavior.
  - **Explanation**: It is true that some young women in today's society are more sexualized than in the past, but that is not true for all girls. Many girls have strict parents, dress appropriately, and do not engage in sexual activity while in middle school and high school. The writer of this thesis should ask the following questions:
    - Which teenage girls?
    - What constitutes "too" sexualized?
    - Why are they behaving that way?
    - Where does this behavior show up?
    - What are the repercussions?

? Exercise 11

On a separate sheet of paper, write a thesis statement for each of the following topics. Remember to make each statement specific, precise, demonstrable, forceful and confident. Then choose one of the topics and create a list of supporting points that could be developed into one or more paragraphs each.

1. Texting while driving
2. The legal drinking age in the United States
3. Steroid use among professional athletes
4. Abortion
5. Racism

Key Takeaways

- Proper essays require a thesis statement to provide a specific focus and suggest how the essay will be organized.
- A thesis statement is your interpretation of the subject, not the topic itself.
- A strong thesis is specific, precise, forceful, confident, and is able to be demonstrated.
- A strong thesis challenges readers with a point of view that can be debated and can be supported with evidence.
- A weak thesis is simply a declaration of your topic or contains an obvious fact that cannot be argued.
- Depending on your topic, it may or may not be appropriate to use first person point of view.
- Revise your thesis by ensuring all words are specific, all ideas are exact, and all verbs express action.

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3.4: Drafting (Part 1)

Drafting is the stage of the writing process in which you develop a complete first version of a piece of writing. Even professional writers admit that an empty page scares them because they feel they need to come up with something fresh and original every time they open a blank document on their computers. Because you have completed the first two steps in the writing process, you have already recovered from empty page syndrome. You have prewriting and planning already done, so you know what will go on that blank page: what you wrote in your outline.

Goals and Strategies for Drafting

Your objective at this stage of the writing process is to draft an essay with at least three body paragraphs, which means that the essay will contain a minimum of five paragraphs, including an introduction and a conclusion. A draft is a complete version of a piece of writing, but it is not the final version. The step in the writing process after drafting, as you may remember, is revising. During revising, you will have the opportunity to make changes to your first draft before you put the finishing touches on it during the editing and proofreading stage. A first draft gives you a working version that you can later improve.

If you are more comfortable starting on paper than on the computer, you can start on paper and then type it before you revise. You can also use a voice recorder to get yourself started, dictating a paragraph or two to get you thinking. In this lesson, Mariah does all her work on the computer, but you may use pen and paper or the computer to write a rough draft.

Making the Writing Process Work for You

The following approaches, done alone or in combination with others, may improve your writing and help you move forward in the writing process:

- **Begin writing with the part you know the most about**: You can start with the third paragraph in your outline if ideas come easily to mind. You can start with the second paragraph or the first paragraph, too. Although paragraphs may vary in length, keep in mind that short paragraphs may contain insufficient support. Readers may also think the writing is abrupt. Long paragraphs may be wordy and may lose your reader's interest. As a guideline, try to write paragraphs longer than one sentence but shorter than the length of an entire double-spaced page.
- **Write one paragraph at a time and then stop**: As long as you complete the assignment on time, you may choose how many paragraphs you complete in one sitting. Pace yourself. On the other hand, try not to procrastinate. Writers should always meet their deadlines.
- **Take short breaks to refresh your mind**: This tip might be most useful if you are writing a multipage report or essay. Still, if you are antsy or cannot concentrate, take a break to let your mind rest. But do not let breaks extend too long. If you spend too much time away from your essay, you may have trouble starting again. You may forget key points or lose momentum. Try setting an alarm to limit your break, and when the time is up, return to your desk to write.
- **Be reasonable with your goals**: If you decide to take ten-minute breaks, try to stick to that goal. If you told yourself that you need more facts, then commit to finding them. Holding yourself to your own goals will create successful writing assignments.
- **Keep your audience and purpose in mind as you write**: These aspects of writing are just as important when you are writing a single paragraph for your essay as when you are considering the direction of the entire essay.

Of all of these considerations, keeping your purpose and your audience at the front of your mind is the most important key to writing success. If your purpose is to persuade, for example, you will present your facts and details in the most logical and convincing way you can. Your purpose will guide your mind as you compose your sentences. Your audience will guide word choice. Are you writing for experts, for a general audience, for other college students, or for people who know very little about your topic? Keep asking yourself what your readers, with their background and experience, need to be told in order to understand your ideas. How can you best express your ideas so they are totally clear and your communication is effective?

You may want to identify your purpose and audience on an index card that you clip to your paper (or keep next to your computer). On that card, you may want to write notes to yourself—perhaps about what that audience might not know or what it needs to know—so that you will be sure to address those issues when you write. It may be a good idea to also state exactly what you want to explain to that audience, or to inform them of, or to persuade them about.

? Exercise 5

Using the topic for the essay that you outlined in the second step of Exercise 4, describe your purpose and your audience as specifically as you can. Use your own sheet of paper to record your responses. Then keep these responses near you during future stages of the writing process.

Purpose: _____

Audience: _____

Discovering the Basic Elements of a First Draft

If you have been using the information in the previous chapters step by step to help you develop an assignment, you already have both a formal topic outline and a formal sentence outline to direct your writing. Knowing what a first draft looks like will help you make the creative leap from the outline to the first draft.

A first draft should include the following elements:

- An **introduction** that piques the audience's interest, tells what the essay is about, and motivates readers to keep reading.
- A **thesis statement** that presents the main point, or controlling idea, of the entire piece of writing.
- A **topic sentence** in each paragraph that states the main idea of the paragraph and implies how that main idea connects to the thesis statement.
- **Supporting sentences** in each paragraph that develop or explain the topic sentence. These can be specific facts, examples, anecdotes, or other details that elaborate on the topic sentence.
- A **conclusion** that reinforces the thesis statement and leaves the audience with a feeling of completion.

The Bowtie Method

There are many ways to think about the writing process as a whole. One way to imagine your essay is to see it like a bowtie. In the figure below, you will find a visual representation of this metaphor. The left side of the bow is the introduction, which begins with a hook and ends with the thesis statement. In the center, you will find the body paragraphs, which grow with strength as the paper progresses, and each paragraph contains a supported topic sentence. On the right side, you will find the conclusion. Your conclusion should reword your thesis and then wrap up the paper with a summation, clinch, or challenge. In the end, your paper should present itself as a neat package, like a bowtie.

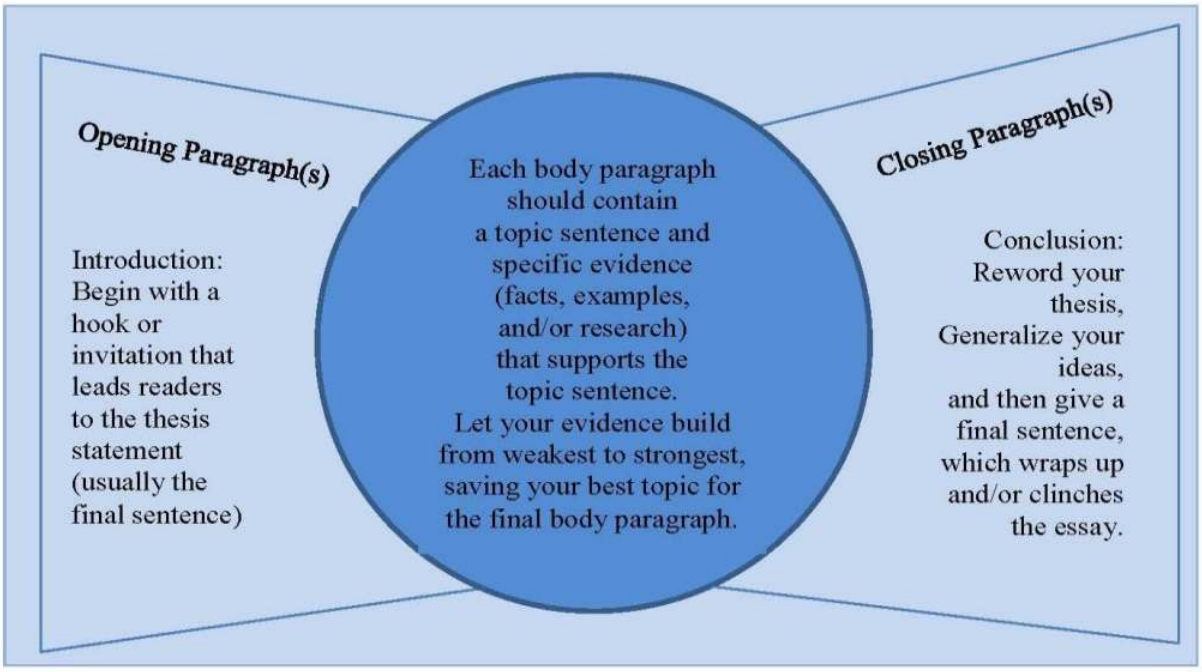


Figure **3.4.1** - Figure of the "Bowtie Method"

Starting Your First Draft

Now we are finally ready to look over Mariah's shoulder as she begins to write her essay about digital technology and the confusing choices that consumers face. As she does, you should have in front of you your outline, with its thesis statement and topic sentences, and the notes you wrote earlier in this lesson on your purpose and audience. Reviewing these will put both you and Mariah in the proper mind-set to start.

The following is Mariah's thesis statement:

E-book readers are changing the way people read.

Here are the notes that Mariah wrote to herself to characterize her purpose and audience:

> *Everyone wants the newest and the best digital technology, but the choices are many, and the specifications are often confusing.*
>
> *Purpose: My purpose is to inform readers about the wide variety of consumer digital technology available in stores and to explain why the specifications for these products, expressed in numbers that average consumer don't understand, often cause bad or misinformed buying decisions.*
>
> *Audience: My audience is my instructor and members of this class. Most of them are not heavy into technology except for the usual laptops, cell phones, and MP3 players, which are not topics I'm writing about. I'll have to be as exact and precise as I can be when I explain possibly unfamiliar product specifications. At the same time, they're more with it electronically than my grandparents' VCR-flummoxed generation, so I won't have to explain every last detail.*

Mariah chose to begin by writing a quick introduction based on her thesis statement. She knew that she would want to improve her introduction significantly when she revised. Right now, she just wanted to give herself a starting point. Remember that she could have started directly with any of the body paragraphs. You will learn more about writing attention-getting introductions and effective conclusions later in this chapter.

With her thesis statement and her purpose and audience notes in front of her, Mariah then looked at her sentence outline. She chose to use that outline because it includes the topic sentences. The following is the portion of her outline for the first body paragraph. The Roman numeral I identifies the topic sentence for the paragraph, capital letters indicate supporting details, and Arabic numerals label sub-points.

> *I. Ebook readers are changing the way people read.*
>
> *A. Ebook readers make books easy to access and to carry.*
>
> *1. Books can be downloaded electronically.*
> *2. Devices can store hundreds of books in memory.*
>
> *B. The market expands as a variety of companies enter it.*
>
> *1. Booksellers sell their own ebook readers.*
> *2. Electronics and computer companies also sell ebook readers.*
>
> *C. Current ebook readers have significant limitations.*
>
> *1. The devices are owned by different brands and may not be compatible.*
> *2. Few programs have been made to duplicate the way Americans borrow and read printed books.*

Mariah then began to expand the ideas in her outline into a paragraph. Notice how the outline helped her guarantee that all her sentences in the body of the paragraph develop the topic sentence.

> *Ebook readers are changing the way people read, or so ebook developers hope. The main selling point for these handheld devices, which are sort of the size of a paperback book, is that they make books easy to access and carry. Electronic versions of printed books can be downloaded online for a few bucks or directly from your cell phone. These devices can store hundreds of books in memory and, with text-to-speech features, can even read the texts. The market for ebooks and ebook readers keeps expanding as a lot of companies enter it. Online and traditional booksellers have been the first to market ebook readers to the public, but computer companies, especially the ones already involved in cell phone, online music, and notepad computer technology, will also enter the market. The problem for consumers, however, is which device to choose. Incompatibility is the norm. Ebooks can be read only on the devices they were intended for. Furthermore, use is restricted by the same kind of DRM systems that restrict the copying of music and videos. So, book buyers are often unable to lend books to other readers, as they can with a read book. Few accommodations have been made to fit the other way Americans read: by borrowing books from libraries. What is a buyer to do?*

If you write your first draft on the computer, consider creating a new file folder for each course with a set of subfolders inside the course folders for each assignment you are given. Label the folders clearly with the course names, and label each assignment folder and word processing document with a title that you will easily recognize. The assignment name is a good choice for the document. Then use that subfolder to store all the drafts you create. When you start each new draft, do not just write over the last one. Instead, save the draft with a new tag after the title—draft 1, draft 2, and so on—so that you will have a complete history of drafts in case your instructor wishes you to submit them. In your documents, observe any formatting requirements—for margins, headers, placement of page numbers, and other layout matters—that your instructor requires.

? Exercise 6

Study how Mariah made the transition from her sentence outline to her first draft. First, copy her outline onto your own sheet of paper. Leave a few spaces between each part of the outline. Then copy sentences from Mariah's paragraph to align each sentence with its corresponding entry in her outline.

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3.5: Drafting (Part 2)

Continuing the First Draft

Mariah continued writing her essay, moving to the second and third body paragraphs. She had supporting details but no numbered sub-points in her outline, so she had to consult her prewriting notes for specific information to include. If you decide to take a break between finishing your first body paragraph and starting the next one, do not start writing immediately when you return to your work. Put yourself back in context and in the mood by rereading what you have already written. This is what Mariah did. If she had stopped writing in the middle of writing the paragraph, she could have jotted down some quick notes to herself about what she would write next.

Preceding each body paragraph that Mariah wrote is the appropriate section of her sentence outline. Notice how she expanded Roman numeral II from her outline into a first draft of the second body paragraph. As you read, ask yourself how closely she stayed on purpose and how well she paid attention to the needs of her audience.

✔ Outline

I. ...

II. Digital cameras have almost totally replaced film cameras.

A. The first major choice is the type of digital camera.

1. Compact digital cameras are light but lack the megapixels.
2. Single lens reflex cameras, or SLRs, may be large but can be used for many functions.
3. Some cameras combine the best features of compacts and SLRs.

B. Choosing the camera type involves the confusing “megapixel wars.”

C. The zoom lens battle also determines the camera you will buy. ...

Digital cameras have almost totally replaced film cameras in amateur photographers’ gadget bags. My father took hundreds of slides when his children were growing up, but he had more and more trouble getting them developed. So, he decided to go modern. But, what kind of camera should he buy? The small compact digital cameras could slip right in his pocket, but if he tried to print a photograph larger than an 8 x 10, the quality would be poor. When he investigated buying a single lens reflex camera, or SLR, he discovered that they were as versatile as his old film camera, also an SLR, but they were big and bulky. Then he discovered yet a third type, which combined the smaller size of the compact digital cameras with the zoom lenses available for SLRs. His first thought was to buy one of those, but then he realized he had a lot of decisions to make. How many megapixels should the camera be? Five? Ten? What is the advantage of each? Then came the size of the zoom lens. He knew that 3x was too small, but what about 25x? Could he hold a lens that long without causing camera shake? He read many photography magazines and buying guides, and he still wasn’t sure he was right.

Mariah then began her third and final body paragraph using Roman numeral III from her outline.

✔ Outline

I.

II. ...

III. Nothing is more confusing to me than choosing among televisions.

A. In the resolution wars, what are the benefits of 1080p and 768p?

B. In the screen-size wars, what do plasma screens and LCD screens offer?

C. Does every home really need a media center? ...

Nothing is more confusing to me than choosing among televisions. It confuses lots of people who want a new high-definition digital television (HDTV) with a large screen to watch sports and DVDs on. You could listen to the guys in the electronics stores, but word has it they know little more than you do. They want to sell you what they have in stock, not what best fits your needs. You face decisions you never had to make with the old, bulky picture-tube televisions. Screen resolution means the number of horizontal scan lines the screen can show. This resolution is often 1080p, or full HD, or 768p. The trouble is that if

you have a smaller screen, 32 inches or 37 inches, you won't be able to tell the difference with the naked eye. The 1080p televisions cost more, though, so those are what the salespeople want you to buy. They get bigger commissions. The other important decision you face as you walk around the sales floor is whether to get a plasma screen or an LCD screen. Now here the salespeople may finally give you decent info. Plasma flat-panel television screens can be much larger in diameter than their LCD rivals. Plasma screens show decent lacks and can be viewed at a wider angle than current LCD screens. But be careful and tell the salesperson you have budget constraints. Large flatpanel plasma screens are much more expensive than flat-screen LCD models. Don't buy more television than you need.

? Exercise 7

Reread body paragraphs two and three of the essay that Mariah is writing. Then answer the questions on your own sheet of paper.

1. In body paragraph two, Mariah decided to develop her paragraph as a nonfiction narrative. Do you agree with her decision? Explain. How else could she have chosen to develop the paragraph? Why is that better?
2. Compare the writing styles of paragraphs two and three. What evidence do you have that Mariah was getting tired or running out of steam? What advice would you give her? Why?
3. Choose one of these two body paragraphs. Write a version of your own that you think better fits Mariah's audience and purpose.

Writing a Title

A writer's best choice for a title is one that alludes to the main point of the entire essay. Like the headline in a newspaper or the big, bold title in a magazine, an essay's title gives the audience a first peek at the content. If readers like the title, they are likely to keep reading.

Following her outline carefully, Mariah crafted each paragraph of her essay. Moving step by step in the writing process, Mariah finished the draft and even included a brief concluding paragraph which you will read later. She then decided, as the final touch for her writing session, to add an engaging title.

Thesis Statement: Everyone wants the newest and the best digital technology, but the choices are many, and the specifications are often confusing.

Working Title: Digital Technology: The Newest and the Best at What Price?

Key Takeaways

- Make the writing process work for you. Use any and all of the strategies that help you move forward in the writing process.
- Always be aware of your purpose for writing and the needs of your audience. Cater to those needs in every sensible way.
- Remember to include all the key structural parts of an essay: a thesis statement that is part of your introductory paragraph, three or more body paragraphs as described in your outline, and a concluding paragraph. Then add an engaging title to draw in readers.
- Write paragraphs of an appropriate length for your writing assignment. Paragraphs in college-level writing can be a page long, as long as they cover the main topics in your outline.
- Use your topic outline or your sentence outline to guide the development of your paragraphs and the elaboration of your ideas. Each main idea, indicated by a Roman numeral in your outline, becomes the topic of a new paragraph. Develop it with the supporting details and the sub-points of those details that you included in your outline.
- Generally speaking, write your introduction and conclusion last, after you have fleshed out the body paragraphs.

Drafting Body Paragraphs

If your thesis gives the reader a roadmap to your essay, then body paragraphs should closely follow that map. The reader should be able to predict what follows your introductory paragraph by simply reading the thesis statement. The body paragraphs present the evidence you have gathered to confirm your thesis. Before you begin to support your thesis in the body, you must find information from a variety of sources that support and give credit to what you are trying to prove.

Select Primary Support for Your Thesis

Without primary support, your argument is not likely to be convincing. Primary support can be described as the major points you choose to expand on your thesis. It is the most important information you select to argue for your point of view. Each point you choose will be incorporated into the topic sentence for each body paragraph you write. Your primary supporting points are further supported by supporting details within the paragraphs.

Remember that a worthy argument is backed by examples. In order to construct a valid argument, good writers conduct lots of background research and take careful notes. They also talk to people knowledgeable about a topic in order to understand its implications before writing about it. For guidance on incorporating research into your paragraphs, see the section “Using Sources.”

Identify the Characteristics of Good Primary Support

In order to fulfill the requirements of good primary support, the information you choose must meet the following standards:

- **Be relevant to the thesis**: Primary support is considered strong when it relates directly to the thesis. Primary support should show, explain, or prove your main argument without delving into irrelevant details. When faced with lots of information that could be used to prove your thesis, you may think you need to include it all in your body paragraphs. But effective writers resist the temptation to lose focus. Choose your supporting points wisely by making sure they directly connect to your thesis.
- **Be specific**: The main points you make about your thesis and the examples you use to expand on those points need to be more specific than the thesis. Use specific examples to provide the evidence and to build upon your general ideas. These types of examples give your reader something narrow to focus on, and if used properly, they leave little doubt about your claim. General examples, while they convey the necessary information, are not nearly as compelling or useful in writing because they are too obvious and typical.
- **Be detailed**: Remember that your thesis, while specific, should not be very detailed. The body paragraphs are where you develop the discussion that a thorough essay requires. Using detailed support shows readers that you have considered all the facts and chosen only the most precise details to enhance your point of view.

Pre-write to Identify Primary Supporting Points for a Thesis Statement

Recall that when you pre-write you essentially make a list of examples or reasons why you support your stance. Stemming from each point, you further provide details to support those reasons. After prewriting, you are then able to look back at the information and choose the most compelling pieces you will use in your body paragraphs.

Select the Most Effective Primary Supporting Points for a Thesis Statement

As you developed a working thesis through prewriting techniques, you may have generated a lot of information, which may be edited out later. Remember that your primary support must be relevant to your thesis. Remind yourself of your main argument, and delete any ideas that do not directly relate to it. Omitting unrelated ideas ensures that you will use only the most convincing information in your body paragraphs. Choose at least three of only the most compelling points. These will serve as the topic sentences for your body paragraphs.

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 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, some facts may still need explanation. For example, the sentence “The most populated state in the United States is California” is a pure fact, but it may require some explanation to make it relevant to your specific argument.
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.
3. **Testimony**: Testimony consists of direct quotations from either an eyewitness or an expert witness. An eyewitness is someone who has direct experience with a subject; he 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.

You can consult a vast pool of resources to gather support for your stance. Citing relevant information from reliable sources ensures that your reader will take you seriously and consider your assertions. Use any of the following sources for your essay: newspapers or news organization websites, magazines, encyclopedias, and scholarly journals, which are periodicals that address topics in a specialized field. When using sources, you are responsible for properly documenting the borrowed information properly. Refer to the section "Using Sources" for more information.

Choose Supporting Topic Sentences

Each body paragraph contains a topic sentence that states one aspect of your thesis and then expands upon it. Like the thesis statement, each topic sentence should be specific and supported by concrete details, facts, or explanations.

Each body paragraph should comprise the following elements: topic sentence + supporting details (examples, reasons, or arguments)

As you read in Writing Paragraphs, topic sentences indicate the location and main points of the basic arguments of your essay. These sentences are vital to writing your body paragraphs because they always refer back to and support your thesis statement. Topic sentences are linked to the ideas you have introduced in your thesis, thus reminding readers what your essay is about. A paragraph without a clearly identified topic sentence may be unclear and scattered, just like an essay without a thesis statement.

Unless your professor instructs otherwise, you should include at least three body paragraphs in your essay. A five-paragraph essay, including the introduction and conclusion, is commonly the standard for exams and essay assignments because it is meant to help students create fully developed essays; however, writers should maintain flexibility and not expect all essays to conform to that model. The emphasis is on creating an essay that provides enough support to tell a story, create an image or idea, or inform or persuade the audience.

Example 3.5.1:

Author J.D. Salinger relied primarily on his personal life and belief system as the foundation for the themes in the majority of his works.

Example 3.5.2:

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

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 Bananafish" details a day in the life of a WWII veteran who was recently released form 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 Esme – 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.

Draft Supporting Detail Sentences for Each Primary Support 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 writer drafts possible supporting detail sentences for each primary support sentence based on the thesis statement:

> ***Thesis**: Unleashed dogs on city streets are a dangerous nuisance.*

I. Dogs can scare cyclists.

A. Cyclists are forced to zigzag on the roads.
B. School children panic and turn wildly on their bikes.
C. People walking at night freeze in fear.

II. Loose dogs are traffic hazards.

A. Dogs in the street make people swerve their cars.
B. To avoid dogs, drivers run into other cars or pedestrians.
C. Children coaxing dogs across city streets create danger.

III. Unleashed dogs damage gardens.

A. They step on flowers and vegetables.
B. They destroy hedges by urinating on them.
C. They mess up lawns by digging holes.

You have the option of writing your topic sentences in one of three ways. You can state it at the beginning of the body paragraph, or at the end of the paragraph, or you do not have to write it at all. This is called an implied topic sentence. An implied topic sentence lets readers form the main idea for themselves. For beginning writers, it is best to not use implied topic sentences because it makes it harder to focus your writing. Your instructor may also want to clearly identify the sentences that support your thesis.

Key Takeaways

- Your body paragraphs should closely follow the path set forth by your thesis statement.
- Strong body paragraphs contain evidence that supports your thesis.
- Primary support comprises the most important points you use to support your thesis.
- Strong primary support is specific, detailed, and relevant to the thesis.
- Prewriting helps you determine your most compelling primary support.
- Evidence includes facts, judgments, testimony, and personal observation.
- Reliable sources may include newspapers, magazines, academic journals, books, encyclopedias, and firsthand testimony.
- A topic sentence presents one point of your thesis statement while the information in the rest of the paragraph supports that point.
- A body paragraph comprises a topic sentence plus supporting details.

Exercise 8

Print out the first draft of your essay and use a highlighter to mark your topic sentences in the body paragraphs. Make sure they are clearly stated and accurately present your paragraphs, as well as accurately reflect your thesis. If your topic sentence contains information that does not exist in the rest of the paragraph, rewrite it to more accurately match the rest of the paragraph.

Exercise 9

Choose one of the following working thesis statements. On a separate sheet of paper, write for at least five minutes using one of the prewriting techniques you learned in Chapter 2, “PreWriting Techniques.”

1. Unleashed dogs on city streets are a dangerous nuisance.
2. Students cheat for many different reasons.
3. Drug use among teens and young adults is a problem.
4. The most important change that should occur at my college or university is _____.

Exercise 10

Refer to the previous Exercise and select three of your most compelling reasons to support the thesis statement. Remember that the points you choose must be specific and relevant to the thesis. The statements you choose will be your primary support points, and you will later incorporate them into the topic sentences for the body paragraphs.

Collaboration: Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

Exercise 11

In the previous Exercise, you chose three of your most convincing points to support the thesis statement you selected from the list. Take each point and incorporate it into a topic sentence for each body paragraph.

Supporting point 1: _____

Topic sentence: _____

Supporting point 2: _____

Topic sentence: _____

Supporting point 3: _____

Topic sentence: _____

Collaboration: Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

Exercise 12

Using the three topic sentences you composed for the thesis statement in Exercise 11, draft at least three supporting details for each point.

Thesis statement: _____

Primary supporting point 1: _____

Supporting details: _____

Primary supporting point 2: _____

Supporting details: _____

Primary supporting point 3: _____

Supporting details: _____

Drafting Introductory and Concluding Paragraphs

Picture your introduction as a storefront window: You have a certain amount of space to attract your customers (readers) to your goods (subject) and bring them inside your store (discussion). Once you have enticed them with something intriguing, you then point them in a specific direction and try to make the sale (convince them to accept your thesis). Your introduction is an invitation to your readers to consider what you have to say and then to follow your train of thought as you expand upon your thesis statement.

Writing an Introduction

An introduction serves the following purposes:

- Establishes your voice and tone, or your attitude, toward the subject
- Introduces the general topic of the essay
- States the thesis that will be supported in the body paragraphs

First impressions are crucial and can leave lasting effects in your reader's mind, which is why the introduction is so important to your essay. If your introductory paragraph is dull or disjointed, your reader probably will not have much interest in continuing with

the essay.

Attracting Interest in Your Introductory Paragraph

Your introduction should begin with an engaging statement devised to provoke your readers' interest. In the next few sentences, introduce them to your topic by stating general facts or ideas about the subject. As you move deeper into your introduction, you gradually narrow the focus, moving closer to your thesis. Moving smoothly and logically from your introductory remarks to your thesis statement can be achieved using a funnel technique, as illustrated in the diagram "Funnel Technique."

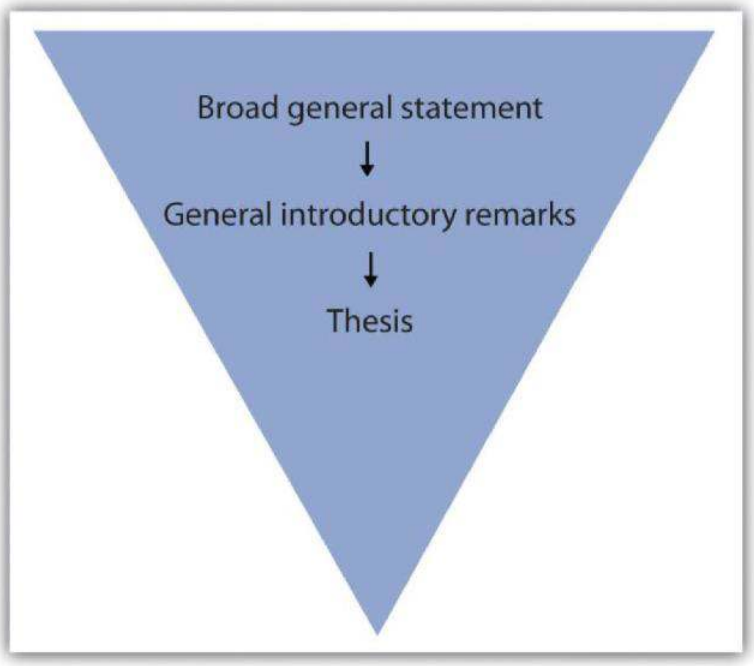


Figure **3.5.1** - *Funnel Technique*

Immediately capturing your readers' interest increases the chances of having them read what you are about to discuss. You can garner curiosity for your essay in a number of ways. Try to get your readers personally involved by doing any of the following:

- Appealing to their emotions
- Using logic
- Beginning with a provocative question or opinion
- Opening with a startling statistic or surprising fact
- Raising a question or series of questions
- Presenting an explanation or rationalization for your essay
- Opening with a relevant quotation or incident
- Opening with a striking image
- Including a personal anecdote

Remember that your diction, or word choice, while always important, is most crucial in your introductory paragraph. Boring diction could extinguish any desire a person might have to read through your discussion. Choose words that create images or express action.

Earlier in this chapter we followed Mariah as she moved through the writing process. In this section, Mariah writes her introduction and conclusion for the same essay. Mariah incorporates some of the introductory elements into her introductory paragraph, which she previously outlined. Her thesis statement is underlined.

> *Play Atari on a General Electric brand television set? Maybe watch Dynasty? Or read old newspaper articles on microfiche at the library? Twenty-five years ago, the average college student did not have many options when it came to entertainment in the form of*

> *technology. Fast forward to the twenty-first century, and the digital age has revolutionized the way people entertain themselves. In today's rapidly evolving world of digital technology, consumers are bombarded with endless options for how they do most everything, from buying and reading books to taking and developing photographs. In a society that is obsessed with digital means of entertainment, it is easy for the average person to become baffled. Everyone wants the newest and best digital technology, but the choices are many and the specifications are often confusing.*

Writing a Conclusion

It is not unusual to want to rush when you approach your conclusion, and even experienced writers may fade. But what good writers remember is that it is vital to put just as much attention into the conclusion as in the rest of the essay. After all, a hasty ending can undermine an otherwise strong essay.

A conclusion that does not correspond to the rest of your essay, has loose ends, or is unorganized can unsettle your readers and raise doubts about the entire essay. However, if you have worked hard to write the introduction and body, your conclusion can often be the most logical part to compose.

The Anatomy of a Strong Conclusion

Keep in mind that the ideas in your conclusion must conform to the rest of your essay. In order to tie these components together, restate your thesis at the beginning of your conclusion. This helps you assemble, in an orderly fashion, all the information you have explained in the body. Repeating your thesis reminds your readers of the major arguments you have been trying to prove and also indicates that your essay is drawing to a close. A strong conclusion also reviews your main points and emphasizes the importance of the topic.

The construction of the conclusion is similar to the introduction, in which you make general introductory statements and then present your thesis. The difference is that in the conclusion you first paraphrase, or state in different words, your thesis and then follow up with general concluding remarks. These sentences should progressively broaden the focus of your thesis and maneuver your readers out of the essay.

Many writers like to end their essays with a final emphatic statement. This strong closing statement will cause your readers to continue thinking about the implications of your essay; it will make your conclusion, and thus your essay, more memorable. Another powerful technique is to challenge your readers to make a change in either their thoughts or their actions. Challenging your readers to see the subject through new eyes is a powerful way to ease yourself and your readers out of the essay.

When closing your essay, do not expressly state that you are drawing to a close. Relying on statements such as *in conclusion, it is clear that, as you can see*, or *in summation* is unnecessary and can be considered trite.

It is wise to avoid doing any of the following in your conclusion:

- **Introducing new material**: Introducing new material in your conclusion has an unsettling effect on your reader. When you raise new points, you make your reader want more information, which you could not possibly provide in the limited space of your final paragraph.
- **Contradicting your thesis**: Contradicting or changing your thesis statement causes your readers to think that you do not actually have a conviction about your topic. After all, you have spent several paragraphs adhering to a specific point of view.
- **Changing your thesis**: When you change sides or open up your point of view in the conclusion, your reader becomes less inclined to believe your original argument.
- **Using apologies or disclaimers**: By apologizing for your opinion or stating that you know it is tough to digest, you are in fact admitting that even you know what you have discussed is irrelevant or unconvincing. You do not want your readers to feel this way. Effective writers stand by their thesis statement and do not stray from it.

Mariah incorporates some of these pointers into her conclusion. She has paraphrased her thesis statement in the first sentence, which is underlined.

> *In a society fixated on the latest and smartest digital technology, a consumer can easily become confused by the countless options and specifications. The ever-changing state of digital technology challenges consumer with its updates and add-ons and expanding markets and incompatible formats and restrictions – a fact that is complicated by salesmen who want to sell them anything. In a world that is increasingly driven by instant gratification, it's easy for people to buy the first thing they see. The solution for many people should be to avoid buying on impulse. Consumers should think about what they really need, not what is advertised.*

Make sure your essay is balanced by not having an excessively long or short introduction or conclusion. Check that they match each other in length as closely as possible, and try to mirror the formula you used in each. Parallelism strengthens the message of your essay.

? Exercise 13

Reread each sentence in Mariah's introductory paragraph. Indicate which techniques she used and comment on how each sentence is designed to attract her readers' interest.

? Exercise 14

On a separate sheet of a paper, restate your thesis from an earlier exercise in this section and then make some general concluding remarks. Next, compose a final emphatic statement. Finally, incorporate what you have written into a strong conclusion paragraph for your essay.

Collaboration: Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

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3.6: Revising and Editing (Part 1)

Revising and editing are the two tasks you undertake to significantly improve your essay. Both are very important elements of the writing process. You may think that a completed first draft means little improvement is needed. However, even experienced writers need to improve their drafts and rely on peers during revising and editing. You may know that athletes miss catches, fumble balls, or overshoot goals. Dancers forget steps, turn too slowly, or miss beats. For both athletes and dancers, the more they practice, the stronger their performance will become. Web designers seek better images, a more clever design, or a more appealing background for their web pages. Writing has the same capacity to profit from improvement and revision.

Understanding the Purpose of Revising and Editing

Revising and editing allow you to examine two important aspects of your writing separately, so that you can give each task your undivided attention.

- When you **revise**, you take a second look at your ideas. You might add, cut, move, or change information in order to make your ideas clearer, more accurate, more interesting, or more convincing.
- When you **edit**, you take a second look at how you expressed your ideas. You add or change words. You fix any problems in grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure. You improve your writing style. You make your essay into a polished, mature piece of writing, the end product of your best efforts.

Here are some strategies that writers have developed to look at their first drafts from a fresh perspective. Try them over the course of this semester; then keep using the ones that bring results.

- Take a break. You are proud of what you wrote, but you might be too close to it to make changes. Set aside your writing for a few hours or even a day until you can look at it objectively.
- Ask someone you trust for feedback and constructive criticism.
- Use the resources that your college provides. Find out where your school's writing lab is located and ask about the assistance they provide online and in person.
- Pretend you are one of your readers. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied? Why?

Many people hear the words critic, critical, and criticism and pick up only negative vibes that provoke feelings that make them blush, grumble, or shout. However, as a writer and a thinker, you need to learn to be critical of yourself in a positive way and have high expectations for your work. You also need to train your eye and trust your ability to fix what needs fixing. For this, you need to teach yourself where to look.

When you reread your writing to find revisions to make, look for each type of problem in a separate sweep. Read it straight through once to locate any problems with unity. Read it straight through a second time to find problems with coherence. You may follow this same practice during many stages of the writing process.

Completing a Peer Review

After working so closely with a piece of writing, writers often need to step back and ask for a more objective reader. What writers most need is feedback from readers who can respond only to the words on the page. When they are ready, writers show their drafts to someone they respect and who can give an honest response about its strengths and weaknesses.

You, too, can ask a peer to read your draft when it is ready. After evaluating the feedback and assessing what is most helpful, the reader's feedback will help you when you revise your draft. This process is called **peer review**. You can work with a partner in your class and identify specific ways to strengthen each other's essays. Although you may be uncomfortable sharing your writing at first, remember that each writer is working toward the same goal: a final draft that fits the audience and the purpose. Maintaining a positive attitude when providing feedback will put you and your partner at ease. The box that follows provides a useful framework for the peer review session.

Questions for Peer Review

Title of essay: _____

Date: _____

Writer's name: _____

Peer reviewer's name: _____

1. This essay is about_____.
2. Your main points in this essay are_____.
3. What I most liked about this essay is_____.
4. These three points struck me as your strongest:
    a. Point: _____
       Why: _____
    b. Point: _____
       Why: _____
    c. Point: _____
       Why: _____

These places in your essay are not clear to me:

a. Where: _____
   Needs improvement because _____
b. Where: _____
   Needs improvement because _____
c. Where: _____
   Needs improvement because _____

The one additional change you could make that would improve this essay significantly is_____.

? Exercise 15

Exchange essays with a classmate and complete a peer review of each other's draft in progress. Remember to give positive feedback and to be courteous and polite in your responses. Focus on providing one positive comment and one question for more information to the author

Using Feedback

Using Feedback Objectively

The purpose of peer feedback is to receive constructive criticism of your essay. Your peer reviewer is your first real audience, and you have the opportunity to learn what confuses and delights a reader so that you can improve your work before sharing the final draft with a wider audience (or your intended audience). It may not be necessary to incorporate every recommendation your peer reviewer makes. However, if you start to observe a pattern in the responses you receive from peer reviewers, you might want to take that feedback into consideration in future assignments. For example, if you read consistent comments about a need for more research, then you may want to consider including more research in future assignments.

Using Feedback from Multiple Sources

You might get feedback from more than one reader as you share different stages of your revised draft. In this situation, you may receive feedback from readers who do not understand the assignment or who lack your involvement with and enthusiasm for it. You need to evaluate the responses you receive according to two important criteria:

- Determine if the feedback supports the purpose of the assignment.
- Determine if the suggested revisions are appropriate to the audience.

Then, using these standards, accept or reject revision feedback.

? Exercise 16

Work with two partners. Go back Exercise 14 in this lesson and compare your responses to Mariah's paragraph, with your partners' response. Recall Mariah's purpose for writing and her audience. Then, working individually, list where you agree and where you disagree about revision needs.

Writing at Work

One of the reasons why word-processing programs build in a reviewing feature is that workgroups have become a common feature in many businesses. Writing is often collaborative, and the members of a workgroup and their supervisors often critique group members' work and offer feedback that will lead to a better final product.

Creating Unity and Coherence

Following your outline closely offers you a reasonable guarantee that your writing will stay on purpose and not drift away from the controlling idea. However, when writers are rushed, are tired, or cannot find the right words, their writing may become less than they want it to be. Their writing may no longer be clear and concise, and they may be adding information that is not needed to develop the main idea.

When a piece of writing has unity, all the ideas in each paragraph and in the entire essay clearly belong and are arranged in an order that makes logical sense. When the writing has coherence, the ideas flow smoothly. The wording clearly indicates how one idea leads to another within a paragraph and from paragraph to paragraph.

Reading your writing aloud will often help you find problems with unity and coherence. Listen for the clarity and flow of your ideas. Identify places where you find yourself confused, and write a note to yourself about possible fixes.

Creating Unity

Sometimes writers get caught up in the moment and cannot resist a good digression. Even though you might enjoy such detours when you chat with friends, unplanned digressions usually harm a piece of writing.

Mariah stayed close to her outline when she drafted the three body paragraphs of her essay she tentatively titled "Digital Technology: The Newest and the Best at What Price?" But a recent shopping trip for an HDTV upset her enough that she digressed from the main topic of her third paragraph and included comments about the sales staff at the electronics store she visited. When she revised her essay, she deleted the offtopic sentences that affected the unity of the paragraph. Read the following paragraph twice, the first time without Mariah's changes, and the second time with them.

> *Nothing is more confusing to me than choosing among televisions. It confuses lots of people who want a new high-definition digital television (HDTV) with a large screen to watch sports and DVDs on. ~~You could listen to the guys in the electronics store, but word has it they know little more than you do. They want to sell you what they have in stock, not what best fits your needs.~~ You face decisions you never had to make with the old, bulky picture-tube televisions. Screen resolution means the number of horizontal scan lines the screen can show. This resolution is often 1080p, or full HD, or 768p. The trouble is that if you have a smaller screen, 32 inches or 37 inches, you won't be able to tell the difference with the naked eye. ~~The 1080p televisions cost more, though, so those are what the salespeople want you to buy. They get bigger commissions.~~ The other important decision you face as you walk around the sales floor is whether to get a plasma screen or an LCD screen. ~~Now here the salespeople may finally give you decent info.~~ Plasma flat-panel television screens can be much larger in diameter than their LCD rivals. Plasma screens show decent lacks and can be viewed at a wider angle than current LCD screens. ~~But be careful and tell the salesperson you have budget constraints~~. Large flat-panel plasma*

> *screens are much more expensive than flat-screen LCD models. Don't ~~let someone make you~~ buy more television than you need!*

? Exercise 17

1. Answer the following two questions about Mariah's paragraph:
    1. Do you agree with Mariah's decision to make the deletions she made? Did she cut too much, too little, or just enough? Explain.
    2. Is the explanation of what screen resolution means a digression? Or is it audience friendly and essential to understanding the paragraph? Explain.

Collaboration: Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

2. Now start to revise the first draft of the essay you wrote at the end of Writing Your Own First Draft. Reread it to find any statements that affect the unity of your writing. Decide how best to revise.

Creating Coherence

Careful writers use transitions to clarify how the ideas in their sentences and paragraphs are related. These words and phrases help the writing flow smoothly. Adding transitions is not the only way to improve coherence, but they are often useful and give a mature feel to your essays. The Table of Common Transitional Words and Phrases groups many common transitions according to their purpose.

After Mariah revised for unity, she next examined her paragraph about televisions to check for coherence. She looked for places where she needed to add a transition or perhaps reword the text to make the flow of ideas clear. In the version that follows, she has already deleted the sentences that were off topic.

Many writers make their revisions on a printed copy and then transfer them to the version on-screen. They conventionally use a small arrow called a caret (^) to show where to insert an addition or correction.

> ^ *Finally*, *Nothing is more confusing to me than choosing among televisions. It confuses lots of people who want a new high-definition digital television (HD television) with a large screen to watch sports and DVDs on.* ^ *There's good reason for this confusion:* *You face a decision you never had to make with the old, bulky picture-tube televisions.* ^ *The first big decision is the screen resolution you want.* *Screen resolution means the number of horizontal scan lines the screen can show. This resolution is often 1080p, or full HD, or 768p. The trouble is that if you have a smaller screen, 32 inches or 37 inches diagonal, you won't be able to tell the difference with the naked eye. The* ^ *second other* *important decision you face as you walk around the sales floor is whether to get a plasma screen or an LCD screen.* ^ *Along with the choice of display type, a further decision buyers face is screen size and features.* *Plasma flat-panel television screens can be much larger in diameter than their LCD rivals. Plasma screens show truer blacks and can be viewed at a wider angle than current LCD screens.* ^ *However*, *Large flat-panel plasma screens are much more expensive than flat-screen LCD models. Don't buy more television than you need!*

? Exercise 18

1. Answer the following questions about Mariah's revised paragraph.
    1. Do you agree with the transitions and other changes that Mariah made to her paragraph? Which would you keep and which were unnecessary? Explain.
    2. What transition words or phrases did Mariah add to her paragraph? Why did she choose each one?

3. What effect does adding additional sentences have on the coherence of the paragraph? Explain. When you read both versions aloud, which version has a more logical flow of ideas? Explain.

2. Now return to the first draft of the essay you wrote in Starting Your First Draft and revise it for coherence. Add transition words and phrases where they are needed, and make any other changes that are needed to improve the flow and connection between ideas.

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3.7: Revising and Editing (Part 2)

Being Clear and Concise

Some writers are very methodical and painstaking when they write a first draft. Other writers unleash a lot of words in order to get out all that they feel they need to say. Do either of these composing styles match your style? Or is your composing style somewhere in between? No matter which description best fits you, the first draft of almost every piece of writing, no matter its author, can be made clearer and more concise. If you have a tendency to write too much, you will need to look for unnecessary words. If you have a tendency to be vague or imprecise in your wording, you will need to find specific words to replace any overly general language.

Identifying Wordiness

Sometimes writers use too many words when fewer words will appeal more to their audience and better fit their purpose. Here are some common examples of wordiness to look for in your draft. Eliminating wordiness helps all readers, because it makes your ideas clear, direct, and straightforward.

- **Sentences that begin with** *There is* or *There are*.
  Wordy: There are two major experiments that the Biology Department sponsors.
  Revised: The Biology Department sponsors two major experiments.
- **Sentences with unnecessary modifiers.**
  Wordy: Two extremely famous and well-known consumer advocates spoke eloquently in favor of the proposed important legislation.
  Revised: Two well-known consumer advocates spoke in favor of the proposed legislation.
- **Sentences with deadwood phrases that add little to the meaning**. Be judicious when you use phrases such as *in terms of*, *with a mind to*, *on the subject of*, *as to whether or not*, *more or less*, *as far as…is concerned*, and similar expressions. You can usually find a more straightforward way to state your point.
  Wordy: As a world leader in the field of green technology, the company plans to focus its efforts in the area of geothermal energy. A report as to whether or not to use geysers as an energy source is in the process of preparation.
  Revised: As a world leader in green technology, the company plans to focus on geothermal energy. A report about using geysers as an energy source is in preparation.
- **Sentences in the passive voice or with forms of the verb** *to be*. Sentences with passive-voice verbs often create confusion, because the subject of the sentence does not perform an action. Sentences are clearer when the subject of the sentence performs the action and is followed by a strong verb. Use strong active-voice verbs in place of forms of *to be*, which can lead to wordiness. Avoid passive voice when you can.
  Wordy: It might perhaps be said that using a GPS device is something that is a benefit to drivers who have a poor sense of direction.
  Revised: Using a GPS device benefits drivers who have a poor sense of direction.
- **Sentences with constructions that can be shortened**.
  Wordy: The ebook reader, which is a recent invention, may become as commonplace as the cell phone. My over-sixty uncle bought an ebook reader, and his wife bought an ebook reader, too.
  Revised: The ebook reader, a recent invention, may become as commonplace as the cell phone. My over-sixty uncle and his wife both bought ebook readers.

? Exercise 19

Now return once more to the first draft of the essay you have been revising. Check it for unnecessary words. Try making your sentences as concise as they can be.

Choosing Specific, Appropriate Words

Most college essays should be written in formal English, suitable for an academic situation. Follow these principles to be sure that your word choice is appropriate.

- **Avoid slang**: Find alternatives to *bummer*, *kewl*, and *rad*.

- **Avoid language that is overly casual**: Write about “men and women” rather than “girls and guys” unless you are trying to create a specific effect. A formal tone calls for formal language.
- **Avoid contractions**: Use *do not* in place of *don’t*, *I am* in place of *I’m*, *have not* in place of *haven’t*, and so on. Contractions are considered casual speech.
- **Avoid clichés**: Overused expressions such as *green with envy, face the music, better late than never,* and similar expressions are empty of meaning and may not appeal to your audience.
- **Be careful when you use words that sound alike but have different meanings**: Some examples are *allusion/illusion, complement/compliment, council/counsel, concurrent/consecutive, founder/flounder,* and *historic/historical.* When in doubt, check a dictionary.
- **Choose words with the connotations you want:** Choosing a word for its connotations is as important in formal essay writing as it is in all kinds of writing. Compare the positive connotations of the word *proud* and the negative connotations of *arrogant* and *conceited*.
- **Use specific words rather than overly general words:** Find synonyms for *thing, people, nice, good, bad, interesting*, and other vague words. Or use specific details to make your exact meaning clear.

Now read the revisions Mariah made to make her third paragraph clearer and more concise. She has already incorporated the changes she made to improve unity and coherence.

> *Finally, nothing* ^ *confuses buyers more than purchasing* ~~*is more confusing to me than choosing among televisions. It confuses lots of people who want*~~ *a new high-definition digital television (HDTV),* ~~*with a large screen to watch sports and DVDs on.*~~ ^ *and with* ~~*There’s a*~~ *good reason.* ~~*for this confusion. You face decisions you never had to make with the old, bulky picture-tube televisions.*~~ *The first big decision* ~~*is*~~ ^ *involves screen resolution,* ~~*you want.*~~ ^ *which* ~~*Screen resolution*~~ *means the number of horizontal scan lines the screen can show. This resolution is often 1080p, or full HD, or* ^ *as 768p. The trouble is that* ^ *on* ~~*if you have*~~ *a* ~~*smaller screen*~~*, 32-inch or 37-inch diagonal,* ^ *screen, viewers will not* ~~*you won’t*~~ *be able to tell the difference* ^ *between them with the naked eye. The other important decision* ~~*you face as you walk around the sales floor*~~ *is whether to get a plasma screen or an LCD screen.* ~~*Along with the choice of display type, a further decision buyers face is screen size and features*~~*. Plasma flat-panel television screens can be much larger in diameter than their LCD rivals. Plasma screens show* ~~*truer*~~ ^ *deeper blacks and can be viewed at a wider angle than current LCD screens. However, large flat-panel plasma screens are much more expensive than flat-screen LCD models.* ^ *Only after buyers are totally certain they know what they want should they open their wallets* . ~~*Don’t buy more television than you need!*~~

? Exercise 20

1. Answer the following questions about Mariah’s revised paragraph:
   a. Read the unrevised and the revised paragraphs aloud. Explain in your own words how changes in word choice have affected Mariah’s writing.
   b. Do you agree with the changes that Mariah made to her paragraph? Which changes would you keep and which were unnecessary? Explain. What other changes would you have made?
   c. What effect does removing contractions and the pronoun you have on the tone of the paragraph? How would you characterize the tone now? Why?
2. Now return once more to your essay in progress. Read carefully for problems with word choice. Be sure that your draft is written in formal language and that your word choice is specific and appropriate.

Writing at Work

Many companies hire copy editors and proofreaders to help them produce the cleanest possible final drafts of large writing projects. Copy editors are responsible for suggesting revisions and style changes; proofreaders check documents for any errors in capitalization, spelling, and punctuation that have crept in. Many times, these tasks are done on a freelance basis, with one freelancer working for a variety of clients.

Editing Your Draft

If you have been incorporating each set of revisions as Mariah has, you have produced multiple drafts of your writing. So far, all your changes have been content changes. Perhaps with the help of peer feedback, you have made sure that you sufficiently supported your ideas. You have checked for problems with unity and coherence. You have examined your essay for word choice, revising to cut unnecessary words and to replace weak wording with specific and appropriate wording.

The next step after revising the content is **editing**. When you edit, you examine the surface features of your text. You examine your spelling, grammar, usage, and punctuation. You also make sure you use the proper format when creating your finished assignment. Editing often takes time. Budgeting time into the writing process allows you to complete additional edits after revising.

Editing and proofreading your writing helps you create a finished work that represents your best efforts. Here are a few more tips to remember about your readers:

- Readers do not notice correct spelling, but they do notice misspellings.
- Readers look past your sentences to get to your ideas—unless the sentences are awkward, poorly constructed, and frustrating to read.
- Readers notice when every sentence has the same rhythm as every other sentence, with no variety.
- Readers do not cheer when you use there, their, and they're correctly; but they notice when you do not.
- Readers will notice the care with which you handled your assignment and your attention to detail in the delivery of an error-free document.

Chapter 5 offers a useful review of grammar, mechanics, and usage. Use it to help you eliminate major errors in your writing and refine your understanding of the conventions of language. Do not hesitate to ask for help, too, from peer tutors in your academic department or in the college's writing lab. In the meantime, use the following checklists to help you edit your writing.

Checklists for Editing Your Writing

Grammar

- Are some sentences actually sentence fragments?
- Are some sentences run-on sentences? How can I correct them?
- Do some sentences need conjunctions between independent clauses?
- Does every verb agree with its subject?
- Is every verb in the correct tense?
- Are tense forms, especially for irregular verbs, written correctly?
- Have I used subject, object, and possessive personal pronouns correctly?
- Have I used who and whom correctly?
- Is the antecedent of every pronoun clear?
- Do all personal pronouns agree with their antecedents?
- Have I used the correct comparative and superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs?
- Is it clear which word a participial phrase modifies, or is it a dangling modifier?

Sentence Structure

- Are all my sentences simple sentences, or do I vary my sentence structure?
- Have I chosen the best coordinating or subordinating conjunctions to join clauses?
- Have I created long, overpacked sentences that should be shortened for clarity?
- Do I see any mistakes in parallel structure?

Punctuation

- Does every sentence end with the correct end punctuation?
- Can I justify the use of every exclamation point?
- Have I used apostrophes correctly to write all singular and plural possessive forms?
- Have I used quotation marks correctly?

Mechanics and Usage

- Can I find any spelling errors? How can I correct them?
- Have I used capital letters where they are needed?
- Have I written abbreviations, when allowed, correctly?
- Can I find any errors in the use of commonly confused words, such as to/too/two?

Be careful about relying too much on spelling checkers and grammar checkers. A spelling checker cannot recognize that you meant to write *principle* but wrote principal instead. A grammar checker often queries constructions that are perfectly correct. The program does not understand your meaning; it makes its check against a general set of formulas that might not apply in each instance. If you use a grammar checker, accept the suggestions that make sense, but consider why the suggestions came up.

Proofreading requires patience; it is very easy to read past a mistake. Set your paper aside for at least a few hours, if not a day or more, so your mind will rest. Some professional proofreaders read a text backward so they can concentrate on spelling and punctuation. Another helpful technique is to slowly read a paper aloud, paying attention to every word, letter, and punctuation mark. If you need additional proofreading help, ask a reliable friend, a classmate, or a peer tutor to make a final pass on your paper to look for anything you missed.

Formatting

Remember to use proper format when creating your finished assignment. Sometimes an instructor, a department, or a college will require students to follow specific instructions on titles, margins, page numbers, or the location of the writer's name. These requirements may be more detailed and rigid for research projects and term papers, which often observe the American Psychological Association (APA) or Modern Language Association (MLA) style guides, especially when citations of sources are included. To ensure the format is correct and follows any specific instructions, make a final check before you submit an assignment.

? Exercise 21

With the help of the checklist, edit and proofread your essay.

Key Takeaways

- Revising and editing are the stages of the writing process in which you improve your work before producing a final draft.
- During revising, you add, cut, move, or change information in order to improve content.
- During editing, you take a second look at the words and sentences you used to express your ideas and fix any problems in grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure.
- Unity in writing means that all the ideas in each paragraph and in the entire essay clearly belong together and are arranged in an order that makes logical sense.
- Coherence in writing means that the writer's wording clearly indicates how one idea leads to another within a paragraph and between paragraphs.
- Transitional words and phrases effectively make writing more coherent.
- Writing should be clear and concise, with no unnecessary words.
- Effective formal writing uses specific, appropriate words and avoids slang, contractions, clichés, and overly general words.
- Peer reviews, done properly, can give writers objective feedback about their writing. It is the writer's responsibility to evaluate the results of peer reviews and incorporate only useful feedback.
- Remember to budget time for careful editing and proofreading. Use all available resources, including editing checklists, peer editing, and your institution's writing lab, to improve your editing skills.

Exercise 22

Starting with the title “The Future of Information: How It Will Be Created, Transmitted, and Consumed,” narrow the focus of the topic until it is suitable for a two- to three-page paper. Then narrow your topic with the help of brainstorming, idea mapping, and searching the Internet until you select a final topic to explore. Keep a journal or diary in which you record and comment on everything you did to choose a final topic. Then record what you will do next to explore the idea and create a thesis statement.

Exercise 23

Write a thesis statement and a formal sentence outline for an essay about the writing process. Include separate paragraphs for prewriting, drafting, and revising and editing. Your audience will be a general audience of educated adults who are unfamiliar with how writing is taught at the college level. Your purpose is to explain the stages of the writing process so that readers will understand its benefits.

Collaboration: Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

Exercise 24

Pieces of writing in a variety of real-life and work-related situations would benefit from revising and editing. Consider the following list of real-life and work-related pieces of writing: emails, greeting card messages, junk mail, late-night television commercials, social networking pages, local newspapers, bulletin-board postings, and public notices. Find and submit at least two examples of writing that needs revision. Explain what changes you would make. Replace any recognizable names with pseudonyms.

Exercise 25

Group activity: At work, an employer might someday ask you to contribute to the research base for an essay such as the one Mariah wrote or the one you wrote while working through this chapter. Choosing either her topic or your own, compile a list of at least five sources. Then, working in a group of four students, bring in printouts or PDF files of Internet sources or paper copies of non-Internet sources for the other group members to examine. In a group report, rate the reliability of each other’s sources.

Exercise 26

Group activity: Working in a peer-review group of four, go to the section on Drafting and reread the draft of the first two body paragraphs of Mariah’s essay, “Digital Technology: The Newest and the Best at What Price?” Review those two paragraphs using the same level of inspection given to the essay’s third paragraph in the section Revising and Editing. Suggest and agree on changes to improve unity and coherence, eliminate unneeded words, and refine word choice. Your purpose is to help Mariah produce two effective paragraphs for a formal college-level essay about her topic.

Sample Student Paper with Outline

The following paper and outline by Pere Ellis, entitled “Aquaponics: A Viable Solution to World Hunger,” clearly breaks down the argument presented in his thesis, providing specific examples in the sub-points and further developing and expanding the subpoints.

Sample Student Outline

Pere J. Ellis II

English 1101 Honors

Dr. Cox

February 25, 2014

Outline

Thesis: Aquaponics is the best solution to the world hunger problem because it is simple to manage, environmentally friendly, and yields larger food quantities than typical farming techniques.

I. Aquaponics is a simple system that can be managed at the individual level, commercial level, and adapted to any location.
   A. An aquaponics system can be managed by one person.
      1. The system can be created at any level to meet the individual needs.
      2. The system can be easily managed with the use of technology.
   B. An aquaponics system can be managed at a commercial level.
      1. The system can be created for small scale and large scale production.
      2. The system is capable of providing produce to the commercial market.
   C. An aquaponics system can be managed at any location.
      1. A system can be built on land not suitable for crops.
      2. A system can be created with plants and animals from similar environments

II. Aquaponics is an environmentally friendly system.
   A. Chemical fertilizers are not used in aquaponics.
      1. Fish excrement is the only fertilizer used in the aquaponic system.
      2. Fish excrement is filtered from the water and cycled back into the system.
   B. Pesticides are not used in aquaponics.
      1. Pesticides contaminate fish tanks and potentially harm the fish.
      2. Pesticides kill insects, which are an additional food source for the fish.

III. Aquaponics yields larger quantities of food.
   A. Aquaponics produces two types of crops.
      1. Various species of plants can be grown in an aquaponics system.
      2. Various species of fish can be grown in an aquaponics system.
   B. Aquaponics produces greater quantities of food in a smaller area.
      1. Aquaponics farms are compounded and compact ecological systems.
      2. Aquaponics farms are capable of producing food year round.

Sample Student Paper

Pere J. Ellis II

English 1101 Honors

Dr. Cox

February 25, 2014

Aquaponics: A Viable Solution to World Hunger

Hunger and food shortages have plagued the world over and over again. The World agricultural community has historical problems with the demand and the need for more food. Technological advancements such as the bioengineering of plants have allowed them to thrive in harsher environments and produce high yields. But these advancements have not solved the world's food problems. One of the more recent developments is a technique known as aquaponics. Aquaponics is a farming method that utilizes a balanced ecological cycle between plants and aquatic animals, which creates surprising results. The cycle starts with transferring fresh water aquatic animal excrement to plants as a source of nutrients. The excrement is then filtered by the plants, and the water is recycled back to the freshwater aquatic animal environment. The cycle is constantly repeated until the plants and animals are harvested. An aquaponics system is the best system for farming because it is the most easily managed and environmentally friendly system

available, and it is capable of producing impressive crop yields several times higher than more traditional farming systems practiced today.

Aquaponics is a versatile and simple system that can be easily managed by one person. One individual can easily set up a small scale operation to completely supplement or cheapen a food budget. By incorporating inexpensive sensors and other technological devices, an aquaponics system can be expanded beyond the management capabilities of one individual. Adapting technology to a smaller system will minimize the amount of time spent on managing an aquaponics system. Electronic devices, such as timed fish feeders and automated temperature control devices, reduce the amount of time spent managing a system, while simultaneously increasing production.

Like any individually managed aquaponics systems, a commercial system can be created on any scale. The scale of a commercial aquaponics system will be limited to the available space, workforce, and funding. Commercial systems typically provide produce to individual, local, and national markets. Most commercial aquaponics systems distribute to the local market since a typical aquaponics system is a small or medium scale operation. There are a few large-scale commercial aquaponics companies capable of meeting the demands of the national market.

No matter the scale of the operation, an aquaponics system can be created anywhere. An individual can build an aquaponics system in a backyard or on the rooftop of an apartment building. Several aquaponics farms have been created on land previously incapable of producing crops of any kind. Other commercial scale systems have been built in large unused industrial buildings reconstructed for use as green houses. In addition to being able to build an aquaponics system in any physical location, an aquaponics farm can also be adapted to many environments. The ability to adapt an aquaponics system to multiple environments comes from the variety of different plants and animals which can be grown within a single system. Identifying plants and animals that thrive in atmospheres similar to the aquaponics farm's environment strengthens the production and survivability of the plants and animals in the system.

While aquaponics is a very adaptive ecological system, it is also an environmentally friendly system with no chemical additives. Unlike other farming techniques, aquaponics systems never use chemical fertilizers. This is partially because chemical fertilizers are extremely toxic to the aquatic animals in the system and there is no need for chemical fertilizers. The entire aquaponics system is a symbiotic ecosystem where the fish and plants rely on each other to survive. Fish excrement provides the nutrients needed for the plants to continue to grow. In turn, the plants filter and clean the water that is reintroduced back into the fish tanks. And the cycle is repeated over and over until harvest. As with chemical fertilizers, pesticides are not used in an aquaponics system because they are harmful to both plants and animals. Additionally, insects are a natural food source for aquatic animals such as fish, which are the most common type of aquatic animal used in an aquaponics system.

While the aquaponics system is an adaptable and environmentally friendly system, its most important quality is the amount of food that can be produced. Aquaponics farms are capable of growing two different types of crops. The adaptability of the aquaponics system is partially derived from the vast combinations of plants and animals which can be cultivated and raised. There are hundreds of various fruits and vegetables that can be grown in an aquaponics system. Broad leafy and juicy fruit bearing plants tend to do very well. Besides plants, various species of freshwater fish such as catfish, trout, and tilapia also do very well in aquaponics systems. In addition to growing fish, a few aquaponics farms have been very successful in raising different species of freshwater shrimp, further diversifying the aquaponics system.

Another advantage of the aquaponics system is that it requires a much smaller area than traditional farming systems. Aquaponics farms are compounded systems that can produce two different types of crops in the same amount of space that one traditional crop requires. This is accomplished in part by growing the plants much closer to each other. Typically, aquaponics systems are built in greenhouses, allowing for year round production, a smaller geographic footprint, and the production of larger crop yields.

The adaptable system of aquaponics is the best answer to solving world hunger because it produces organic and environmentally friendly high yield crops on less land than more traditional farming methods. Even though several aquaponics systems have been built in differing environments throughout world and have done quite well, aquaponics still has not been accepted as a viable alternative to traditional farming. Perhaps this is because it is a new idea and will take a while to catch on. Nevertheless, once aquaponics is accepted as a solution, the world may finally be rid of one of its longest living problems.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: Rhetorical Modes of Writing

4.1: Introduction
4.2: Narration
4.3: Description
4.4: Classification
4.5: Process Essay
4.6: Definition
4.7: Comparison and Contrast
4.8: Cause and Effect
4.9: Persuasion (Part 1)
4.10: Persuasion (Part 2)

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4.1: Introduction

Rhetorical modes simply mean the ways we can effectively communicate through language. Each day people interact with others to tell a story about a new pet, describe a transportation problem, explain a solution to a science experiment, persuade a customer that a brand is the best, or even reveal what has caused a particular medical issue. We speak in a manner that is purposeful to each situation, and writing is no different. While rhetorical modes can refer to both speaking and writing, in this chapter we reveal the ways in which we shape our writing according to our purpose or intent. **Your purpose for writing determines the mode you choose**.

The four major categories of rhetorical modes are narration, description, exposition, and persuasion. The narrative essay tells a relevant story or relates an event. The descriptive essay uses vivid, sensory details to draw a picture in words. The writer's purpose in expository writing is to explain or inform. Exposition is subdivided into five modes: classification, process, definition, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect. In the persuasive essay, the writer's purpose is to persuade or convince the reader by presenting one idea against another and clearly taking a stand on one side of the issue. We often use several of these modes in everyday and professional writing situations, so this chapter will also consider special examples of these modes such as personal statements and other common academic writing assignments.

Whether you are asked to write a cause/effect essay in a history class, a comparison/contrast report in biology, or a narrative email recounting the events in a situation on the job, you will be equipped to express yourself precisely and communicate your message clearly. Learning these rhetorical modes will also help you to become a more effective writer.

The best way to become a better writer is to become a closer reader. This chapter contains essays from students and professional writers that illustrate the rhetorical modes. Model student essays demonstrating these and other rhetorical modes can often be found in college and university publications such as Perimeter College's *The Polishing Cloth*.

While you read these essays, remember the purpose of the writing and pay attention to the following:

Thesis statement: What is the author's main point of the essay? Identify the sentence and see how well it is supported throughout the essay.

Topic sentence: How well does each topic sentence support the thesis, and how well does it describe the main idea of the paragraph?

Supporting evidence: Identify the evidence that the author uses to support the essay's main ideas, and gauge their credibility.

Noting these elements should shape your response to each essay and also to your own writing.

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4.2: Narration

The Purpose of Narrative Writing

Narration means the art of storytelling, and the purpose of narrative writing is to tell stories. Any time you tell a story to a friend or family member about an event or incident in your day, you engage in a form of narration. A narrative can be factual or fictional. A factual story is one that is based on, and tries to be faithful to, actual events as they unfolded in real life. A fictional story is a made-up, or imagined, story; when writing a fictional story, we can create characters and events to best fit our story.

The big distinction between factual and fictional narratives is determined by a writer's purpose. The writers of factual stories try to recount events as they actually happened, but writers of fictional stories can depart from real people and events because their intentions are not to retell a real-life event. Biographies and memoirs are examples of factual stories, whereas novels and short stories are examples of fictional stories.

Because the line between fact and fiction can often blur, it is helpful to understand what your **purpose** is from the beginning. Is it important that you recount history, either your own or someone else's? Or does your interest lie in reshaping the world in your own image—either how you would like to see it or how you imagine it could be? Your answers will go a long way in shaping the stories you tell.

Ultimately, whether the story is fact or fiction, narrative writing tries to relay a series of events in an emotionally engaging way. You want your audience to be moved by your story, which could mean through laughter, sympathy, fear, anger, and so on. The more clearly you tell your story, the more emotionally engaged your audience is likely to be.

? Exercise 1

On a separate sheet of paper, start brainstorming ideas for a narrative. First, decide whether you want to write a factual or fictional story. Then, freewrite for five minutes. Be sure to use all five minutes, and keep writing the entire time. Do not stop to think about what to write. To review other brainstorming techniques, see Chapter 2.1 Prewriting. The following are some topics to consider as you get going:

1. Childhood
2. School
3. Adventure
4. Work
5. Love
6. Family
7. Friends
8. Vacation
9. Nature
10. Space

The Structure of a Narrative Essay

Major narrative events are most often conveyed in chronological order, the order in which events unfold from first to last. Stories typically have a beginning, a middle, and an end, and these events are typically organized by time. However, sometimes it can be effective to begin with an exciting moment from the climax of the story ("flash-forward") or a pivotal event from the past ("flash-back") before returning to a chronological narration. Certain transitional words and phrases aid in keeping the reader oriented in the sequencing of a story. Some of these phrases are listed in Table of Transition Words and Phrases for Expressing Time. For more information about chronological order, see Chapter 1.5 "Methods of Organizing Your Writing."

Table of Transition Words and Phrases for Expressing Time

after/afterward	as soon as	at last	before	until
currently	during	eventually	meanwhile	when /whenever
next	now	since	soon	while
finally	later	still	then	first, second, third

The following are the other basic components of a narrative:

- **Plot**: The events as they unfold in sequence.
- **Characters**: The people who inhabit the story and move it forward. Typically, there are minor characters and main characters. The minor characters generally play supporting roles to the main character, or the protagonist.
- **Conflict**: The primary problem or obstacle that unfolds in the plot that the protagonist must solve or overcome by the end of the narrative. The way in which the protagonist resolves the conflict of the plot results in the theme of the narrative.
- **Theme**: The ultimate message the narrative is trying to express; it can be either explicit or implicit.

Writing at Work

When interviewing candidates for jobs, employers often ask about conflicts or problems a potential employee has had to overcome. They are asking for a compelling personal narrative. To prepare for this question in a job interview, write out a scenario using the narrative mode structure. This will allow you to troubleshoot rough spots, as well as better understand your own personal history. Both processes will make your story better and your self-presentation better, too.

? Exercise 2

Take your freewriting exercise from the last section and start crafting it chronologically into a rough plot summary. Be sure to use the time transition words and phrases listed in Table of Transition Words and Phrases for Expressing Time to sequence the events.

Collaboration: Please share with a classmate and compare your rough plot summary

Writing a Narrative Essay

When writing a narrative essay, start by asking yourself if you want to write a factual or fictional story, then free-write about topics that are of general interest to you. For more information about freewriting, see Chapter 2.1 "Prewriting."

Once you have a general idea of what you will be writing about, you should sketch out the major events of the story that will constitute your plot. Typically, these events will be revealed chronologically and climax at a central conflict that must be resolved by the end of the story, although you might consider using a flash-forward or flash-back for dramatic effect. The use of vivid details is crucial as you describe the events and characters in your narrative. You want the reader to emotionally engage with the world that you create in writing. To create strong details, keep the human senses in mind. You want your reader to be immersed in the world that you create, so focus on details related to sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch as you describe people, places, and events in your narrative.

As always, it is important to start with a strong introduction to hook your reader into wanting to read more. Try opening the essay with an event that is interesting to introduce the story and get it going. Finally, your conclusion should help resolve the central conflict of the story and impress upon your reader the ultimate theme of the piece. See the student and professional essays at the end of this section to read a sample narrative essay.

? Exercise 3

On a separate sheet of paper, add two or three paragraphs to the plot summary you started in the last section. Describe in detail the main character and the setting of the first scene. Try to use all five senses in your descriptions.

Sample Narrative Essay: Personal Statement

One type of narrative essay you may have reason to write is a Personal Statement. Many colleges and universities ask for a Personal Statement Essay for students who are applying for admission, to transfer, or for scholarships. Generally, a Personal Statement asks you to respond to a specific prompt, most often asking you to describe a significant life event, a personality trait, or a goal or principle that motivates or inspires you. Personal Statements are essentially narrative essays with a particular focus on the writer's personal life. The following essay was responding to the prompt: "Write about an experience that made you aware of a skill or strength you possess." As you read, pay attention to the way the writer gets your attention with a strong opening, uses vivid details and a chronological narrative to tell his story, and links back to the prompt in the conclusion.

Sample Student Essay

Alen Abramyan

Professor Jones

English 1101

2/5/2015

In the Middle of Nowhere Fighting Adversity.

A three-punch combination had me seeing stars. Blood started to rush down my nose. The Russian trainers quietly whispered to one another. I knew right away that my nose was broken. Was this the end of my journey; or was I about to face adversity?

Ever since I was seven years old, I trained myself in, "The Art of Boxing." While most of the kids were out playing fun games and hanging out with their friends, I was in a damp, sweat-filled gym. My path was set to be a difficult one. Blood, sweat, and, tears were going to be an everyday occurrence.

At a very young age I learned the meaning of hard work and dedication. Most kids jumped from one activity to the next. Some quit because it was too hard; others quit because they were too bored. My father pointed this out to me on many occasions. Adults would ask my father," why do you let your son box? It's such a dangerous sport, he could get hurt." My father always replied, "Everyone is going to get hurt in their lives, physically, mentally and emotionally. I'm making sure he's ready for the challenges he's going to face as a man." I always felt strong after hearing my father speak that way about me. I was a boy being shaped into a man, what a great feeling it was.

Year after year, I participated in boxing tournaments across the U.S. As the years went by, the work ethic and strength of character my father and coaches instilled in me, were starting to take shape. I began applying the hard work and dedication I learned in boxing, to my everyday life. I realized that when times were tough and challenges presented themselves, I wouldn't back down, I would become stronger. This confidence I had in myself, gave me the strength to pursue my boxing career in Russia.

I traveled to Russia to compete in Amateur Boxing. Tournament after tournament I came closer to my goal of making the Russian Olympic Boxing team. After successfully winning the Kaliningrad regional tournament, I began training for the Northwest Championships. This would include boxers from St. Petersburg, Pskov, Kursk and many other powerful boxing cities.

We had to prepare for a tough tournament, and that's what we did. While sparring one week before the tournament, I was caught by a strong punch combination to the nose. I knew right away it was serious. Blood began rushing down my face, as I noticed the coaches whispering to each other. They walked into my corner and examined my nose," yeah, it's broken," Yuri Ivonovich yelled out. I was asked to clean up and to meet them in their office. I walked in to the Boxing Federation office after a quick shower. I knew right away, they wanted to replace me for the upcoming tournament. "We're investing a lot of money on you boxers and we expect good results. Why should we risk taking you with a broken nose?" Yuri Ivonovich asked me. I replied, "I traveled half-way around the world to be here, this injury isn't a problem for me." And by the look on my face they were convinced, they handed me my train ticket and wished me luck.

The train came to a screeching halt, shaking all the passengers awake. I glanced out my window, "Welcome to Cherepovets," the sign read. In the background I saw a horrific skyline of smokestacks, coughing out thick black smoke. Arriving in the city, we went straight to the weigh ins. Hundreds of boxers, all from many cities were there. The brackets were set up shortly after the weigh ins. In the Super Heavyweight division, I found out I had 4 fights to compete in, each increasing in difficulty. My first match, I made

sure not a punch would land; this was true for the next two fights. Winning all three 6-0, 8-0 and 7-0 respectively. It looked like I was close to winning the whole tournament. For the finals I was to fight the National Olympic Hope Champion.

The night before the finals was coincidentally the 200th anniversary of the city. All night by my hotel, I heard screams of laughter and partying. I couldn't sleep a wink. The morning of the fight I was exhausted but anxious. I stepped into the ring knowing that I was tired. I fell behind in points quickly in the first round. I felt as if I were dreaming, with no control of the situation. I was going along for the ride and it wasn't pleasant. At the end of the second round, the coach informed me that I was far behind. "You're asleep in there," he yelled out to me, confirming how I felt. I knew this was my last chance; I had to give it my all. I mustered up enough strength to have an amazing round. It was as if I stepped out and a fresh boxer stepped in. I glanced at my coaches and see a look of approval. No matter the outcome, I felt that I had defeated adversity. My opponent's hand was raised; he won a close decision, 6-5. After I got back to my hotel, I remembered Yuri Ivonovich telling me they expected good results. "How were my results," I asked myself. In my mind, the results were great, with a broken nose and with no sleep, I came one point shy of defeating the National Olympic Hope Champion.

Even from a very young age, I knew that when my back was against the wall and adversity was knocking on my door, I would never back down. I became a stronger person, a trait my family made sure I would carry into my adult years. No matter what I'm striving for; getting into a University; receiving a scholarship; or applying for a job, I can proudly say to myself, I am Alen Abramyan and adversity is no match for me.

Online Narrative Essay Alternatives

Sandra Cisneros offers an example of a narrative essay in "Only Daughter" that captures her sense of her Chicana-Mexican heritage as the only daughter in a family of seven children. Click here to access the essay as a PDF file. (It can also be accessed here as a .doc file).

Gary Shteyngart came to the United States when he was seven years old. The son of Russian Jewish parents who struggled to provide a better life for their son, he reflects on his struggles, including becoming "American," in his *New Yorker* essay "Sixty-Nine Cents."

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4.3: Description

The Purpose of Description in Writing

Writers use description in writing to make sure that their audience is fully immersed in the words on the page. This requires a concerted effort by the writer to describe the world through the use of sensory details.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, sensory details are descriptions that appeal to our sense of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. The use of sensory details provides you the greatest possibility of relating to your audience and thus engaging them in your writing, making descriptive writing important not only during your education but also during everyday situations. To make your writing vivid and appealing, avoid empty descriptors if possible. Empty descriptors are adjectives that can mean different things to different people. Good, beautiful, terrific, and nice are examples. The use of such words in descriptions can lead to misreads and confusion. A good day, for instance, can mean far different things depending on one's age, personality, or tastes.

? Exercise 4

On a separate sheet of paper, describe the following five items in a short paragraph. Use at least three of the five senses for each description.

- Night
- Beach
- City
- Dinner
- Stranger

The Structure of a Description Essay

Description essays typically describe a person, a place, or an object using sensory details. The structure of a descriptive essay is more flexible than in some of the other rhetorical modes. The introduction of a description essay should set up the tone and focus of the essay. The thesis should convey the writer's overall impression of the person, place, or object described in the body paragraphs.

The organization of the essay may best follow spatial order, which means an arrangement of ideas according to physical characteristics or appearance. Depending on what the writer describes, the organization could move from top to bottom, left to right, near to far, warm to cold, frightening to inviting, and so on. For example, if the subject were a client's kitchen in the midst of renovation, you might start at one side of the room and move slowly across to the other end, describing appliances, cabinetry, and so on. Or you might choose to start with older remnants of the kitchen and progress to the new installations. Or maybe start with the floor and move up toward the ceiling.

? Exercise 5

On a separate sheet of paper, choose an organizing strategy and then execute it in a short paragraph for three of the following six items:

- Train station
- Your office
- Your car
- A coffee shop
- Lobby of a movie theater
- Mystery Option*

*Choose an object to describe but do not indicate it. Describe it, but preserve the mystery.

Writing a Description Essay

Choosing a subject is the first step in writing a description essay. Once you have chosen the person, place, or object you want to describe, your challenge is to write an effective thesis statement to guide your essay. The remainder of your essay describes your subject in a way that best expresses your thesis. Remember, you should have a strong sense of how you will organize your essay. Choose a strategy and stick to it. Every part of your essay should use vivid sensory details. The more you can appeal to your readers' senses, the more they will be engaged in your essay. You can read a sample essay at the end of this section.

Example 6

On a separate sheet of paper, choose one of the topics that you started in Exercise 5 and expand it into a five-paragraph essay. Expanding on ideas in greater detail can be difficult. Sometimes it is helpful to look closely at each of the sentences in a summary paragraph. Those sentences can often serve as topic sentences to larger paragraphs.

Mystery Option: Here is an opportunity to collaborate. Please share with a classmate and compare your thoughts on your mystery descriptions. Did your classmate correctly guess your mystery topic? If not, how could you provide more detail to describe it and lead them to the correct conclusion?

Sample Description Essay

In the following student essay, notice how the writer uses sensory details to describe not only the visual appearance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s tomb, but also the experience of visiting such a historically significant and emotionally moving monument. Pay particular attention to the organization of the description; how does the author move us around the monument and describe its characteristics? Is it effective?

Sharif Ray

Professor Smith

English 1101

11 June 2014

The King's Tomb

The water is always so beautiful, a hypnotic shade of baby blue, with a few autumn colored leaves floating in the ripples made by the wind. This isn't a natural body of water. No wildlife swim in the shallow waves, but this water is as full of life as any ocean. In the middle of what is fittingly called the Reflecting Pool lies the closest thing African Americans have ever had to royalty. Here lie the remains of Dr. Martin Luther King and Coretta Scott King.

Nestled between the King Center for Nonviolent Social Change and the original Ebenezer Baptist Church is a beautiful white marble monument, warmly bathed in the lights circling the tomb of our late civil rights leaders. Following Dr. King's assassination in April 1968, he was first interred at South View Cemetery, a final resting place largely reserved for African Americans during that period. It took nearly a decade before he was exhumed and placed in the beautiful ivory stone structure that he now shares with his beloved wife Coretta. The tomb, erected in 1977, sits within the south end of the Reflecting Pool. Seemingly suspended on the bright blue water, the tomb displays scriptures that only capture a small portion of the legacy left by these great leaders. Engraved on Dr. King's portion reads, "Free at last, Free at last, Thank God Almighty I'm free at last!" from his pivotal "I Have a Dream" speech given during the March on Washington in 1963. I can't help but attempt to recite the mantra in my head with the same bravado and conviction as Dr. King had when he gave the speech over fifty years ago. While the saying is a beautiful incantation, fit for a King, the cost at which that freedom was attained is still heartbreaking.

In a scene reminiscent of Romeo and Juliet, Mrs. Coretta Scott King, who passed away in January 2006 after a prolonged illness, lies next to her slain husband. For a short period following her death Mrs. King was interred in a smaller yet equally beautiful tomb directly across from her late husband. Spectacular floral arrangements surrounded her tomb as scores of mourners came from afar to pay their respects to the First Lady of the Civil Rights Movement. In November 2006, she was laid to rest in a beautiful new tomb aside her husband. The words "And now abide Faith, Hope, Love, These Three, but the greatest of these is Love," emblazon her final resting place. No truer instance could describe her legacy.

Auburn Avenue, shrouded in darkness, is void of people aside from the few vagrants that aimlessly roam the streets. Heat from the Eternal Flame warms my back as I stare off into space. The brilliant glow of the LED lights strategically placed around the tomb and the amber flicker of the Eternal Flame are the only lights that seem to suit this moment. Kneeling as if I'm preparing to pray, I take a moment to reflect. Through my clenched eyes I can hear the soft splashes of the water, the gas fueled roar of the Eternal Flame. The ambient noise of car horns, traffic and construction fade to nearly a whisper. I envision the March on Washington. I can feel the sting of water hoses pelting my black skin. I can hear the sharp sonics of police dogs barking. The feeling is overwhelming. My eyelashes clump together from the tears winning their battle against my eyelids. Nearby is a place of worship, a place where anyone can still feel the spirit of past congregations, a place where the walls hold almost as much history as any Smithsonian exhibit.

Just a few feet away sits the original Ebenezer Baptist Church, a beautiful, rustic old building left largely intact from the days of Atlanta's past. Walking inside is like stepping into a time warp, instantly sending you to the heart of the Civil Rights Movement. With the exception of a few strategically placed speakers, the church is left in its pure form. Dr. King's voice echoes through wooden pews playing his famous "Drum Major" speech, given during his final sermon at Ebenezer on February 4, 1968. With closed eyes, I have difficulty telling what era I am in. Given with almost Machiavellian prediction and passion, ten minutes engulfed with his powerful words makes me feel as though I've been baptized, born again.

Surrounded with reminders of our history's darkest time, this place brings me peace. There's an aura in this place. A powerful spirit that infiltrates my conscience with thoughts of struggle, loss and freedom. The reality of this place forces my mind to reevaluate my own mortality. Even with the knowledge of how Dr. King was vilified, degraded, and executed, his death serves as a shining beacon of light. A lone ray of sun through the seemingly endless cloud of racism and intolerance. Coretta's grace, beauty and resilience in the face of unspeakable tragedy and injustice is incomparable. Her social work and philanthropy should be an influence to women of all walks of life.

The legacy that Dr. and Mrs. King leave behind is an unfulfilled one. Equality in America has improved since Dr. King's assassination but his dream is still unrealized. There is turmoil within the King family regarding funding and management of the King Memorial, leaving the future of this serene place uncertain. Engraved on the Stone of Hope, a newly completed Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial in Washington, D.C., reads, "Out of the Mountain of Despair, a Stone of Hope." Although we still have a mountain to climb, The King's Tomb is surely my Stone of Hope.

Online Descriptive Essay Alternatives

Susan Berne visits New York and describes her impressions in "Where Nothing Says Everything," also called "Ground Zero."

Heather Rogers provides a detailed description of a landfill that challenges the reader to consider his or her own consumption and waste in this excerpt from the book Gone Tomorrow: The Hidden Life of Garbage.

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4.4: Classification

The Purpose of Classification in Writing

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. For example, cars can be classified by type (convertible, sedan, station-wagon, or SUV) or by the fuel they use (diesel, petrol, electric, or hybrid). Smaller categories, and the way in which these categories are created, help us make sense of the world. Keep both of these elements in mind when writing a classification essay. It's best to choose topics that you know well when writing classification essays. The more you know about a topic, the more you can break it into smaller, more interesting parts. Adding interest and insight will enhance your classification essays.

? Exercise 7

On a separate sheet of paper, break the following categories into smaller classifications.

- The United States
- Colleges and universities
- Beverages
- Fashion

The Structure of a Classification Essay

The classification essay opens with a paragraph that introduces the broader topic. The thesis should then explain how that topic is divided into subgroups and why. Take the following introductory paragraph, for example:

✓ Example 4.4.1:

When people think of New York, they often think of only New York City. But New York is actually a diverse state with a full range of activities to do, sights to see, and cultures to explore. In order to better understand the diversity of New York State, it is helpful to break it into these five separate regions: Long Island, New York City, Western New York, Central New York, and Northern New York.

The underlined thesis explains not only the category and subcategory, but also the rationale for breaking the topic into those categories. Through this classification essay, the writer hopes to show the readers a different way of considering the state of New York.

Each body paragraph of a classification essay is dedicated to fully illustrating each of the subcategories. In the previous example, then, each region of New York would have its own paragraph. To avoid settling for an overly simplistic classification, make sure you break down any given topic at least three different ways. This will help you think outside the box and perhaps even learn something entirely new about a subject.

The conclusion should bring all of the categories and subcategories back together again to show the reader the big picture. In the previous example, the conclusion might explain how the various sights and activities of each region of New York add to its diversity and complexity.

? Exercise 8

Using your classifications from Exercise 7, write a brief paragraph explaining why you chose to organize each main category in the way that you did.

Writing a Classification Essay

Start with an engaging opening that will adequately introduce the general topic that you will be dividing into smaller subcategories. Your thesis should come at the end of your introduction. It should include the topic, your subtopics, and the reason you are choosing to break down the topic in the way that you are. Identifying the reason or rationale for breaking down the topic in a

particular way builds the argument that will become your thesis. Use the following classification equation to craft your thesis statement:

$$\text{topic} + \text{subtopics} + \text{rationale for the subtopics} = \text{thesis}. \tag{4.4.1}$$

The organizing strategy of a classification essay is dictated by the initial topic and the subsequent subtopics. Each body paragraph is dedicated to fully illustrating each of the subtopics. In a way, coming up with a strong topic pays double rewards in a classification essay. Not only do you have a good topic, but you also have a solid organizational structure to use as your outline while drafting. Be sure you use **strong d**etails and **explanations** for each subcategory paragraph that help explain and support your thesis. Also, be sure to give examples to illustrate your points.

Finally, write a conclusion that links all the subgroups together again. The conclusion should successfully wrap up your essay by connecting it to your topic initially discussed in the introduction. See the sample professional essays at the end of the section for examples of the classification essay.

? Exercise 9

Building on Exercise 7 and Exercise 8, write a five-paragraph classification essay about one of the four original topics. In your thesis, make sure to include the topic, subtopics, and rationale for your breakdown. And make sure that your essay is organized into paragraphs that each describe a subtopic

Online Classification Essay Examples

Amy Tan describes her relationship with her heritage, her mother, and her languages in “Mother Tongue.”

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4.5: Process Essay

The Purpose of the Process Essay

The purpose of a process essay is to explain how to do something (directional) or how something works (informative). In either case, the formula for a process essay remains the same. The process is articulated into clear, definitive steps.

Almost everything we do involves following a step-by-step process. From learning to ride a bike as a child to starting a new job as an adult, we initially needed instructions to effectively execute the task. Likewise, we have likely had to instruct others, so we know how important good directions are—and how frustrating it is when they are poorly put together.

? Exercise 10

On a separate sheet of paper, make a bulleted list of all the steps that you feel are required to clearly illustrate three of the following four processes (note that the first three are directional and the fourth is informative).

- Tying a shoelace
- Parallel parking
- Planning a successful first date
- How a historical event occurred (pick one you know well!)

The Structure of a Process Essay

The process essay opens with a discussion of the process and a thesis statement that states the goal of the process. The organization of a process essay typically follows chronological order. The steps of the process are conveyed in the order in which they usually occur, and so your body paragraphs will be constructed based on these steps. If a particular step is complicated and needs a lot of explaining, then it will likely take up a paragraph on its own. But if a series of simple steps is easy to understand, then the steps can be grouped into a single paragraph.

The time transition phrases covered in the Narration section are also helpful for organizing process analysis essays (see Table of Transition Words and Phrases for Expressing Time). Words such as first, second, third, next, and finally are cues to orient readers and organize the content of the essay.

Finally, it's a good idea to always have someone else read your process analysis to make sure it makes sense. Once we get too close to a subject, it is difficult to determine how clearly an idea is coming across. Having a peer read over your analysis will serve as a good way to troubleshoot any confusing spots.

? Exercise 11

Choose two of the lists you created in Exercise 10 and start writing out the processes in paragraph form. Try to construct paragraphs based on the complexity of each step. For complicated steps, dedicate an entire paragraph. If less complicated steps fall in succession, group them into a single paragraph.

Writing a Process Essay

Choose a topic that is interesting, is relatively complex, and can be explained in a series of steps. As with other rhetorical writing modes, it is best to choose a process that you know well so that you can more easily describe the finer details about each step in the process. Your thesis statement should come at the end of your introduction, and it should state the final outcome of the process you are describing.

Body paragraphs are composed of the steps in the process. Each step should be expressed using strong details and clear examples. If you are writing a directional essay, you should provide every detail necessary for your reader to complete the process. If you are writing an instructional essay, your body paragraphs should explain the process and how it works, although you should not expect your reader to be actually performing the process. Use time transition phrases to help organize steps in the process and to orient

readers. The conclusion should thoroughly describe the result of the process described in the body paragraphs. See the student paper below, “Keep Them in Stitches,” or one of the sample professional essays to read an example of a process analysis essay.

? Exercise 12

Choose one of the expanded lists from Exercise 11. Construct a full process essay from the work you have already done. That means adding an engaging introduction, a clear thesis, time transition phrases, body paragraphs, and a solid conclusion.

Sample Process Essay

“Keep Them in Stitches,” by Jacob Gallman-Dreiling, describes the process of finding the perfect yarn for a knitting project. As you read, pay attention to the words and phrases the author uses to help orient the reader, as well as the strong details that bring the subject to life.

Outline:

Jacob Gallman-Dreiling

English 1101

Dr. Cox

24 February 2013

Outline

Thesis statement: Choosing the perfect yarn for a knitting project relies on the preferences of the person for whom the project is being made, the availability of the yarn, and the type of yarn called for by the pattern.

I. Choosing the perfect yarn for a knitting project relies on the preferences of the person for whom the project is being made.
   A. The knitter must determine if the recipient has any allergies or sensitivities.
      1. Wool yarn will aggravate allergies to lanolin.
      2. Acrylic yearns can be scratchy or leave splinters.
   B. The knitter must consider the type of project.
      1. Warmer items should be made with animal fibers.
      2. Lighter items should be made with cotton.
   C. The knitter must consider the care of the finished garment.
      1. Wool yarn should be hand washed with cold water.
      2. Cotton and acrylic yarns are machine washable.
   D. The knitter must determine what color the recipient prefers.
      1. Solid colors are great for sweaters and accessories like professional iPad cases.
      2. Variegated yarn makes for show-stopping pieces and can help maintain the knitter’s interest through the end of the project.

II. Choosing the perfect yarn for a knitting project relies on the availability of the yarn.
   A. Many people prefer to shop for yarn at a local yarn store.
      1. An advantage to shopping in person is the ability to touch the yarn.
      2. An advantage to shopping at the local yarn store is the knowledgeable staff, many of whom have been knitting for years.
      3. An advantage to shopping at the yarn store is that the staff can provide ready assistance and often have first-hand knowledge of the yarn the knitter intends to use.
   B. Other people prefer to shop at one of the many online retailers.
      1. Online retailers typically have greater stock availability.
      2. Online retailers also provide tutorial videos.

III. Choosing the perfect yarn for a knitting project relies on the type of yarn called for by the pattern.

A. The knitter must determine the proper yarn weight for the project.

1. Fingering, sport, and DK weight yarns are good for smaller projects like socks or baby clothes.
2. Worsted, bulky, and super bulky are great for sweaters, scarves, blankets, and washcloths.

B. The knitter must determine the recipient's preferences.

1. Some people prefer sweaters with a small gauge.
2. Some people prefer socks with a large gauge

Essay

Jacob Gallman-Dreiling

English 1101

Dr. Cox

24 February 2013

Keep Them in Stitches

The popularity of knitting is cyclical, rising and falling according to the prevailing opinion of women's places in society. Though internationally a unisex hobby, knitting is pervasively thought of as a woman's hobby in the United States. Knitting is currently enjoying a boost in popularity as traditionally minded women pick up the craft while women who enjoy subverting traditional gender roles have also picked up the needles to reclaim "the lost domestic arts" and give traditionally feminine crafts the proper respect. American men are also picking up the needles in greater numbers, with men's knitting guilds and retreats nationwide. This rise in popularity has made the receiving of hand-knit items special, and many people enjoy receiving these long-lasting, painstakingly crafted items. For any knitters, the perfect gift starts by choosing the perfect yarn. Choosing the perfect yarn for a knitting project relies on the preferences of the person for whom the project is being made, the availability of the yarn, and the type of yarn recommended by the pattern.

In order to select the right yarn for a knitting project, the knitter must take into account the preferences of the recipient of the knitted item. The most basic choice is the composition of the yarn to be used. Natural fibers are luxurious and tend to age better. Nevertheless, the knitter must determine if the recipient has any allergies or sensitivities. Wool yarn, for example, will aggravate allergies in those sensitive to lanolin, but mohair, alpaca, cotton, or angora will not cause discomfort. Acrylic is a synthetic yarn, but it can be scratchy or leave splinters. A second consideration is the type of project the knitter plans to complete: each project requires a specific type of yarn. For warmer items such as sweaters, blankets, or mittens, animal fibers are best. Socks, warmer-weather items, and household accessories are best served using cotton. One must also give thought to the care of the finished project. Items made from wool yarn survive best when hand washed in cold water whereas cotton and acrylic items are machine washable.

Once the type of yarn has been chosen, the knitter should consider what color yarn the recipient prefers. A solid color garment looks more professional and functions as a base piece in a wardrobe or interior design. Sweaters, iPad and tablet cases, as well as belts are well-suited to solid colors. Pieces made with variegated colors, in which the yarn has either multiple colors or shades of the same basic color, make for show pieces and accessories. Socks, gloves, scarves, and cowls are great projects for variegated yarn. Variegated yarn colors tend to keep the knitter's interest, but multicolored yarn can be difficult to use when working on larger projects which require multiple skeins of yarn. Due to the way yarn is dyed, the color at the end of one skein may not match the color at the beginning of the next skein.

The next step in determining the right yarn for a project is availability, particularly where to purchase the yarn. Some people prefer to shop at a local store for yarn because it offers many advantages. Shopping in person allows the knitter to feel the yarn he or she intends to purchase. This can help sway the knitter's opinion in regards to yarn choice. The staff at a local shop is often knowledgeable; many of them have been knitting for years, and they are usually ready to offer assistance with projects or yarn selection. If a knitter does not live near a yarn store, there are many online retailers who can fulfill their orders. Online retailers typically have a larger selection of yarns and patterns available for download. Since they cannot give personal assistance, many compensate for this deficiency by providing free tutorial videos.

Finally, choosing the right yarn for a project relies on the type of yarn called for in the knitting pattern. Patterns are highly adaptable. Most things in a pattern can be substituted: yarn type, yarn weight, color, and number of stitches can all be substituted to fit the knitter's desire, but the pattern will provide a good place to start. The yarn weight, which determines the gauge of the project, is one of the most basic substitutions. Fingering or lace weight, sport, and DK weight are lighter weight yarns typically good for smaller projects like socks or baby clothes. Those types of yarn tend to be knit on smaller needles and produce a smaller stitch. Worsted, bulky, and super-bulky yarns are chunkier, knit on larger needles, and provide beautiful, large stitches. They are well suited for sweaters, scarves, blankets, and washcloths. The preferences of the recipient must also be taken into account. Some people prefer sweaters with a small stitch, while others prefer thick, warm socks to wear around the house.

The right yarn for a knitting project is one that meets the preferences of the recipient of the project, is readily available, and matches the needs of the pattern. After the project is completed and given to the intended recipient, both the knitter and receiver can bask in the adulation the finished garment brings. These hand-knit items can be passed down for several generations, truly becoming a gift that keeps on giving.

Online Process Essay Alternatives:

Stanley Fish, an American literary theorist, public intellectual, and professor of humanities and law, tells us why "Getting Coffee Is Hard to Do."

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4.6: Definition

The Purpose of Definition in Writing

The purpose of a definition essay may seem self-explanatory: to write an extended definition of a word or term. 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.

Take, for example, a word like *alcoholism*. The way in which one defines alcoholism depends on its legal, moral, and medical contexts. Lawyers may define alcoholism in terms of its legality; parents may define alcoholism in terms of its morality; and doctors will define alcoholism in terms of symptoms and diagnostic criteria. Think also of terms that people tend to debate in our broader culture. How we define words, such as *marriage* and *climate change*, has enormous impact on policy decisions and even on daily decisions. Debating the definition of a word or term might have an impact on your relationship or your job, or it might simply be a way to understand an unfamiliar phrase in popular culture or a technical term in a new profession.

Defining terms within a relationship, or any other context, can be difficult at first, but once a definition is established between two people or a group of people, it is easier to have productive dialogues. Definitions, then, establish the way in which people communicate ideas. They set parameters for a given discourse, which is why they are so important.

When writing definition essays, avoid terms that are too simple, that lack complexity. Think in terms of concepts, such as hero, immigration, or loyalty, rather than physical objects. Definitions of concepts, rather than objects, are often fluid and contentious, making for a more effective definition essay. For definition essays, try to think of concepts in which you have a personal stake. You are more likely to write a more engaging definition essay if you are writing about an idea that has value and importance to you.

Writing at Work

Definitions play a critical role in all workplace environments. Take the term sexual harassment, for example. Sexual harassment is broadly defined on the federal level, but each company may have additional criteria that define it further. Knowing how your workplace defines and treats all sexual harassment allegations is important. Think, too, about how your company defines lateness, productivity, or contributions.

? Exercise 13

On a separate sheet of paper, write about a time in your own life in which the definition of a word, or the lack of a definition, caused an argument. Your term could be something as simple as the category of an all-star in sports or how to define a good movie. Or it could be something with higher stakes and wider impact, such as a political argument. Explain how the conversation began, how the argument hinged on the definition of the word, and how the incident was finally resolved.

Collaboration: Please share with a classmate and compare your responses.

The Structure of a Definition Essay

The definition essay opens with a general discussion of the term to be defined. You then state your definition of the term as your thesis.

The rest of the essay should explain the rationale for your definition. Remember that a dictionary's definition is limiting, so you should not rely strictly on the dictionary entry. Indeed, unless you are specifically addressing an element of the dictionary definition (perhaps to dispute or expand it), it is best to avoid quoting the dictionary in your paper. Instead, consider the context in which you are using the word. Context identifies the circumstances, conditions, or setting in which something exists or occurs. Often words take on different meanings depending on the context in which they are used. For example, the ideal leader in a battlefield setting could likely be very different from a leader in an elementary school setting. If a context is missing from the essay, the essay may be too short or the main points could be vague and confusing.

The remainder of the essay should explain different aspects of the term's definition. For example, if you were defining a good leader in an elementary classroom setting, you might define such a leader according to personality traits: patience, consistency, and

flexibility. Each attribute would be explained in its own paragraph. Be specific and detailed: flesh out each paragraph with examples and connections to the larger context.

Writing at Work

It is a good idea to occasionally assess your role in the workplace. You can do this through the process of definition. Identify your role at work by defining not only the routine tasks but also those gray areas where your responsibilities might overlap with those of others. Coming up with a clear definition of roles and responsibilities can add value to your résumé and even increase productivity in the workplace.

? Exercise 14

On a separate sheet of paper, define each of the following items in your own terms. If you can, establish a context for your definition.

1. Bravery
2. Adulthood
3. Consumer culture
4. Violence
5. Art

Writing a Definition Essay

Choose a topic that will be complex enough to discuss at length. Keep in mind that choosing a word or phrase of personal relevance often leads to a more interesting and engaging essay.

After you have chosen your word or phrase, start your essay with an introduction that establishes the relevancy of the term in the chosen specific context. Your thesis comes at the end of the introduction, and it should clearly state your definition of the term in the specific context. Establishing a context from the beginning will orient readers and minimize misunderstandings; for example, if you are defining the word childhood, you will need to explain if you are discussing the developmental stages of childhood, the history and evolution of the notion of childhood, or the cultural attitudes towards childhood in a certain country.

The body paragraphs should each be dedicated to explaining a different facet of your definition. Make sure to use clear examples and strong details to illustrate your points. Your concluding paragraph should pull together all the different elements of your definition to ultimately reinforce your thesis and explain why your definition is a compelling interpretation of your chosen word or term.

? Exercise 15

Create a full definition essay from one of the items you already defined in Exercise 14. Be sure to include an interesting introduction, a clear thesis, a well-explained context, distinct body paragraphs, and a conclusion that pulls everything together.

Sample Definition Essay

In the following essay, the writer chose to define justice in a specific context: the prison system and mass incarceration. Notice how he begins the essay with a more general definition of justice and then moves into a detailed analysis of his chosen topic, using facts, statistics, and quotations to support his argument.

Darius Porter

English 1101

Dr. Jones

September 24, 2015

Mass Incarceration: The Real Trends of the United States Justice System

The favorite part of the national anthem by most people is “the land of the free,” but how much freedom do you really have in a country that has the highest incarceration rate in the world? Record levels of incarceration have proven that the U.S justice system is a failed system in need of serious reform. The justice system was designed to punish individuals equally for their crimes and then rehabilitate them back into society. However, today’s perception of the justice system is that it promotes mass incarceration which results in a billion dollar prison industry, unjust mandatory sentencing, and racial and low income targeting. Government officials’ desire for higher conviction rates have had a negative impact on their sense of morality, which has altered their idea of justice.

The definition of justice will differ from person to person, but no matter who is giving the definition, the word “equality” should not be left out. Justice is the golden rule – treat others how you would like to be treated. Justice is blind; it does not see age, race, or social classification. Justice should punish criminals, teach them a lesson, the rehabilitate them into society. It is the balance of fairness and righteousness, a scale that should not tip to the left or the right, a scale that has been broken by the United States of America.

America’s justice system has lost its deeply rooted values, which are, “to keep communities safe, to respect and restore victims, and to return offenders who leave prison to be self-sufficient and law-abiding” (DeRoche). The shifts behind the justice system began in the 1980’s when the U.S. was battling against a drug war. The methods the government used to overcome the drug war were higher conviction rates, mandatory minimum sentences, and mass incarceration. Although these were once solutions to a major problem, today the implementation of these policies has caused negative effects on both society and the justice system.

For a country with trillions of dollars of debt, does a billion dollar prison industry sound productive, especially when both crime rates and incarceration rates are increasing? “The United States incarcerates 2.3 million individuals – more people, both per capita and in absolute terms, than any other nation in the world including Russia, China and Iran,” (Shapiro) with a ratio of ,“1 in 100 residents [in prison] and… 1 in 31 citizens on parole or probation” (DeRoche). How do the aforementioned statistics relate to a billion prison dollar industry? Well, “government employment in criminal justice has grown by 1 million employees since 1980” (Alexander qtd. in DeRoche). That’s an extensive increase in capital, funds that will be deducted from hard earned tax payer dollars. Another costly fact is, “prosecutors and police budgets are rewarded for convictions, and they are not held to account for their contribution to spending in prisons” (DeRoche). So far, our price tag is in the hundreds of millions of dollars, but this only amounts to a minor chunk of the billions that are poured into the prison industry yearly. Spending billions on a prison industry is an economic failure, “but mass incarceration provides a gigantic windfall for one special interest group: the private prison industry. As current incarceration levels harm the nation as a whole, for-profit prisons obtain taxpayer dollars in ever greater amounts,” (Shapiro). A huge amount of the billions that go into the prison industry goes into private prisons that the government pays to house inmates. While our local, state, and federal governments are in deep fiscal deficits, according to Shapiro, private prison executives are enjoying yearly bonuses of over 3 million dollars each. Shapiro cites the Securities and Exchange Commission, the largest private prison company, which reports that: “The demand for our facilities and services could be adversely affected by … leniency in conviction or parole standards and sentencing practices...” As, we, citizens are concerned over prison spending cost and mass incarceration rates, private prison companies get to have their cake and eat it too.

United States mandatory sentencing laws are one of the leading contributors to the billion dollar prison industry and private prison executives even admit it, “[private prison companies] profits depend on locking up more people,” (Shapiro); on the other hand, mandatory sentencing laws pose a prejudice upon the accused. To give someone a minimum sentence before they are found guilty of a crime is cruel, bias, and unfair. Essentially, it is the crime that you are guilty of that sentences you, not the judge. These minimum sentences do not take into account your character, criminal history, or your reason for committing the crime. It is a problem when first time offenders and repeat offenders receive the same sentence for a crime. Nevertheless, prisons are filled with first time, non-violent, offenders subject to unjust minimum sentences; which is another reason the United States is in need of serious criminal justice reform.

A drastic effect on society that results from mass incarceration and mandatory sentencing laws is the targeting of people based race and/or income level. As stated by DeRoche, “Our minority population is a reliably easier target for getting the numbers by which society measures law enforcement today,” so when police departments are pressured about high crime rates they pursue marijuana and petty crime convictions from minorities. In a further detailed study by Palta “Arrest rates for marijuana possession are four times as high for black Americans as for whites. [Although] black men spend an average of 20 percent longer behind bars in federal prisons than their white peers [even though they committed] the same crimes.” Although these are interesting facts, the more shocking facts estimate that, “1 in 3 black men will spend time behind bars during their lifetime, compared with 1 in 6 Latino men

and 1 in 17 white men" (Palta). While racial targeting is a major contributor of the statistics mentioned, income levels are also a component.

The U.S. Constitution states that all citizens are entitled to equal protection under the law. The reality though, is that the accused lower income citizen will experience the justice system differently than the accused higher income citizen. A wealthier citizen will have more money to pay for a better, more experienced, lawyer which is important because your lawyer is the person who is most important in defending you against the charges brought against you. In many instances, a person of a lower income bracket cannot afford a lawyer, so they are forced to continue the judicial process with a public defender. A public defender is an appointed lawyer who is provided by, and works for, the courts. It is widely argued that public defenders are on the side of the prosecutors. Regardless of the fact, "Statistically, trolling for low-level law breakers has distracted the public from demanding justice where it is most needed," (DeRoche). Your income will determine your experience in the justice system. People of a lower social classification may not get the protection under the law, which is needed so that the corruption will not continue.

When the crime rate and the incarceration rate are rising simultaneously, it is apparent that the United States criminal justice system is not very effective. In conclusion, DeRoche states, "Beyond the dollars spent, our failing criminal justice system contributes to our cultural decline." A true justice system is one that lowers the crime rate by punishing criminals while promoting equality, fairness, and rehabilitation skills. Robbing individuals of their freedom through record levels of mass incarceration results in a billion dollar prison industry, mandatory sentencing, and racial and low income targeting. Higher convictions rates will not solve the problem, only criminal justice reform will.

Online Definition Essay Alternatives

Judy Brady provides a humorous look at responsibilities and relationships in "I Want a Wife."

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4.7: Comparison and Contrast

The Purpose of Comparison and Contrast in Writing

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 examining them closely and comparing them, contrasting them, or both.

The key to a good compare-and-contrast essay is to choose two or more subjects that connect in a meaningful way. The purpose of conducting the comparison or contrast is not to state the obvious but rather to illuminate subtle differences or unexpected similarities. For example, if you wanted to focus on contrasting two subjects you would not pick apples and oranges; rather, you might choose to compare and contrast two types of oranges or two types of apples to highlight subtle differences. For example, Red Delicious apples are sweet, while Granny Smiths are tart and acidic. Drawing distinctions between elements in a similar category will increase the audience's understanding of that category, which is the purpose of the compare-and-contrast essay.

Similarly, to focus on comparison, choose two subjects that seem at first to be unrelated. For a comparison essay, you likely would not choose two apples or two oranges because they share so many of the same properties already. Rather, you might try to compare how apples and oranges are quite similar. The more divergent the two subjects initially seem, the more interesting a comparison essay will be.

? Exercise 16

Brainstorm an essay that leans toward contrast. Choose one of the following three categories. Pick two examples from each. Then come up with one similarity and three differences between the examples.

- Romantic comedies
- Internet search engines
- Cell phones

? Exercise 17

Brainstorm an essay that leans toward comparison. Choose one of the following three items. Then come up with one difference and three similarities.

- Department stores and discount retail stores
- Fast food chains and fine dining restaurants
- Dogs and cats

The Structure of a Comparison-and-Contrast Essay

The compare-and-contrast essay starts with a thesis that clearly states the two subjects that are to be compared, contrasted, or both, and the reason for doing so. The thesis could lean more toward comparing, contrasting, or both. Remember, the point of comparing and contrasting is to provide useful knowledge to the reader. Take the following thesis as an example that leans more toward contrasting.

Thesis statement: Organic vegetables may cost more than those that are conventionally grown, but when put to the test, they are definitely worth every extra penny.

Here the thesis sets up the two subjects to be compared and contrasted (organic versus conventional vegetables), and it makes a claim about the results that might prove useful to the reader.

You may organize compare-and-contrast essays in one of the following two ways:

1. According to the subjects themselves, discussing one and then the other
2. According to individual points, discussing each subject in relation to each point

See the "Comparison and Contrast Diagram," which diagrams ways to organize our organic versus conventional vegetables thesis. The organizational structure you choose depends on the nature of the topic, your purpose, and your audience.

Given that compare-and-contrast essays analyze the relationship between two subjects, it is helpful to have some phrases on hand that will cue the reader to such analysis. See Table of "Phrases of Comparison and Contrast" for examples.

Table of Phrases of Comparison and Contrast

Comparison	Contrast
one similarity	one difference
Both	conversely
Like	in contrast
Likewise	unlike
Similarly	while
in a similar fashion	whereas

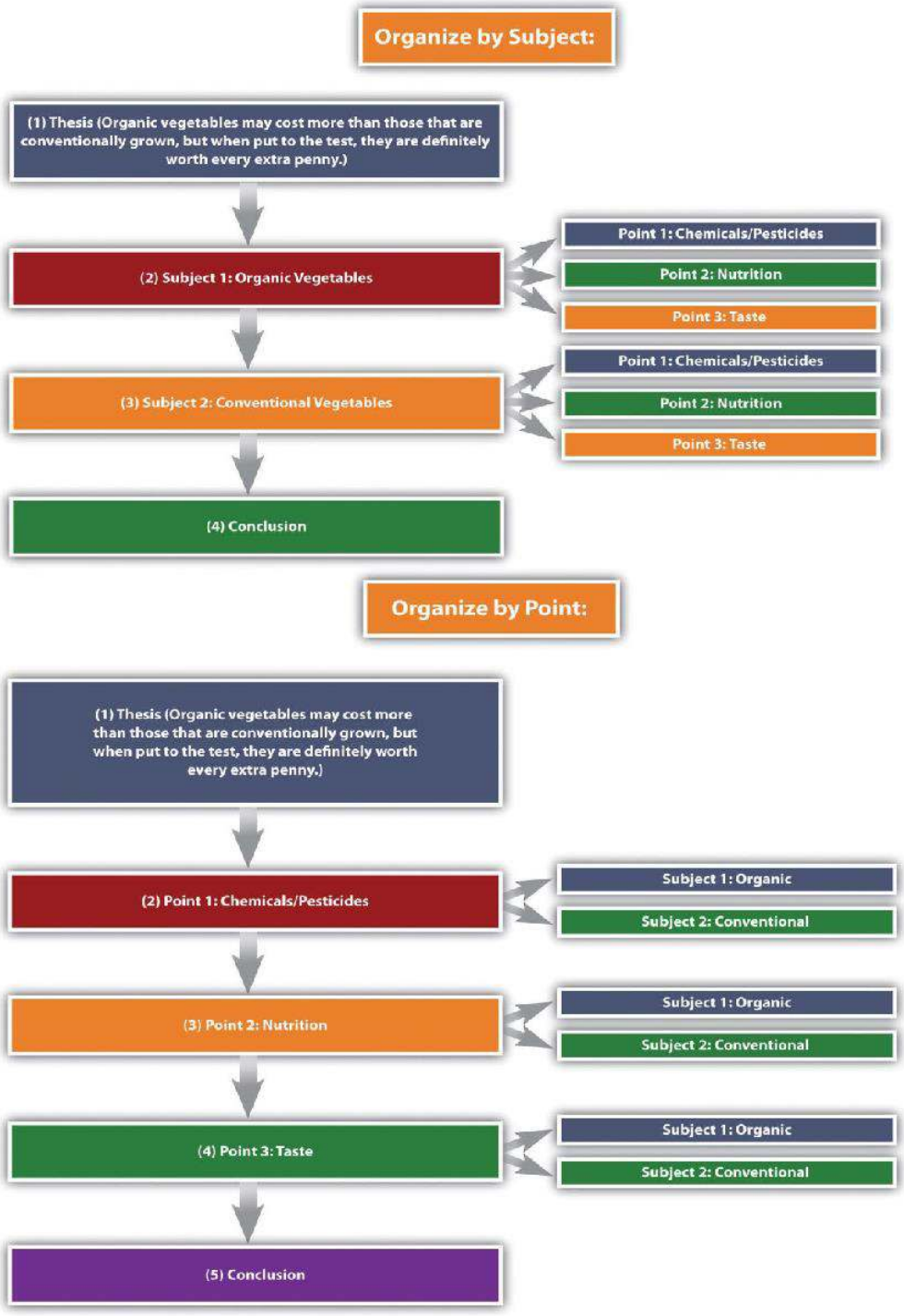


Figure **4.7.1** - Comparison and Contrast Diagram

? Exercise 18

Create an outline for each of the items you chose in Exercise 16 and Exercise 17 Use the pointby-point organizing strategy for one of them, and use the subject organizing strategy for the other.

Writing a Comparison-and-Contrast Essay

First choose whether you want to compare seemingly disparate subjects, contrast seemingly similar subjects, or compare and contrast subjects. Once you have decided on a topic, introduce it with an engaging opening paragraph. Your thesis should come at

the end of the introduction, and it should establish the subjects you will compare, contrast, or both, as well as state what can be learned from doing so. Be sure to make an argument in your thesis; explain to the reader what's at stake in analyzing the relationship between your stated subjects.

The body of the essay can be organized in one of two ways: by subject or by individual points. The organizing strategy that you choose will depend on, as always, your audience and your purpose. You may also consider your particular approach to the subjects as well as the nature of the subjects themselves; some subjects might better lend themselves to one structure or the other. Make sure to use comparison and contrast phrases to cue the reader to the ways in which you are analyzing the relationship between the subjects.

After you finish analyzing the subjects, write a conclusion that summarizes the main points of the essay and reinforces your thesis. See the student essay that follows, "Batman: A Hero for Any Time," as well as the professional essays at the end of this chapter to read some examples of the compare-and-contrast essay.

? Exercise 19

Choose one of the outlines you created in Exercise 18 and write a full compare-and-contrast essay. Be sure to include an engaging introduction, a clear thesis, well-defined and detailed paragraphs, and a fitting conclusion that ties everything together.

Sample Comparison-and-Contrast Essay

In "Batman: A Hero for Any Time," Jacob Gallman-Dreiling compares the traditional portrayal of the superhero Batman with the modern version. As you read, look for the comparison and contrast phrases that the author uses to help the reader understand the argument he is making. What kind of organizational structure does the essay follow?

Outline

Jacob Gallman-Dreiling

English 1101

Dr. Cox

16 March 2013

Outline

Thesis: Although the framework of the Batman story always remains the same, the character has been re-imagined over time to suit the changing expectations of a hero through his characterization as well as that of those who surround him, both friends and foes.

I. The backstory for Batman has always remained the same.
   A. Bruce Wayne is the son of wealthy socialites.
      1. Bruce Wayne's parents are murdered in front of him.
      2. Bruce Wayne grows up to inherit his parents' fortune.
   B. Bruce Wayne becomes Batman to avenge the violence of his parents' death.
      1. Batman fights crime with the help of Commissioner Gordon and others.
      2. Batman employs an arsenal of non-lethal weapons to aid him.

II. The characterization of Batman has changed to fit the changing expectations of a hero.
   A. In the Silver Age of comic books, Batman was portrayed as a sunny, pulpy character.
      1. Batman's stories had to adhere to the guidelines of the Comics Code Authority.
         a. Characters could not use concealed weapons.
         b. Stories required "morals."
         c. Stories could not use kidnapping or excessive violence.
         d. Stories incorporated elements of science fiction.
         e. Stories had limitations on the portrayal of female characters.

2. Batman's suits often had ridiculous properties he conveniently prepared for the upcoming mission.

B. In modern portrayals, Batman is a tortured and flawed character.

1. Batman is haunted by the death of his parents.
2. Batman has become a skilled detective and fighter.
3. Batman's suit is more armor than spandex.
4. Batman is haunted by his mistakes.
5. Batman and Commissioner Gordon conspire to hide the truth about Harvey Dent from the people of Gotham.

III. The characterization of Batman's associates has changed to fit the changing expectations of a hero.

A. In the Silver Age of comic books, Batman's associates were correspondingly lighthearted.

1. Characters like Ace the Bat-Hound, Bat-Mice, and Batwoman were created to draw in children.
2. Issues were built around a villain-of-the-week.

B. In modern portrayals, Batman's associates deal with real consequences and changes.

1. Dick Grayson grows up and goes to college.
2. Batgirl is paralyzed by the Joker.
3. Joker is given several conflicting backstories explaining his psychosis.
4. Catwoman has changed from a harmless cat-burglar to a reformed prostitute.

Student Essay

Jacob Gallman-Dreiling

English 1101

Dr. Cox

16 March 2013

Batman: A Hero for Any Time

Few ideas in this world are as timeless as that of a superhero. The ancient Greeks had Odysseus and Hercules. The British have Sherlock Holmes and Allan Quatermain. The Americans developed the modern concept of the superhero with characters like Superman and Spider-Man and created elaborate stories for the origin of their powers, much like the Greeks used when creating their heroes. While the world of superheroes was originally a white man's club, the creation of Wonder Woman ushered in a new era of diversity. Now men, women, people of color, even those of differing sexual orientations are represented among the ranks of those who fight against evil. Though teams of superheroes like the Justice League of America and the XMen have enduring popularity, few superheroes have captured the imagination like Batman. Created in 1939 by Bob Kane and Bill Finger, a boy orphaned by violence grows to become the Caped Crusader, avenger of the fictional of Gotham. This comic book hero has spurred film, radio, and television adaptations, has spawned action figures and video games, and has maintained an uninterrupted comic book publication, something few other superhero titles can boast. Although the framework of the Batman story always remains the same, the character has been re-imagined over time to suit the changing expectations of a hero through his characterization as well as through the portrayal of those who surround him, both friends and foes.

The basic framework of the Batman story has stayed the same since his debut in May, 1939. At the age of eight, Bruce Wayne, the son of wealthy socialites, witnesses his parents' murder at the hands of a desperate mugger and swears to avenge their deaths by waging war on all criminals. He grows up to inherit their fortune and the family company, using the money to fund charitable efforts and to reside in stately Wayne Manor. By night, he becomes Batman, ridding the Gotham City streets of menacing foes like the Joker, the Riddler, and Two-Face. He is aided in his fight by his sidekick Robin, Batgirl, and Commissioner Gordon, as well as his butler Alfred Pennyworth. His most enduring love interest is Selina Kyle, who is also known as the notorious cat-burglar, Catwoman. Batman eschews lethal weaponry such as guns, instead preferring to outwit his foes using his intellect to bring them to justice.

While the key details of Batman's backstory have remained unchanged for almost seventy-five years, his characterization has changed to suit the ever-evolving expectations of a superhero. When the character debuted in the Silver Age of comics—the decades between 1950 and 1970—he was a sunny, pulpy character: he was billed as the "World's Greatest Detective" and

performed as such, while reflecting what is considered to be a more innocent time. His villains were grand, but he outsmarted them using his intelligence and science. The introduction of the Comics Code Authority in 1954 restricted not only the way that stories were presented but also the types of stories that could be presented. For instance, concealed weapons were forbidden, stories were required to have "morals," and kidnapping and excessive violence were forbidden. As such, Batman's stories began incorporating elements of science fiction. As the comics demonstrate, Batman famously repels aliens and an island of animatronic dinosaurs during this period. Also, female characters in the Batman stories of this time are poorly treated. The villain Catwoman had to be shelved due to regulations regarding women and violence, while the original Batwoman was brought on as a potential love interest to quiet the growing assertion of conservative culture warriors that Batman and Robin were, in fact, lovers. When this version of Batwoman was deemed unnecessary, she was written out. This period is also famous for Batman having "batsuits" with heretofore unseen special properties, such as fireproofing and thermal heating.

Modern portrayals of Batman show him as a deeply flawed, psychologically scarred hero. During the 1980s the Comics Code's influence was waning, and writers like Frank Miller took advantage of this to tell brutal, psychological stories. Haunted by the murder of his parents, a modern Batman is dangerous and calculating. He has returned to his roots as a skilled detective and fighter, which has made him suspicious and paranoid. He is often depicted as having calculated how to defeat his allies, should the need arise, with contingency plans for everyone from Robin to Superman. Modern writers have a young Bruce Wayne train as a ninja before returning to Gotham to become Batman, so greater emphasis is placed on his stealth and fighting skills. The batsuit has reflected this change as well, shifting from a cloth/spandex suit to one that is very clearly body armor, built to withstand bullets and knives.

He is also haunted by his mistakes. After the death of Jason Todd, the second sidekick to go by the codename Robin, Batman spirals into anger and depression over not being able to prevent Jason's death at the hands of the Joker. For the next decade, Jason's murder haunts Batman alongside that of his parents as his greatest failure. He puts Jason's costume on display in the Batcave as motivation. In the 2008 Christopher Nolan film *The Dark Knight*, Batman and Commissioner Gordon conspire to hide the truth of the popular District Attorney Harvey Dent's descent into madness so that Gotham City will have a symbol of hope. While that decision is for the good of the city, it leads to Bruce Wayne's reclusion and an eight year hiatus as Batman. Such dark, psychological stories would never have been allowed during the heyday of the Comics Code Authority.

Just as the portrayal of Batman has shifted to meet the current expectations of a superhero, so too have the depictions of the characters around him, both allies and enemies. During the Silver Age, Batman's associates are, like Batman himself, light-hearted. Characters like Ace the Bat-Hound and the Bat-Mice were introduced to bring in more young readers, though these characters were rarely seen after 1964. Issues were built around a villain-of-the-week who is purely evil and has no outside motivation. These stories also tend to be episodic with no story arcs or even character arcs. The Joker is originally a calculating murderer, but his character becomes a gleeful trickster to comply with the Code.

As readers matured, the creative forces driving the various Batman outlets were able to tell more complex, meaningful stories. Thus, in modern portrayals, Batman's associates deal with real, lasting consequences and changes. Beginning with Frank Miller's *The Dark Knight* comic series, Batman's friends begin their trials. Dick Grayson, the original Robin, grows up and goes to college, being replaced by the ill-fated Jason Todd. He becomes a hero in his own right, going by the codename Nightwing and becoming the leader of the Teen Titans. In the seminal 1988 graphic novel *The Killing Joke*, Batgirl is partially paralyzed by the Joker, who shoots her through her spine as part of an effort to drive her father, Commissioner Gordon, insane. This condition lasts until the DC-Universe-wide reboot in 2011, and she is now able to walk and has resumed the mantle of Batgirl. The Joker himself has been given many different backstories, all of them horrific. Filmmakers give a nod to the Joker's varied backstories in the film *The Dark Knight* by having the Joker give conflicting accounts of how he received his trademark scars. Catwoman is originally just a bored housewife who turns to crime, but beginning in the 1980s her story retroactively changes to her being a prostitute who turns to burglary to buy freedom for herself and her sister. Once a staunch villain of Batman, this new version of the character is portrayed more as an antihero; though she is not necessarily an upstanding citizen, the new Catwoman will join forces with Batman to fight evil when it suits her. These stories appeal to an audience craving depth and substance to their characters, far different from the Pre-Vietnam War era Batman stories.

While the key details to the Batman story never change, the way the character has been presented has changed over time, as has the way his associated characters have been presented. It is perhaps this adaptability that has allowed Batman to flourish in popularity for almost seventy-five years, with no signs of that popularity waning. As the demographic for Batman's stories matures, the power

wielded by the Comics Code Authority has diminished, making darker, more meaningful stories possible. Previously one dimensional characters were given subtleties and nuances, much in the way modern film versions depict the heroes of old, from Odysseus to Sherlock Holmes. As society's norms change, this change is reflected in the way films, stories, and comic books depict superheroes. With all the changes occurring in culture worldwide, who knows what the next generation's Batman will be like?

Online Compare-and-Contrast Essay Alternatives

Deborah Tannen compares and contrasts conversation styles in "Sex, Lies and Conversation: Why Is It So Hard for Men and Women to Talk to Each Other?"

Alex Wright examines communication patterns, old and new, in "Friending, Ancient or Otherwise."

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4.8: Cause and Effect

The Purpose of Cause and Effect in Writing

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. We want to know how much money we will save over the long term if we buy a hybrid car. These examples identify only a few of the relationships we think about in our lives, but each shows the importance of understanding cause and effect.

A cause is something that produces an event or condition; an effect is what results from an event or condition. The purpose of the cause-and-effect essay is to determine how various phenomena relate in terms of origins and results. Sometimes the connection between cause and effect is clear, but often determining the exact relationship between the two is very difficult. For example, the following effects of a cold may be easily identifiable: a sore throat, runny nose, and a cough. But determining the cause of the sickness can be far more difficult. A number of causes are possible, and to complicate matters, these possible causes could have combined to cause the sickness. That is, more than one cause may be responsible for any given effect. Therefore, cause-and-effect discussions are often complicated and frequently lead to debates and arguments. Indeed, you can use the complex nature of cause and effect to your advantage. Often it is not necessary, or even possible, to find the exact cause of an event or to name the exact effect. So, when formulating a thesis, you can claim one of a number of causes or effects to be the primary, or main, cause or effect. As soon as you claim that one cause or one effect is more crucial than the others, you have developed a thesis.

? Exercise 20

Consider the causes and effects in the following thesis statements. List a cause and effect for each one on your own sheet of paper.

- The growing childhood obesity epidemic is a result of technology.
- Much of the wildlife is dying because of the oil spill.
- The town continued programs that it could no longer afford, so it went bankrupt.
- More young people became politically active as use of the Internet spread throughout society.
- While many experts believed the rise in violence was due to the poor economy, it was really due to the summer-long heat wave.

? Exercise 21

Write three cause-and-effect thesis statements of your own for each of the following five broad topics.

- Health and nutrition
- Sports
- Media
- Politics
- History

The Structure of a Cause-and-Effect Essay

The cause-and-effect essay opens with a general introduction to the topic, which then leads to a thesis that states the main cause, main effect, or various causes and effects of a condition or event.

The cause-and-effect essay can be organized in one of the following two primary ways:

1. Start with the cause and then talk about the effects.
2. Start with the effect and then talk about the causes.

For example, if your essay were on childhood obesity, you could start by talking about the effect of childhood obesity and then discuss the cause, or you could start the same essay by talking about the cause of childhood obesity and then move to the effect.

Regardless of which structure you choose, be sure to explain each element of the essay fully and completely. Explaining complex relationships requires the full use of evidence, such as scientific studies, expert testimony, statistics, and anecdotes. Be careful of resorting to empty speculation. In writing, speculation amounts to unsubstantiated guessing. Writers are particularly prone to such trappings in cause-and-effect arguments due to the complex nature of finding links between phenomena. Be sure to have clear evidence to support the claims that you make.

Because cause-and-effect essays determine how phenomena are linked, they make frequent use of certain words and phrases that denote such linkage. See Table of Phrases of Causation for examples of such terms.

Table of Phrases of Causation

as a result	consequently
because	due to
hence	since
thus	therefore

The conclusion should wrap up the discussion and reinforce the thesis, leaving the reader with a clear understanding of the relationship that was analyzed.

? Exercise 22

Look at some of the cause-and-effect relationships from Exercise 21. Outline the links you listed. Outline one using a cause-then-effect structure. Outline the other using the effect-thencause structure.

Writing a Cause-and-Effect Essay

Choose an event or condition that you think has an interesting cause-and-effect relationship. Introduce your topic in an engaging way. End your introduction with a thesis that states the main cause, the main effect, or both.

Organize your essay by starting with either the cause-then-effect structure or the effectthen-cause structure. Within each section, you should clearly explain and support the causes and effects using a full range of evidence. If you are writing about multiple causes or multiple effects, you may choose to sequence either in terms of order of importance. In other words, order the causes from least to most important (or vice versa), or order the effects from least to most important (or vice versa).

Use the phrases of causation when trying to forge connections between various events or conditions. This will help you to organize your ideas and orient the reader. End your essay with a conclusion that summarizes your main points and reinforces your thesis. At the end of this section you can read some online cause-and-effect essays.

? Exercise 23

Choose one of the ideas that you outlined in Exercise 22 and write a full cause-and-effect essay. Be sure to include an engaging introduction, a clear thesis, strong evidence and examples, and a thoughtful conclusion.

Online Cause-and-Effect Essay Examples

Norman Cousins examines cause and effect in boxing in “Who Killed Benny Paret?”

Alan Weisman examines the human impact on the planet and its effects in “Earth without People.”

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4.9: Persuasion (Part 1)

The Purpose of Persuasive Writing

The purpose of persuasion in writing is to convince, motivate, or move readers toward a certain point of view, or opinion. The act of trying to persuade automatically implies that more than one opinion on the subject can be argued.

The idea of an argument often conjures up images of two people yelling and screaming in anger. In writing, however, an argument is very different. An argument is a reasoned opinion supported and explained by evidence. To argue in writing is to advance knowledge and ideas in a positive way. Written arguments often fail when they employ ranting rather than reasoning.

Most of us feel inclined to try to win the arguments we enter. On some level, we all want to be right, and we want others to see the error of their ways. More times than not, however, arguments in which both sides try to win end up producing losers all around. The more productive approach is to persuade your audience to consider your opinion as a valid one, not simply the right one.

The Structure of a Persuasive Essay

The following five features make up the structure of a persuasive essay:

- Introduction and thesis
- Opposing and qualifying ideas
- Strong evidence in support of claim
- Style and tone of language
- A compelling conclusion

Creating an Introduction and Thesis

The persuasive essay begins with an engaging introduction that presents the general topic. The thesis typically appears somewhere in the introduction and clearly states the writer's point of view.

Acknowledging Opposing Ideas and Limits to Your Argument

Because an argument implies differing points of view on the subject, you must be sure to acknowledge those opposing ideas. Avoiding ideas that conflict with your own gives the reader the impression that you may be uncertain, fearful, or unaware of opposing ideas. Thus it is essential that you not only address counterarguments but also do so respectfully.

Try to address opposing arguments earlier rather than later in your essay. Rhetorically speaking, ordering your positive arguments last allows you to better address ideas that conflict with your own because it allows you to focus on countering those arguments. This way, you leave your reader thinking about your argument rather than someone else's. You have the last word.

Acknowledging points of view different from your own also has the effect of fostering more credibility between you and the audience. Readers will know from the outset that you are aware of opposing ideas and that you are not afraid to give them space. It is also helpful to establish the limits of your argument and what you are trying to accomplish. In effect, you are conceding early on that your argument is not the ultimate authority on a given topic. Such humility can go a long way toward earning credibility and trust with an audience ("ethos"). Audience members will know from the beginning that you are a reasonable writer, and they will trust your argument as a result. For example, in the following concessionary statement, the writer advocates for stricter gun control laws, but she admits it will not solve all of our problems with crime:

> *Although tougher gun control laws are a powerful first step in decreasing violence in our streets, such legislation alone cannot end these problems since guns are not the only problem we face.*

Such a concession will be welcome by those who might disagree with this writer's argument in the first place. To effectively persuade their readers, writers need to be realistic in their goals and humble in their approach to get readers to listen to their ideas. See Table of Phrases of Concession for some useful phrases of concession.

Table of Phrases of Concession

although	granted that
of course	still
though	yet

? Exercise 24

Try to form a thesis for each of the following topics. Remember the more specific your thesis, the better.

- Foreign policy
- Television and advertising
- Stereotypes and prejudice
- Gender roles and the workplace
- Driving and cell phones

Collaboration: Please share with a classmate and compare your answers. Choose the thesis statement that most interests you and discuss why.

Bias in Writing

Everyone has various biases on any number of topics. For example, you might have a bias toward listening to music radio stations rather than talk radio or news programs. You might have a bias toward working at night rather than in the morning, or working by deadlines rather than getting tasks done in advance. These examples identify minor biases, of course, but they still indicate preferences and opinions.

Handling bias in writing and in daily life can be a useful skill. It will allow you to articulate your own points of view while also defending yourself against unreasonable points of view. The ideal in persuasive writing is to let your reader know your bias, but do not let that bias blind you to the primary components of good argumentation: sound, thoughtful evidence and a respectful and reasonable address of opposing sides.

The strength of a personal bias is that it can motivate you to construct a strong argument. If you are invested in the topic, you are more likely to care about the piece of writing. Similarly, the more you care, the more time and effort you will put forth and the better the final product will be.

The weakness of bias is when the bias begins to take over the essay—when, for example, you neglect opposing ideas, exaggerate your points, or repeatedly insert yourself ahead of the subject by using I too often. Being aware of all three of these pitfalls will help you avoid them.

The Use of “I” in Writing

The use of “I “in writing is a topic of debate, and the acceptance of its usage varies from instructor to instructor. It is difficult to predict the preferences for all your present and future instructors, but consider the effects it can potentially have on your writing. Be mindful of the use of I in your writing because it can make your argument sound overly biased. There are two primary reasons:

Excessive repetition of any word will eventually catch the reader’s attention--and usually not in a good way. The use of “I” is no different. 2. The insertion of “I” into a sentence alters not only the way a sentence might sound but also the composition of the sentence itself. “I” is often the subject of a sentence. If the subject of the essay is supposed to be, say, smoking, then by inserting yourself into the sentence, you are effectively displacing the subject of the essay into a secondary position. In the following example, the subject of the sentence is underlined:

> *Smoking is bad.*
>
> *I think smoking is bad.*

In the first sentence, the rightful subject, smoking, is in the subject position in the sentence. In the second sentence, the insertion of I and think replaces smoking as the subject, which draws attention to I and away from the topic that is supposed to be discussed. Remember to keep the message (the subject) and the messenger (the writer) separate. Indeed, your argument will be stronger if you remove the I think and simply assert "Smoking is bad." For more information about pronoun focus in an essay see Chapter 1 "Introduction to Writing."

Key Takeaways

Developing Sound Arguments

Does my essay contain the following elements?

- An engaging introduction
- A reasonable, specific thesis that is able to be supported by evidence
- A varied range of evidence from credible sources
- Respectful acknowledgement and explanation of opposing ideas
- A style and tone of language that is appropriate for the subject and audience
- Acknowledgement of the argument's limits
- A conclusion that will adequately summarize the essay and reinforce the thesis

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4.10: Persuasion (Part 2)

Facts and Opinions

Facts are statements that can be definitely proven using objective data. The statement that is a fact is absolutely valid. In other words, the statement can be pronounced as true or false. For example, 2 + 2 = 4. This expression identifies a true statement, or a fact, because it can be proved with objective data.

Opinions are personal views, or judgments. An opinion is what an individual believes about a particular subject. However, an opinion in argumentation must have legitimate backing; adequate evidence and credibility should support the opinion. Consider the credibility of expert opinions. Experts in a given field have the knowledge and credentials to make their opinion meaningful to a larger audience; this credibility is sometimes called "**ethos**" and is one way that we make our arguments persuasive. For example, you seek the opinion of your dentist when it comes to the health of your gums, and you seek the opinion of your mechanic when it comes to the maintenance of your car. Both have knowledge and credentials in those respective fields, which is why their opinions matter to you. But the authority of your dentist may be greatly diminished should he or she offer an opinion about your car, and vice versa. In writing, you want to strike a balance between credible facts and authoritative opinions. Relying on one or the other will likely lose more of your audience than it gains.

? Exercise 25

On a separate sheet of paper, take three of the theses you formed in Exercise 24 and list the types of evidence you might use in support of that thesis.

? Exercise 26

Using the evidence you provided in support of the three theses in Exercise 25, come up with at least one counter-argument to each. Then write a concession statement, expressing the limits to each of your three arguments.

Using Visual Elements to Strengthen Arguments

Adding visual elements to a persuasive argument can often strengthen its persuasive effect. There are two main types of visual elements: quantitative visuals and qualitative visuals.

Quantitative visuals present data graphically. They allow the audience to see statistics spatially. The purpose of using quantitative visuals is to make logical appeals to the audience. An appeal based on logic is called "**logos**," and it persuades the reader using reasoning. Often we can provide information in data form to persuade the reader through logic. Quantitative visuals help display the information clearly. For example, sometimes it is easier to understand the disparity in certain statistics if you can see how the disparity looks graphically. Bar graphs, pie charts, Venn diagrams, histograms, and line graphs are all ways of presenting quantitative data in spatial dimensions.

Qualitative visuals present images that appeal to the audience's emotions. Persuading your reader based on an emotional appeal is called "**pathos**." Photographs and pictorial images are examples of qualitative visuals that can create an emotional appeal. Such images often try to convey a story, and seeing an actual example can carry more power than hearing or reading about the example. For example, one image of a child suffering from malnutrition will likely have more of an emotional impact than pages dedicated to describing that same condition in writing.

Writing at Work

You will find that many of the rhetorical devices used in writing are the same ones used in the workplace. When making a business presentation, you typically have limited time to get across your idea. Providing visual elements for your audience can be an effective timesaving tool. Quantitative visuals in business presentations serve the same purpose as they do in persuasive writing. They should make logical appeals by showing numerical data in a spatial design. Qualitative visuals should be pictures that might appeal to your audience's emotions.

Writing a Persuasive Essay

Choose a topic that you feel passionate about. If your instructor requires you to write about a specific topic, approach the subject from an angle that interests you. Begin your essay with an engaging introduction. Your thesis should typically appear somewhere in your introduction. Be sure to have a clear thesis that states your position and previews the main points your essay will address.

Start by acknowledging and explaining points of view that may conflict with your own to build credibility and trust with your audience. Also state the limits of your argument. This too helps you sound more reasonable and honest to those who may naturally be inclined to disagree with your view. By respectfully acknowledging opposing arguments and conceding limitations to your own view, you set a measured and responsible tone for the essay.

Make your appeals in support of your thesis by using sound, credible evidence. Use a balance of facts and opinions from a wide range of sources, such as scientific studies, expert testimony, statistics, and personal anecdotes. Each piece of evidence should be fully explained and clearly stated. See Chapters 1.3 and 4.7 for information on how to correctly incorporate outside sources into your writing.

Make sure that your style and tone are appropriate for your subject and audience. Tailor your language and word choice to these two factors, while still being true to your own voice.

Finally, write a conclusion that effectively summarizes the main argument and reinforces your thesis. See the sample persuasive essay at the end of this chapter, "The Value of Technical High Schools in Georgia's Business Marketplace," by student Elizabeth Lamoureux. Please note that this essay uses the MLA style of documentation, for which you can find guidelines at Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL) website: http://owl.english.purdue.edu.

? Exercise 27

Choose one of the topics you have been working on throughout this section. Use the thesis, evidence, opposing argument, and concessionary statement as the basis for writing a full persuasive essay. Be sure to include an engaging introduction, clear explanations of all the evidence you present, and a strong conclusion.

Sample Persuasive Essay

In this student paper, the student makes a persuasive case for the value of technical high schools in Georgia. As you read, pay attention to the different persuasive devices the writer uses to convince us of her position. Also note how the outline gives a structure to the paper that helps lead the reader step-by-step through the components of the argument.

Outline

Elizabeth Lamoureux

Dr. Cox

English 1101 Honors

April 25, 2013

Outline

Thesis: Technical high schools should be established in every county in Georgia because they can provide the technical training that companies need, can get young people into the workforce earlier, and can reduce the number of drop outs.

I. Technical high schools can provide the technical training that companies in Georgia need.

A. Businesses can provide input regarding jobs needed in specific technical fields.

1. Education can focus on these specific technical fields.
2. Education can work with business to fill these positions.

B. Businesses can provide apprenticeship programs.

1. Apprenticeship programs can be a vital part of a student's education.

2. Apprenticeship programs are integral to Germany's educational program, providing a realistic model for technical high schools in Georgia.

II. Technical high schools can prepare students to enter the workforce earlier.

A. Students not interested in college can enter the workforce upon high school graduation.

1. Students train during their high school years for their chosen profession.
2. Students begin to work in a profession or trade where there is a need.

B. Students can begin to earn a living upon graduation.

1. Students will become independent and self-supporting at the age of eighteen when many of their peers are still dependent upon their parents.
2. Students can make more money over the course of their lifetimes.

III. Technical high schools can reduce the number of drop outs.

A. Students would stay in school because they take courses that they enjoy.

1. Students are more motivated to take courses in which they have an interest.
2. Students will find both core and specialized classes more interesting and valuable when they can see the practical application of the subjects.

B. Students would no longer need to drop out to support their families.

1. Students would be able to earn a living wage while still taking classes that would eventually lead to full-time employment.
2. Students would learn financial skills through experience with money management.

Student Essay

Elizabeth Lamoureux

Dr. Cox

English 1101 Honors

April 25, 2013

The Value of Technical High Schools in Georgia's Business Marketplace

Businesses need specialized workers; young people need jobs. It seems like this would be an easy problem to solve. However, business and education are not communicating with each other. To add to this dilemma, emphasis is still put on a college education for everyone. Samuel Halperin, study director of the Commission on Work, Family, and Citizenship for the W. T. Grant Foundation, co-authored two reports: "The Forgotten Half: Non-College Youth in America" and "The Forgotten Half: Pathways to Success for America's Youth and Young Families." Halperin states: "While the attention of the nation was focused on kids going to college . . . the truth is that 70 percent of our adults never earn a college degree" (qtd. in Rogers). According to an article in Issues in Science and Technology, the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that there will be more need for skills obtained through "community colleges, occupational training, and work experience" (Lerman). As Anne C. Lewis points out, although the poor job situation is recognized as detrimental to American youth, President Bush tried to get rid of career and technical education (CTE) and "promote strictly academic programs." Luckily, Congress did not support it (Lewis 5). The figure for U.S. teen joblessness in October 2009 was 27.6 percent, the highest since World War II (Karaim). According to Thomas E. Persing, Americans are "disregarding the 50 percent who enter college and fail to graduate. . . ." Since everyone does not want or need to go to college, young people need an alternative choice, namely, technical high schools. Technical high schools should be established in every county in Georgia because they can provide the technical training that companies need, can get young people into the work force earlier, and can reduce the number of drop outs.

Technical high schools provide students with the technical training that companies need. By getting input from businesses on exactly what their specialized needs are, school systems could adapt their curricula to accommodate the needs of businesses. According to an article in Issues in Science and Technology, "employers report difficulty in recruiting workers with adequate skills." The article goes on to say that "the shortage of available skills is affecting their ability to serve customers, and 84% of the firms say that the K-12 school system is not doing a good job preparing students for the workplace" (Lerman). Education can work

with businesses to provide them with the workforce they need, and students can learn the skills they need through apprenticeship programs.

Business can be further involved by providing these apprenticeship programs, which can be a vital part of a student's education. Currently, Robert Reich, economist and former Secretary of Labor, and Richard Riley, Secretary of Education, have spoken up for apprenticeship programs (Persing). In these programs, not only do students learn job-specific skills, but they also learn other skills for success in the work place, such as "communication, responsibility, teamwork, allocating resources, problem-solving, and finding information" (Lerman). Businesses complain that the current educational system is failing in this regard and that students enter the workforce without these skills.

The United States could learn from other countries. Apprenticeship programs are integral to Germany's educational program, for example. Because such large numbers of students in a wide array of fields take advantage of these programs, the stigma of not attending college is reduced. Timothy Taylor, the Conversable Economist, explains that most German students complete this program and still have the option to pursue a postsecondary degree. Many occupations are represented in this program, including engineering, nursing, and teaching. Apprenticeship programs can last from one to six years and provide students with a wage for learning. This allows both business and student to compete in the market place. According to Julie Rawe, "under Germany's earn-while-you-learn system, companies are paying 1.6 million young adults to train for about 350 types of jobs. . . ."

A second important reason technical high schools should be promoted in Georgia is that they prepare students to enter the work force earlier. Students not interested in college enter the work force upon high school graduation or sooner if they have participated in an apprenticeship or other cooperative program with a business. Students train during their high school years for their chosen profession and often work for the company where they trained. This ensures that students begin to work in a profession or trade where there is a need.

Another positive factor is that jobs allow students to earn a living upon graduation or before. Even though students are considered adults at eighteen, many cannot support themselves. The jobs available to young people are primarily minimum wage jobs which do not provide them with enough resources to live independently. One recent study indicates that the income gap is widening for young people, and "In March 1997, more than one-fourth of out-ofschool young adults who were working full-time were earning less than the poverty line income standard of just over $16,000 annually for a family of four" ("The Forgotten Half Revisited"). Conversely, by entering the work force earlier with the skills businesses need, young people make more money over their lifetimes. Robert I. Lerman considers the advantages:

> *Studies generally find that education programs with close links to the world of work improve earnings. The earnings gains are especially solid for students unlikely to attend or complete college. Cooperative education, school enterprises, and internship or apprenticeship increased employment and lowered the share of young men who are idle after high school.*

Young people can obviously profit from entering the work force earlier.

One of the major benefits of promoting technical high schools in Georgia is that they reduce the number of dropouts. According to an article in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, the figure for dropouts for the Atlanta metro area is about thirty-four percent (McCaffrey and Badertscher A16). The statistic for Germany's dropout rate is less than nine percent (Rawe). As Rawe maintains, students stay in school because they cannot get the job if they do not have the diploma. Beyond the strong incentive of a job, students are more motivated to take courses in which they have an interest. In addition to the specialized career classes, students are still required to take core classes required by traditional high schools. However, practical application of these subjects makes them more interesting and more valuable to the students.

Another reason students drop out is to support their families. By participating in a program in which they are paid a wage and then entering that job full time, they no longer need to drop out for this reason. It is necessary for many students to contribute financially to the family: by getting a job earlier, they can do this. Joining the work force early also provides students with financial skills gained through experience with money management.

The belief of most Americans that everyone needs to have a college education is outdated. The United States needs skilled employees at all levels, from the highly technical to the practical day to day services society needs to sustain its current standard of living. Germany is doing this through its apprenticeship programs which have proven to be economically successful for both businesses and workers. If the State of Georgia put technical high schools in every county, businesses would get employees with the skills they need; young people would get into good paying jobs earlier, and schools would have fewer dropouts.

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Online Persuasive Essay Alternatives

Martin Luther King, Jr. writes persuasively about civil disobedience in "Letter from Birmingham Jail." You can see the original document here.

Michael Levin argues "The Case for Torture."

Alisa Solomon argues "The Case against Torture"

? Exercise 28

The thesis statement is a fundamental element of writing regardless of what rhetorical mode in which you write. Formulate one more thesis for each of the modes discussed in this chapter.

? Exercise 29

Which rhetorical mode seems most aligned with who you are as a person? That is, which mode seems most useful to you? Explain why in a paragraph.

? Exercise 30

Look closely at the texts and articles you have read. Document in a journal exactly what type of rhetorical mode is being used. Sometimes one mode is used for an entire article, but other times you will see different modes within one article. The more you can detect various ways of communicating ideas, the easier it will be to communicate ideas yourself.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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5.1: Why It Matters- Analysis and Synthesis

Why think and write analytically?



In college courses, you will be asked to read, reason, and write analytically. Effective analysts can distinguish the whole, identify parts, infer relationships, and make generalizations. Those skills enable individuals to connect ideas, detect inconsistencies, and solve problems in a systematic fashion. Understanding what analysis is, how to apply it, and how to convey the results effectively will be invaluable to you throughout your college and professional careers.

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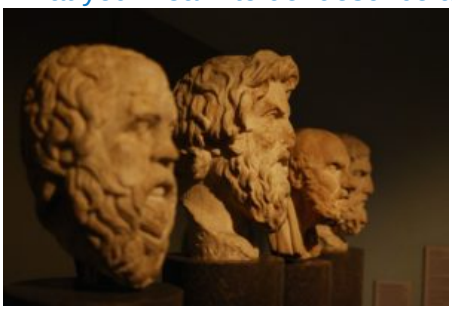
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5.2: Introduction to Analysis As Critical Thinking

What you'll learn to do: describe analysis



Analysis is a critical thinking skill that has been applied to academic study since the time of Aristotle (384–322 BCE). It is a foundational tool across disciplines, from chemistry to literature to business to philosophy. Understanding what analysis is will be of value to you throughout your college career.

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5.3: What Is Analysis?

Learning Objective

- Explain the basics of analysis

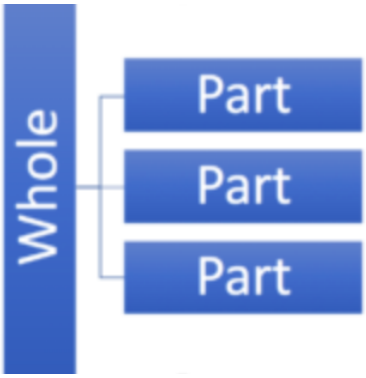


Figure 1. Analysis consists of breaking something down and taking a close look at each of its parts while looking for themes, patterns, and assumptions.

Critical thinking skill **analysis** is the process of methodically breaking something down to gain a better understanding of it. Analysis also includes the ability to connect pieces of information as the basis for generalization or explanation. Analytical assignments in college often couple analysis with the critical thinking skills of interpretation and evaluation.

Analysis can be applied to content but can also cover form, function, and context. For example, an analysis assignment in an art appreciation class might ask you to analyze the subject and iconography of a painting, but also expect you to analyze the use of shape, space, color, and texture (form), as well as the artist's intended purpose (function) and the culture or time period in which the work was created (context).

While each academic discipline characterizes the analytic process to suit its needs, the essential skills of analysis are the following:

1. Breaking down information or artifacts into component parts
2. Uncovering relationships among those parts
3. Determining motives, causes, and underlying assumptions
4. Making inferences and finding evidence to support generalizations

The Language of Analytical Assignments

Although analysis is ubiquitous in college, students sometimes fail to recognize when they are being asked to apply analysis. Often that confusion stems from differences in vocabulary across different disciplines.

For example, each of the verbs in the following list may denote some type of analysis:

Analyze	Deduce	Examine	Outline
Break down	Derive	Experiment	Point out
Calculate	Diagram	Identify	Probe
Categorize	Differentiate	Induce	Question
Classify	Discriminate	Inspect	Separate
Compare	Dissect	Infer	Simplify
Contrast	Distill	Investigate	Test

Although this list is a good start, these aren't the only verbs that denote analysis. Another way to tell whether an assignment is asking for analysis is this: If the assignment asks you to **determine how the parts of something relate to the whole, how something works, what something means, or why it's important**, the assignment is asking you to analyze. Below is a list of sample analytic assignments that meet these criteria.

How the parts relate to the whole:

- Classify problems to identify the appropriate algorithms.
- Determine how well a feminist interpretation is supported by evidence contained in a work.

How something works:

- Recognize flaws, inconsistencies, and logical fallacies in an opinion editorial.
- Distinguish between facts and assumptions in a scientific report.

What something means:

- Interpret quantitative relationships in a graph.
- Analyze data/situations to identify root problems.

Why something is important:

- Assess alternative solutions to the health care crisis.
- Separate relevant from irrelevant information in testimony.

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Glossary

analysis: the process of methodically breaking something down to gain a better understanding of it

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5.4: Overcoming Barriers to Analysis

Learning Objective

- Recognize barriers to analysis

Analysis is a complex-thinking skill, and all of us put up walls to avoid having to analyze certain situations, ideas, or information. While those barriers can sometimes provide comfort, they can also block us from deeper understanding and appreciation. Below are some common obstacles to analysis and some strategies for overcoming them.

Barrier 1: Analysis might challenge my worldview. The purpose of analysis is to understand something better or more deeply, so as you analyze an idea or issue, your thinking may change and evolve. Deeper learning or understanding is valuable. It exposes falsehoods and moves us closer to truth. A good strategy for overcoming this barrier is to approach analysis with an open mind. Don't approach analysis thinking *I will prove this is right* or *I will prove this is false*. Begin analysis by thinking *I want to understand this more deeply*.



Barrier 2: Analysis kills fun. When studying something intently, people often see flaws or imperfections they hadn't noticed before. Those imperfections can diminish an analyst's enjoyment or appreciation of the object. Furthermore, once in the habit of analyzing, some people can't turn off their analytical instincts. Because intense analysis is hard, it becomes exhausting to run around analyzing everything. Some people avoid analysis because they fear they don't have the energy for it. To avoid analysis burnout, manage it in small chunks. Don't try to analyze an artifact in one session. Tackle it in several short sessions with breaks in between. If you find yourself analyzing things beyond your assignment, congratulate yourself on your growing prowess, but remember that sometimes it's best to turn off the skills before you exhaust them.



Barrier 3: Analysis invents meaning. Some people equate analysis with "speculation," "guessing," or "inferring meaning that isn't there." If analysis is done poorly, it can be inaccurate and damaging. The onus is on analysts to support their interpretations with plenty of evidence. Keep in mind that the purpose of analysis is not to present unequivocal truth. Effective and complex analysis offers a well-supported interpretation with the aim of convincing the reader that the interpretation is plausible rather than invincible. By supporting your analysis with a variety of solid evidence, you will avoid the criticism that your analysis is mere conjecture.



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5.5: Suspending Judgment

Learning Objective

- Describe the importance of suspending judgment to analysis

One of the most important steps in the process of thinking and writing analytically is to suspend judgment about topics, artifacts, ideas, or whatever it is you want to analyze. Critical thinking yields the best results when you approach something with an open mind. When we bring our biases and presuppositions to a topic, we aren't allowing a truly organic research process to happen. This isn't to say that we can ever be completely objective or somehow erase our minds of prior knowledge; however, if we try to at least suspend judgments about that knowledge, we increase our likelihood of being open to new discoveries in the research process.

It is also important to suspend judgment when undertaking analysis so that we will not implicitly signal to our reader that our mind is already made up concerning the issue or object at hand. Implying this kind of rigidity, whether in the tone or the single-mindedness of our approach, suggests to our audience that our work is not really attempting to methodically discover or clarify anything. The result can be a paper or presentation that seems presumptuous, as if we do not have to do any work to convince our reader. This can be very off-putting, and will likely not result in a successful analysis.

For example, if you wanted to analyze how campus administration might identify problems with and make improvements to parking, and you have received numerous parking tickets over the past year, you might be tempted to enter your research process with preconceived notions of what should happen because of how certain changes could benefit you. Paying for parking tickets is no fun, to be sure, but your best approach to researching such a topic would be to look at the big picture, and to examine how parking impacts everyone on campus.

Thus, your goal would be to analyze all the problems with parking and how solutions might benefit multiple parties. Suspending judgment about the parking situation on this campus might help you make comparisons with similar campuses, for instance, and determine that the policies on our campus aren't really that bad when you look at the bigger picture. Of course, you might find that we have a terrible campus parking situation, but the point is that you cannot examine the issue fairly until you step back and look at it as objectively as possible.

Watch It

This video explains the following five tips to improve your critical thinking, which will help you suspend judgment and analyze sources before you begin writing:

1. Formulate your question
2. Gather information
3. Apply the information
4. Consider the implications
5. Explore other points of view

A link to an interactive elements can be found at the bottom of this page.

You can view the transcript for "5 tips to improve your critical thinking- Samantha Agoos" here (opens in new window).

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5.6: Introduction to the Keys to Successful Analysis

What you'll learn to do: recognize and evaluate keys to successful analytical writing



Some might think that people just get analysis or they don't. However, most people will get better at analysis the more they do it, and there are tips to get you thinking and writing more analytically. Read over the content in this section to learn how.

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5.7: Analytical Thesis Statements

Learning Objective

- Describe strategies for writing analytical thesis statements
- Identify analytical thesis statements

In order to write an analysis, you want to first have a solid understanding of the thing you are analyzing. Remember, this means:

1. Breaking down information or artifacts into component parts
2. Uncovering relationships among those parts
3. Determining motives, causes, and underlying assumptions
4. Making inferences and finding evidence to support generalizations

You may be asked to analyze a book, an essay, a poem, a movie, or even a song. For example, let's suppose you want to analyze the lyrics to a popular song. Pretend that a rapper called Escalade has the biggest hit of the summer with a song titled "Missing You." You listen to the song and determine that it is about the pain people feel when a loved one dies. You have already done analysis at a surface level and you want to begin writing your analysis. You start with the following thesis statement:

> "Escalade's hit song "Missing You" is about being sad after a loved one dies."

There isn't much depth or complexity to such a claim because the thesis doesn't give much information. In order to write a better thesis statement, we need to dig deeper into the song. What is the importance of the lyrics? What are they really about? Why is the song about being sad? Why did he present it this way? Why is it a powerful song? Ask questions to lead you to further investigation. Doing so will help you better understand the work, but also help you develop a better thesis statement and stronger analytical essay.

Formulating an Analytical Thesis Statement

When formulating an analytical thesis statement in college, there are three words/phrases to remember:

1. What? What is the claim?
2. How? How is this claim supported?
3. So what? In other words, "What does this mean, what are the implications, or why is this important?"

Telling readers what the lyrics are might be a useful way to let them see what you are analyzing and/or to isolate specific parts where you are focusing your analysis. However, you need to move far beyond "what." Instructors at the college level want to see your ability to break down material and demonstrate deep thinking. The claim in the thesis statement above said that Escalade's song was about being sad, but what evidence do we have for that, and why does that matter?

Effective analytical thesis statements require digging deeper and perhaps examining the larger context. Let's say you do some research and learn that the rapper's mother died not long ago, and when you examine the lyrics more closely, you see that a few of the lines seem to be specifically about a mother rather than a loved one in general.

Then you also read a recent interview with Escalade in which he mentions that he's staying away from hardcore rap lyrics on his new album in an effort to be more mainstream and reach more potential fans. Finally, you notice that some of the lyrics in the song focus on not taking full advantage of the time we have with our loved ones. All of these pieces give you material to write a more complex thesis statement, maybe something like this:

> "In the hit song 'Missing You,' Escalade draws on his experience of losing his mother and raps about the importance of not taking time with family for granted in order to connect with a broad audience."

Such a thesis statement is focused while still allowing plenty of room for support in the body of your paper. It addresses the questions posed above:

1. What? What is the claim?
    - The claim is that Escalade connects with a broader audience by rapping about the importance of not taking time with family for granted in his hit song, "Missing You."

2. How? How is this claim supported?
    - This claim is supported in the lyrics of the song and through the "experience of losing his mother."
3. So what? In other words, "What does this mean, what are the implications, or why is this important?"
    - The implications are that we should not take valuable things for granted.

Certainly, there may be many ways for you to address "what," "how," and "so what," and you may want to explore other ideas, but the above example is just one way to more fully analyze the material. Note that the example above is not formulaic, but if you need help getting started, you could use this template format to help develop your thesis statement.

> Through _____(how?), we can see that _____(what?), which is important because _____(so what?).[1]

Just remember to think about these questions (what? how? and so what?) as you try to determine why something is what it is or why something means what it means. Asking these questions can help you analyze a song, story, or work of art, and can also help you construct meaningful thesis sentences when you write an analytical paper.

? ? Key Takeaways for analytical theses

Don't be afraid to let your claim evolve organically. If you find that your thinking and writing don't stick exactly to the thesis statement you have constructed, your options are to scrap the writing and start again to make it fit your claim (which might not always be possible) or to modify your thesis statement. The latter option can be much easier if you are okay with the changes. As with many projects in life, writing doesn't always go in the direction we plan, and strong analysis may mean thinking about and making changes as you look more closely at your topic. Be flexible.

Use analysis to get you to the main claim. You may have heard the simile that analysis is like peeling an onion because you have to go through layers to complete your work. You can start the process of breaking down an idea or an artifact without knowing where it will lead you or without a main claim or idea to guide you. Often, careful assessment of the pieces will bring you to an interesting interpretation of the whole. In their text *Writing Analytically*, authors David Rosenwasser and Jill Stephen posit that being analytical doesn't mean just breaking something down. It also means constructing understandings. Don't assume you need to have deeper interpretations all figured out as you start your work.

When you decide upon the main claim, make sure it is reasoned. In other words, if it is very unlikely anyone else would reach the same interpretation you are making, it might be off base. Not everyone needs to see an idea the same way you do, but a reasonable person should be able to understand, if not agree, with your analysis.

? ? Try It

Look for analytical thesis statements in the following activity.

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290920118213584118/embed

Using Evidence

An effective analytical thesis statement (or claim) may sound smart or slick, but it requires evidence to be fully realized. Consider movie trailers and the actual full-length movies they advertise as an analogy. If you see an exciting one-minute movie trailer online and then go see the film only to leave disappointed because all the good parts were in the trailer, you feel cheated, right? You think you were promised something that didn't deliver in its execution. A paper with a strong thesis statement but lackluster evidence feels the same way to readers.

So what does strong analytical evidence look like? Think again about "what," "how," and "so what." A claim introduces these interpretations, and evidence lets you show them. Keep in mind that evidence used in writing analytically will build on itself as the piece progresses, much like a good movie builds to an interesting climax.

Try It

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Key Takeaways about evidence

Be selective about evidence. Having a narrow thesis statement will help you be selective with evidence, but even then, you don't need to include any and every piece of information related to your main claim. Consider the best points to back up your analytic thesis statement and go deeply into them. (Also, remember that you may modify your thesis statement as you think and write, so being selective about what evidence you use in an analysis may actually help you narrow down what was a broad main claim as you work.) Refer back to our movie theme in this section: You have probably seen plenty of films that would have been better with some parts cut out and more attention paid to intriguing but underdeveloped characters and/or ideas.

Be clear and explicit with your evidence. Don't assume that readers know exactly what you are thinking. Make your points and explain them in detail, providing information and context for readers, where necessary. Remember that analysis is critical examination and interpretation, but you can't just assume that others always share or intuit your line of thinking. Need a movie analogy? Think back on all the times you or someone you know has said something like "I'm not sure what is going on in this movie."

Move past obvious interpretations. Analyzing requires brainpower. Writing analytically is even more difficult. Don't, however, try to take the easy way out by using obvious evidence (or working from an obvious claim). Many times writers have a couple of great pieces of evidence to support an interesting interpretation, but they feel the need to tack on an obvious idea—often more of an observation than analysis—somewhere in their work. This tendency may stem from the conventions of the five-paragraph essay, which features three points of support. Writing analytically, though, does not mean writing a five-paragraph essay (not much writing in college does). Develop your other evidence further or modify your main idea to allow room for additional strong evidence, but avoid obvious observations as support for your main claim. One last movie comparison? Go take a look at some of the debate on predictable Hollywood scripts. Have you ever watched a movie and felt like you have seen it before? You have, in one way or another. A sharp reader will be about as interested in obvious evidence as he or she will be in seeing a tired script reworked for the thousandth time.

Watch It

One type of analysis you may be asked to write is a literary analysis, in which you examine a piece of text by breaking it down and looking for common literary elements, such as character, symbolism, plot, setting, imagery, and tone.

The video below compares writing a literary analysis to analyzing a team's chances of winning a game—just as you would look at various factors like the weather, coaching, players, their record, and their motivation for playing. Similarly, when analyzing a literary text you want to look at all of the literary elements that contribute to the work.

The video takes you through the story of Cinderalla as an example, following the simplest possible angle (or thesis statement), that "Dreams can come true if you don't give up." (Note that if you were really asked to analyze Cinderella for a college class, you would want to dig deeper to find a more nuanced and interesting theme, but it works well for this example.) To analyze the story with this theme in mind, you'd want to consider the literary elements such as imagery, characters, dialogue, symbolism, the setting, plot, and tone, and consider how each of these contribute to the message that "Dreams can come true if you don't give up."

A link to an interactive elements can be found at the bottom of this page.

You can view the transcript for "How to Analyze Literature" here (opens in new window).

1. UCLA Undergraduate Writing Center. *"What, How and So What?" Approaching the Thesis as a Process.*https://wp.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/UWC_handouts_What-How-So-What-Thesis-revised-5-4-15-RZ.pdf↵

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5.8: Making Inferences

Learning Objectives

- Use analytical thinking to make inferences

Making inferences means coming to a conclusion based on evidence and reasoning. Sometimes we need to infer the main idea of a passage, or figure out an implied thesis by carefully "reading between the lines." This may be necessary if the main idea is not clearly stated, if the reading begins with a question that has no direct answer, when the text compares or contrasts various things, or if the reading is satirical. A satire is a type of humorous writing that relies on exaggeration to make its points, and the effectiveness of this strategy depends on the reader recognizing the details being scrutinized by the writer. This means that the reader will need to read analytically and pay close attention to specific parts of the text.

Watch It

Some thesis statements are **explicit**—stated directly in the text itself. Others are **implicit**—implied by the content but not written in one distinct sentence. The following video describes these terms and introduces the excellent idea of the reading voice and the thinking voice that strong readers use as they work through a text.

To help keep you on your toes, the author of this video challenges you to find her spelling mistake in one of her cards along the way!

A link to an interactive elements can be found at the bottom of this page.

You can view the transcript for "explicit v implicit" here (download).

When you are left to make inferences, you can check whether your inference is logical or not by asking these questions:

- Is it based on words and sentences in the text?
- Is it based more on the author's words than on your point of view?
- Does it manage to avoid contradicting other statements made in the text?
- Does it align with the author's attitude or tone about the topic?
- Could it function as the thesis or topic sentence?

The video below offers several examples that show how we make inferences in different situations based on the available evidence. Pay close attention to the details that might lead us to a particular interpretation of meanings that are not directly stated. Also be sure to answer the two multiple choice questions that accompany the examples, and to listen carefully to the explanation for how we can arrive at an accurate understanding based on inference.

Watch It

A link to an interactive elements can be found at the bottom of this page.

You can view the transcript for "Inferencing" here (opens in new window).

GLOSSARY

implicit: a perspective that is implied without being stated directly in a single sentence

explicit: a perspective that is directly stated in a single locatable sentence

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5.9: Introduction to Types of Analysis

What you'll learn to do: identify and apply different types of analytic processes



You will be facing many analytical writing tasks during your time at college, regardless of your major or field. As you learned in the last section, analysis is a function of mature critical thinking. In fact, analysis is a component of almost all academic and professional writing tasks. You will encounter various synonyms for analysis in assignment descriptions including interpretation, inquiry, or evaluation. All of these terms denote the same skill: "to break down or investigate." In this section, we will "break down" several common analytical writing assignments. This section will teach you how to apply context-appropriate analytic processes to your writing tasks.

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5.10: Rhetorical Analysis

Learning Objectives

- Describe rhetorical analysis
- Analyze an argument using rhetorical analysis

Sometimes, the best way to learn how to write a good argument is to start by analyzing other arguments. When you do this, you get to see what works, what doesn't, what strategies another author uses, what structures seem to work well and why, and more.

When we understand the decisions other writers make and why, it helps us make more informed decisions as writers. We can move from being the "accidental" writer, where we might do well but are not sure why, to being a "purposeful" writer, where we have an awareness of the impact our writing has on our audience at all levels.

The Importance of Rhetoric

Rhetoric is the art of effective and persuasive communication that is appropriate to a given situation. Although a thorough understanding of effective oral, written, and visual communication can take years of study, the foundation of such communication begins with rhetoric. With this foundation, even if you are just starting out, you can become a more powerful, more flexible writer. Rhetoric is key to being able to write effectively and persuasively in a variety of situations.

Every time you write or speak, you're faced with a different rhetorical situation. Each rhetorical situation requires thoughtful consideration on your part if you want to be as effective and impactful as possible. Often, a successful essay or presentation is one that manages to persuade an audience to understand a question or issue in a particular way, or to respond to a question or issue by taking a particular action. Urging one's reader to think or act in response to an important question or issue is one way of addressing the "so what?" element of analysis.

Many times, when students are given a writing assignment, they have an urge to skim the assignment instructions and then just start writing as soon as the ideas pop into their minds. But writing rhetorically and with intention requires that you thoroughly investigate your writing assignment (or rhetorical situation) before you begin to write the actual paper.

Thinking about concepts like purpose, audience, and voice will help you make good decisions as you begin your research and writing process.

Rhetorical Analysis

Take a look at the following definition of rhetorical analysis:

Rhetorical analysis shows how the words, phrases, images, gestures, performances, texts, films, etc. that people use to communicate work, how well they work, and how the artifacts, as discourse, inform and instruct, entertain and arouse, and convince and persuade the audience; as such, discourse includes the possibility of morally improving the reader, the viewer, and the listener.[1]

Basically, when you conduct a rhetorical analysis, you're examining the way authors (or speakers) communicate their message. This means you can conduct a rhetorical analysis of **any** act of communication. Naturally, this makes rhetorical analysis one of the most common types of analysis you will perform at the college level.

Read the following short article by Richard Stallman about "open" educational resources (which, incidentally, you are using right now), and think about **how** Stallman makes his argument (not **what** he is arguing).

Online Education Is Using a Flawed Creative Commons License

By Richard Stallman

September 2012

Prominent universities are using a nonfree license for their digital educational works. That is bad already, but even worse, the license they are using has a serious inherent problem.

When a work is made for doing a practical job, the users must have control over the job, so they need to have control over the work. This applies to software, and to educational works too. For the users to have this control, they need certain freedoms (see gnu.org), and we say the work is “free” (or “libre,” to emphasize we are not talking about price). For works that might be useful in commercial contexts, the requisite freedom includes commercial use, redistribution and modification.

Creative Commons publishes six principal licenses. Two are free/libre licenses: the Sharealike license CC-BY-SA is a free/libre license with copyleft, and the Attribution license (CC-BY) is a free/libre license without copyleft. The other four are nonfree, either because they don’t allow modification (ND, Noderivs) or because they don’t allow commercial use (NC, Noncommercial).

In my view, nonfree licenses that permit sharing are OK for works of art/entertainment, or that present some party’s viewpoint (such as this article itself). Those works aren’t meant for doing a practical job, so the argument about the users’ control does not apply. Thus, I do not object if they are published with the CC-BY-NC-ND license, which allows only noncommercial redistribution of exact copies.

Use of this license for a work does not mean that you can’t possibly publish that work commercially or with modifications. The license doesn’t give permission for that, but you could ask the copyright holder for permission, perhaps offering a quid pro quo, and you might get it. It isn’t automatic, but it isn’t impossible.

However, two of the nonfree CC licenses lead to the creation of works that can’t in practice be published commercially, because there is no feasible way to ask for permission. These are CC-BY-NC and CC-BY-NC-SA, the two CC licenses that permit modification but not commercial use.

The problem arises because, with the internet, people can easily (and lawfully) pile one noncommercial modification on another. Over decades this will result in works with contributions from hundreds or even thousands of people.

What happens if you would like to use one of those works commercially? How could you get permission? You’d have to ask all the substantial copyright holders. Some of them might have contributed years before and be impossible to find. Some might have contributed decades before, and might well be dead, but their copyrights won’t have died with them. You’d have to find and ask their heirs, supposing it is possible to identify those. In general, it will be impossible to clear copyright on the works that these licenses invite people to make.

This is a form of the well-known “orphan works” problem, except exponentially worse; when combining works that had many contributors, the resulting work can be orphaned many times over before it is born.

To eliminate this problem would require a mechanism that involves asking someone for permission (otherwise the NC condition turns into a nullity), but doesn’t require asking all the contributors for permission. It is easy to imagine such mechanisms; the hard part is to convince the community that one such mechanisms is fair and reach a consensus to accept it.

I hope that can be done, but the CC-BY-NC and CC-BY-NC-SA licenses, as they are today, should be avoided.

Unfortunately, one of them is used quite a lot. CC-BY-NC-SA, which allows noncommercial publication of modified versions under the same license, has become the fashion for online educational works. MIT’s “Open Courseware” got it stared, and many other schools followed MIT down the wrong path. Whereas in software “open source” means “probably free, but I don’t dare talk about it so you’ll have to check for yourself,” in many online education projects “open” means “nonfree for sure”.

Even if the problem with CC-BY-NC-SA and CC-BY-NC is fixed, they still won’t be the right way to release educational works meant for doing practical jobs. The users of these works, teachers and students, must have control over the works, and that requires making them free. I urge Creative Commons to state that works meant for practical jobs, including educational resources and reference works as well as software, should be released under free/libre licenses only.

Educators, and all those who wish to contribute to on-line educational works: please do not to let your work be made non-free. Offer your assistance and text to educational works that carry free/libre licenses, preferably copyleft licenses so that all versions of the work must respect teachers’ and students’ freedom. Then invite educational activities to use and redistribute these works on that freedom-respecting basis, if they will. Together we can make education a domain of freedom.

A copyleft license has the advantage that modified versions must be free also. That means either CC-BY-SA or the GNU Free Documentation License, or a dual license offering the two of them as options.

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How to Write a Rhetorical Analysis

As a part of thinking rhetorically about an argument, your professor may ask you to write a formal or informal rhetorical analysis essay. Rhetorical analysis is about "digging in" and exploring the strategies and writing style of a particular piece. Rhetorical analysis can be tricky because, chances are, you haven't done a lot of rhetorical analysis in the past.

To add to this trickiness, you can write a rhetorical analysis of any piece of information, not just an essay. You may be asked to write a rhetorical analysis of an ad, an image, or a commercial.

When you analyze a work rhetorically, you explore the following concepts in a piece:

- Audience
- Purpose
- Style or Tone
- Supporting Appeals and Claims: Ethos, Pathos, and Logos
  - **Ethos** – an appeal to ethical considerations. Is the author credible and knowledgeable? Are the actions or understandings that they are calling for ethical?
  - **Pathos** – an appeal to emotions. Is the author trying to evoke strong feelings for or against something?
  - **Logos** – an appeal to rational, logical understanding. Is the author using facts and "hard" research to present a case? Is the argument coherent and cohesive?
  - Note that these three rhetorical modes are closely interrelated. Consider that a strong logical appeal will often convince us that a writer is ethical and diligent in his analysis, whereas an emotional appeal that seems manipulative or a weak substitute for a substantive argument may undermine a writer's ethos, that is, his credibility.

In a rhetorical analysis, you will think about the decisions that author has made regarding the supporting appeals, the styple, tone, purpose, and audience, considering whether these decisions are effective or ineffective.

? ? Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20273

✓ ✓ Watch It

Part of understanding the rhetorical context of a situation includes understanding an author's intent. This video walks you through the process of thinking critically about why, how, and to whom the author is speaking.

When analyzing an author's intent, you will consider their point of view, their purpose in writing, the audience, and their tone. Taking all of this into consideration is part of understanding the broader context in which a person is writing.

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290922675810696988/embed

You can view the transcript for "Evaluating an Author's Intent" here (opens in new window).

? ? Sample Rhetorical Analysis

Here you can see a sample rhetorical analysis with some notes to help you better understand your goals when writing a formal rhetorical analysis.

GLOSSARY

rhetoric: the art of effective and persuasive communication that is appropriate to a given situation

ethos: a rhetorical appeal to ethical considerations, whether regarding the author or the topic at hand

pathos: a rhetorical appeal to emotion

logos: a rhetorical appeal to logic, often utilizing facts and figures in a strong organizational structure

1. https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhetorical_criticism ↵

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5.11: Rhetorical Appeals- Logos, Pathos, and Ethos Defined

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

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

Rhetorical Appeals

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

Logos: Appeal to Logic

Logic. Reason. Rationality. Logos is brainy and intellectual, cool, calm, collected, objective.

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

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

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

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

Pathos: Appeal to Emotions

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

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

Pathetic appeals might include

- **Expressive descriptions** of people, places, or events that help the reader to feel or experience those events

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

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

Ethos: Appeal to Values/Trust

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

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

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

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

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

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

In building ethical appeals, we see authors

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

When reading, you should always think about the author's credibility regarding the subject as well as his or her character. Here is an example of a rhetorical move that connects with ethos: when reading an article about abortion, the author mentions that she has

had an abortion. That is an example of an ethical move because the author is creating credibility via anecdotal evidence and first person narrative. In a rhetorical analysis project, it would be up to you, the analyzer, to point out this move and associate it with a rhetorical strategy.

When writers misuse Logos, Pathos, or Ethos, arguments can be weakened

Above, we defined and described what logos, pathos, and ethos are and why authors may use those strategies. Sometimes, using a combination of logical, pathetic, and ethical appeals leads to a sound, balanced, and persuasive argument. It is important to understand, though, that using rhetorical appeals does not always lead to a sound, balanced argument.

In fact, any of the appeals could be misused or overused. When that happens, arguments can be weakened.

To see how authors can overuse emotional appeals and turn-off their target audience, you can visit the following link from *WritingCommons.org*: Fallacious Pathos.

To see how ethos can be misused or used in a manner that may be misleading, you can visit the following link to *WritingCommons.org*: Fallacious Ethos

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5.12: Annotated Student Sample- "Rhetorical Analysis- Evicted by Matthew Desmond" by Eliana Evans

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify the ways a student writer has analyzed the rhetorical strategies in a persuasive text.
- Demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving when reading a rhetorical analysis.

Introduction

Matthew Desmond (b. 1979 or 1980) is a sociology professor at Princeton University. He has published four books, each addressing issues of poverty or racial inequality in American life. He has been recognized by the Politico 50 list as an important contributing voice to national political debate. In the analysis that follows, student Eliana Evans examines Desmond's work from a rhetorical perspective.



Figure \(9.6\) Matthew Desmond discusses *Evicted* at the Library of Congress. (credit: "Matthew Desmond at 2017 National Book Festival" by United States Library of Congress/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

Living By Their Own Words

Story as Persuasion

Imagine it's Friday—payday. One American worker picks up her check for $637. Now, imagine that $550 will go toward rent, leaving only a small amount for everything else. The remaining $87 must be divided among food, utilities, childcare, and medical treatment. Unfortunately, many of the nation's poor don't have to imagine this troubling scenario because this is their reality. In his book *Evicted: Poverty* and *2*,ethnographer and author Matthew Desmond follows eight poor families in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as they struggle to establish and maintain one of humanity's most basic needs: housing. As an ethnographer, Desmond gathers research to promote the study and documentation of human culture: how people live under all kinds of conditions

Note

Ethos. By mentioning Desmond's qualifications as an ethnographer, Eliana Evans appeals to ethos: Desmond is an authority whose opinions can be taken seriously.

Introductory Anecdote. By beginning with a real-life example and addressing the reader directly, the writer immediately emphasizes Desmond's hard-hitting point. This strategy engages readers from the start.

Living and working in the typical mid-size American city of Milwaukee in the early 2000s, Desmond highlights the source of the cyclical poverty he observes around him. He concludes that unstable housing is “deeply . . . implicated in the creation of poverty" (5).

Note

Thesis Statement. The writer notes that Desmond offers his thesis statement, or the main point of his argument, without delay, building off the specific example in the introduction.

Throughout his book, Desmond explains that inflated rents and evictions— the forced loss of housing—create power imbalances between landlords and tenants. Legal and economic systems rigged against the poor are to blame for creating an unbreakable cycle of poverty for renters. To advance his deductive argument, Desmond largely employs emotional anecdotal evidence, introducing readers to the real-life circumstances of eight families, thus using pathos to reach his readers. To reinforce this anecdotal evidence, he also employs logical statistical evidence as well as emotional allusions to the nation’s founding principle of equality.

To bring his book to life, Desmond uses many quotations from the people he portrays in the cycle of poverty. Early in the book, he describes the life of Sherrena Tarver, an entrepreneur landlord who owns and manages numerous properties and has to evict nonpaying tenants in the most difficult circumstance. At one point, she faces a tough decision about Lamar, a legless man who occupies an apartment where he helps neighborhood boys stay in school and control their lives. He simply cannot meet his financial responsibilities, and Sherrena is torn between helping him and protecting her own bottom line. “I guess I got to stop feeling sorry for these people because nobody is feeling sorry for me,” she states (11). She will have to pay her own mortgage on the property. No connection exists if others do not feel sorry for Sherrena, who has to face her own inner conflict about Lamar.

Note

Ethos, Pathos, and Logos. Desmond speaks with authority as someone who cares deeply about the injustices of the housing situation. Evans notes that Desmond also relies on emotional and logical thought and examples, and she shows this in his quotations.

Although his book identifies unstable housing as a cause of poverty, Desmond writes for the purpose of creating empathy in voters and establishing facts that policy makers cannot ignore to remedy the housing trap. The moving description of eviction and its effects allows readers to fully appreciate his proposed solutions. As a main point, Desmond advocates for legislation that would establish a universal housing voucher program combined with government regulation to stabilize rents. He explains that voucher “programs lift roughly 2.8 million people out of poverty” each year (302). If these programs were expanded and supported by laws that would prevent landlords from establishing exploitative rents, many more people could be helped. Desmond hopes to convince voters who have been moved by his ethnographic discussion to elect candidates who are serious about ending poverty and creating a more equal America.

Note

Language Use. Evans uses the phrase “as a main point” to emphasize to readers that Desmond strongly believes in the voucher system.

In support of his argument, Desmond presents multiple anecdotal examples to illustrate the root of the cyclical poverty his subjects face. For example, in Chapter 16, Kamala, a middle-aged mother of three, leaves her children for one evening in the care of Devon, their father. Later, a fire caused by a lamp kills their eight-monthold daughter. The apartment is uninhabitable, but the landlord, Sherrena, keeps the month’s rent. The police report that the three children, abandoned by Devon, were alone in the apartment. The high cost of monthly rent leaves Kamala with few options for proper childcare, and without childcare, she has few options for employment. The exploitation by landlords such as Sherrena only intensifies the tenant’s poverty. Kamala, who still has two children to support, is left with no home, no money, and little means of survival. Her story, and the

stories of the many others Desmond chronicles, supports the argument that unstable housing is a cause of poverty, not a condition.

Note

Examples and Pathos. Desmond's discussion gains emotional strength from the story of a child's needless death.

Pathos and Logos. The logic of the situation is that a family must endure hardship with little support. The overwhelming need and the trap of poverty in poor housing make for strong logical and emotional persuasion

Desmond relays the stories of Kamala and others to generate empathy with readers. These stories create emotional appeal in that they allow readers to experience the spiraling effects of poverty along with people they come to care about. Indeed, Desmond relies on the intensity of Kamala's story to give poverty a face. Kamala is no longer a nameless, faceless statistic. She is a real woman who experiences the loss of a child as a result of circumstances beyond her control. Kamala's story helps break the preconception that poor people are lazy and make individual choices to perpetuate their own poverty. Her situation illustrates a cycle of unbreakable tragedy and poverty that begins with her inability to secure affordable and stable housing. The details of her story make it hard for the public to ignore.

Desmond does not rely on anecdotal evidence alone. He also includes statistical evidence to support his argument.

Note

Logical Evidence. The writer notes Desmond's use of quantitative evidence—an appeal to logic. Readers are eager to learn facts that will strengthen the impact of Desmond's argument.

In the prologue, Desmond explains that Arleen pays "88 percent of [her] $628-a-month welfare check" in rent (3). This disproportionate sum creates a situation in which "1 in 8 poor renting families nationwide [are] unable to pay all of their rent" (5). In Milwaukee, "landlords evict roughly 16,000 adults and children each year" (4). Such numbers go beyond empathy and instead appeal to logic. Policy makers are likely to reject the idea of drafting laws to relieve poverty based on feelings or empathy. Statistics, however, provide hard numbers that are not subject to debate and that reinforce the need for logical and realistic solutions. Desmond also notes that eviction and its effects have been vastly ignored by sociologists. These statistics fight preconceptions such as *Why don't poor people just get jobs?* In addition, by using personification, Desmond explains that poverty is a formidable enemy that a minimum-wage job cannot defeat.

Note

Logos. As a skilled writer, Desmond knows that if political action is called for, he will have to present a heavy dose of facts and numbers. Evans notes that readers are more likely to be persuaded by a combination of different rhetorical strategies, such as pathos and logos.

Personification. Evans notes that Desmond uses figurative language to personify the idea of poverty, calling it "a formidable enemy?"

Finally, Desmond appeals to his readers' sense of right and wrong when he asks a key rhetorical question: Is housing a fundamental American right? If readers answer "yes," then it is un-American to systematically lock poor people away from the founding ideals of the country through housing, banking, and legal systems that work to guarantee their poverty. The American dream is one of equal opportunity. Yet, despite the constitutional guarantee of civil rights, the poor people who struggle to maintain housing in Desmond's Milwaukee are further separated from the American dream by race.

For example, in Chapter 3, Desmond describes the segregation that has long plagued Milwaukee: despite the "open housing measure" guaranteed by "the 1968 Civil Rights Act," Milwaukee "remain[s] one of the most racially divided cities in the nation" (34). The housing divide in Milwaukee not only keeps poor people from achieving the American dream of stable and affordable housing, but it also supports a system of segregation that goes against the founding ideal of equality.

Note

Logos and Pathos. Desmond addresses the issue of right vs. wrong. He attempts to persuade readers by offering examples that make them think about the legal aspects of housing (logos) and the effects that deprivation have on individuals (pathos).

Desmond's argument is enticing in many ways. However, critics point out that he proposes a solution that fixes only the short-term problem of sustaining stable housing with a universal voucher program that provides no incentive for work. The long-term problem, which Desmond never addresses, would have to include a solution that would raise a massive number of people out of poverty by enabling them to sustain reliable housing, along with other living expenses, without relying heavily on government assistance. Vouchers may begin to eat away at the root of poverty, but they are a short-term, rather than a long-term, fix.

Note

Addressing Counterclaims. Evans is careful to include some possibly negative views of Desmond's main points to indicate that she has considered all sides before reaching a final verdict on the validity of his argument.

In the end, though, Desmond's argument is effective because he provides ample evidence with varying appeals to support his claims. The use of anecdotes allows readers to feel the pain of poverty. Desmond's statistical research shows logical reasons to end poverty through universal housing. The mentions of founding principles such as equality show that readers have a moral obligation as Americans to participate in a solution to the housing crisis.

Although much of Desmond's book relies on its anecdotal evidence and emotional appeal, it is his logic that ultimately proves convincing. He identifies a tangible cause of poverty, then offers an equally tangible solution to the problem he describes. If having stable and affordable housing will help end poverty and thus improve society, then the government should provide this through vouchers and rent regulation.

Note

Conclusion and Thesis Statement Reaffirmed. Evans praises Desmond for his rhetorical ability to appeal to readers in different ways. She claims that his logical approach, presenting facts and figures along with emotional appeals, should be enough to convince the government to act.

Work Cited

Desmond, Matthew. *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. Broadway Books, 2016.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Eliana Evans begins her rhetorical analysis with an example about the problems of paying rent and living on a reduced income?
2. How does Evans portray Desmond as someone worth listening to?
3. How does Evans evaluate Desmond's use of logic in arguing his points?
4. According to Evans, how does Desmond use pathos in persuading readers?
5. What is Evans's final opinion of Desmond's ability to persuade? Explain.

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5.13: Critical Analysis

Learning Objectives

- Describe techniques for critical analysis

Critical analysis is probably what you think of first when you hear the word *analysis*. You probably wrote analyses of poems or stories in high school, or you may have even analyzed films or advertisements. Analysis of a specific artifact is called **critical analysis** or critique. This is typically a process of developing a line of interpretation, or a "reading," and of identifying the interrelated parts of the text that are meaningful.

For this section, we'll use analysis of ads for our examples. However, you can apply critical analysis to any artifact.

Take a look at the old cigarette ad below. How would you start to analyze it?

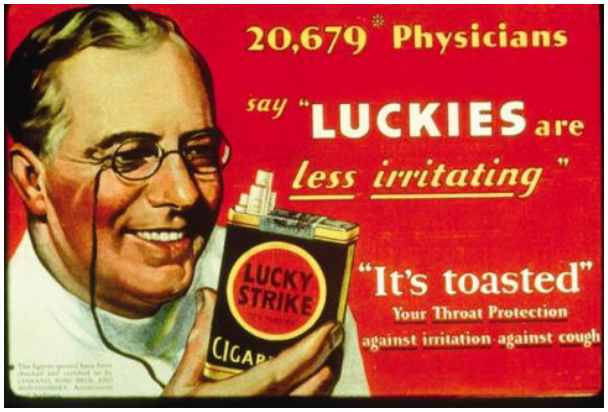


Figure 1. What are some important components of a critical analysis? Use them to analyze this cigarette ad.

There are three possible structures you might use for a critical analysis paper.

Description followed by analysis	Thematic	Part by Part
Introduction with thesis addressing composer's choices and motivations (how and why)Description of artifact Analysis of artifact Conclusion examining larger significance (so what)	Introduction with summary description and thesis (how and why)Identify a theme or pattern Provide examples (Continue this as needed) Conclude with larger significance (so what)	Introduction with summary description and thesis (how and why)Analyze first section of artifact Analyze next section of artifact (Continue this as needed) Conclude with larger significance (so what)

Analytical paragraphs generally follow the claim, evidence, explanation model. A writer establishes a claim, then supports that claim with evidence, and then explains how the evidence supports the claim. In a critical analysis, the details of the artifact serve as the evidence supporting the claim.

In the example below, explore the hotspots to learn about how the writer of this analysis of the Lucky Strike ad uses a claim, evidence, and support of evidence in a paragraph.

? ? explore the hotspots

A link to an interactive elements can be found at the bottom of this page.

[reveal-answer q="226191"]View Accessible Version[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="226191"][1] The Lucky Strikes ad uses the perceived authority of a respectable physician to sell (what we now know as) unhealthy products. [2] The physician depicted is somewhat anachronistic, even for the time period of the ad (with the glasses especially). [3] The appearance of the physician evokes associations with wisdom and respect. The design of this ad works

to reassure the consumer that the Lucky Strikes brand of cigarettes is “less” irritating than other brands. Thus, the ad uses language to imply that other brands of cigarettes may be damaging to the throat, but Lucky Strikes are the exception. All of the language in this ad strikes a negative tone about other brands: in fact, other than “it’s toasted,” all of the adjectives describe the brand in relation to other brands.

[1] The claim of this analysis paragraph is that the image of the physician is being used to sell unhealthy products. The rest of the analysis, including the supporting evidence about the language choices, are in service to this claim.

[2] The description of the physician in the ad and the explanation of his depiction is the central evidence for the claim.

[3] The rest of the paragraph provides support and further explanation of the central evidence in the claim. The analysis of the language choices complement the evidence about the physician. [/hidden-answer]

? ? Try It

So what does a typical critical analysis assignment look like? Consider the example, below:

> For this essay, you will identify and work with an advertisement. The ad you choose may be print or online, but it must be static (i.e., no television or radio commercials). Your purpose is to analyze how and why the ad goes about reaching an audience and to construct and support an original thesis that guides your essay. You should be moving your thinking beyond the obvious, not necessarily to conclusions no one else has ever considered, but at least to conclusions that many people do not consider upon first glance of the ad. Your final product should include brief summary of the ad you have chosen, analysis of how the ad works to appeal to an audience, and then any conclusions you reach about the advertising strategies, including context.

Answer the following questions to help you develop a plan for responding to this critical analysis assignment.

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...sessments/5610

GLOSSARY

critical analysis: an analysis of a particular artifact that develops a line of interpretation and identifies interrelated parts of the text that are meaningful

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5.14: Introduction to Synthesis

What you'll learn to do: examine strategies for successful synthesis



In some writing assignments, you will be asked to not just analyze material, but to synthesize. Analysis would have you recognize hidden meanings, see patterns, or identify the underlying parts of something. In an analysis paper, you may be asked to do things like separate, order, connect, classify, divide, or explain.

Instead of breaking something down into components to look at the pieces and patterns, in synthesis, your goal is to relate and combine knowledge from different areas to draw conclusions. In a synthesis paper, you may be asked to do things like modify, rearrange, substitute, design, invent, or generalize.

In this section, we'll take a closer look at synthesis.

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5.15: Synthesis

Learning Objectives

- Explain synthesis

What is Synthesis?

Synthesis is the combining of two or more things to produce something new. When you read and write, you will be asked to synthesize by taking ideas from what you read and combining them to form new ideas.

Analyzing consists of breaking something down into its parts and examining it closely. For example, you can break down a pizza into its ingredients. Synthesizing, on the other hand, consists of combining ideas to form new ones. So in the pizza example, you could break down the ingredients, then you can take those same ingredients and create something new, like a calzone.

Synthesizing is also different from summarizing; while summarizing consists of restating someone's ideas in as few as words as possible, synthesizing means taking those ideas and creating new ones.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20275

Synthesis in Writing

Synthesis is something you already do in your everyday life. For example, if you are shopping for a new car, the research question you are trying to answer is, "Which car should I buy"? You explore available models, prices, options, and consumer reviews, and you make comparisons. For example: Car X costs more than car Y but gets better mileage. Or: Reviewers A, B, and C all prefer Car X, but their praise is based primarily on design features that aren't important to you. It is this analysis *across* sources that moves you towards an answer to your question.

Early in an academic research project, you are likely to find yourself making initial comparisons—for example, you may notice that Source A arrives at a conclusion very different from that of Source B—but the task of synthesis will become central to your work when you begin drafting your research paper or presentation.

Remember, when you synthesize, you are not just compiling information. You are organizing that information around a specific argument or question, and this work—your own intellectual work—is central to research writing.

Watch It

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290919207594054158/embed

You can view the transcript for "Synthesizing What You Read" here (opens in new window).

GLOSSARY

synthesis: the combining of two or more things to produce something new

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5.16: Synthesis in Practice

Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate strategies for synthesis

Professors frequently expect you to interpret, make inferences, and otherwise synthesize—bring ideas together to make something new or find a new way of looking at something old. (It might help to think of synthesis as the opposite of analysis. To synthesize is to combine; to analyze is to break down.)

Getting Better at Synthesis

To get an A on essays and papers in many courses, such as literature and history, what you write in reaction to the work of others should use synthesis to create new meaning or to show a deeper understanding of what you learned.

To do so, it helps to look for connections and patterns. One way to synthesize when writing an argument essay, paper, or other project is to look for themes among your sources. So try categorizing ideas by topic rather than by source—making associations across and between sources.

Synthesis can seem difficult, particularly if you are used to analyzing others' points but not used to making your own. Like most things, however, it gets easier with practice. So don't be hard on yourself if it seems difficult at first.

? ? EXAMPLE: Synthesis in an Argument



Imagine that you have to write an argument essay about Woody Allen's 2011 movie *Midnight in Paris*. Your topic is "nostalgia," and the movie is the only source you can use.

In the movie, a successful young screenwriter named Gil is visiting Paris with his girlfriend and her parents, who are more politically conservative than he is. Inexplicably, every midnight he time-travels back to the 1920's Paris, a time period he's always found fascinating, especially because of the writers and painters—Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Picasso—with whom he's now on a first-name basis. Gil is enchanted and always wants to stay in this fantastical past. But every morning, he's back in the real present—feeling out of sync with his girlfriend and her parents.

For your essay, you've tried to come up with a narrower topic, but so far nothing seems right. Suddenly, you start paying more attention to the girlfriend's parents' dialogue about politics, which amount to such phrases as "we have to go back to…," "it was a better time," "Americans used to be able to…" and "the way it used to be."

And then it clicks with you that the girlfriend's parents are like Gil—longing for a different time, whether real or imagined. That kind of idea generation, where you find the connection and theme across related elements of the movie, is synthesis.

You decide to write your essay to answer the research question: How is the motivation of Gil's girlfriend's parents similar to Gil's? Your thesis becomes "Despite seeming to be very different, Gil and his girlfriend's parents are similarly motivated, and Woody Allen's *Midnight in Paris*'s message about nostalgia can be applied to all of them."

Of course, you'll have to try to convince your readers that your thesis is valid, and you may or not be successful,—but that's true with all theses. And your professor will be glad to see the synthesis.

Synthesizing From Multiple Sources

Below are some questions that highlight ways in which the act of synthesizing brings together ideas and generates new knowledge.

How do the sources speak to your specific argument or research question?

Your argument or research question is the main unifying element in your project. Keep this in the forefront of your mind when you write about your sources. Explain how, specifically, each source supports your central claim/s or suggests possible answers to your question. For example: Does the source provide essential background information or a definitional foundation for your argument or inquiry? Does it present numerical data that supports one of your points or helps you answer a question you have posed? Does it present a theory that might be applied to some aspect of your project? Does it present a recognized expert's insights on your topic?

How do the sources speak to each other?

Sometimes you will find explicit dialogue between sources (for example, Source A refutes Source B by name), and sometimes you will need to bring your sources into dialogue (for example, Source A does not mention Source B, but you observe that the two are advancing similar or dissimilar arguments). Attending to ***interrelationships among sources*** is at the heart of the task of synthesis.



Figure 1. A strong argument will utilize many different sources to support itself. Synthesizing by identifying interrelationships among these sources will help to strengthen your paper.

Begin by asking: What are the points of agreement? Where are there disagreements?

But be aware that you are unlikely to find your sources in pure positions of "for" vs. "against." You are more likely to find agreement in some areas and disagreement in other areas. You may also find agreement but for different reasons—such as different underlying values and priorities, or different methods of inquiry.

Where are there, or aren't there, information gaps?

Where is the available information unreliable (for example, it might be difficult to trace back to primary sources), or limited, (for example, based on just a few case studies, or on just one geographical area), or difficult for non-specialists to access (for example, written in specialist language, or tucked away in a physical archive)?

Does your inquiry contain sub-questions that may not at present be answerable, or that may not be answerable without additional primary research—for example, laboratory studies, direct observation, interviews with witnesses or participants, etc.?

Or, alternatively, is there a great deal of reliable, accessible information that addresses your question or speaks to your argument or inquiry?

In considering these questions, you are engaged in synthesis: you are conducting an overview assessment of the field of available information and in this way generating composite knowledge.

Remember, synthesis is about pulling together information from a range of sources in order to answer a question or construct an argument. It is something you will be called upon to do in a wide variety of academic, professional, and personal contexts. Being able to dive into an ocean of information and surface with meaningful conclusions is an essential skill.

? ? Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20276

? ? Synthesis in Literature Reviews

One place synthesis is usually required is in literature reviews for honors' theses, master's theses, and Ph.D. dissertations. In all those cases, literature reviews are intended to contribute more than annotated bibliographies do and to be arguments for the research conducted for the theses or dissertations. If you are writing an honors thesis, master's thesis, or Ph.D. dissertation, you will find more help with Susan Imel's Writing a Literature Review .

Showing Synthesis

Some ways to demonstrate synthesis in your writing is to compare and contrast multiple sources. Below are some examples of sentence structures that demonstrate synthesis:

Synthesis that indicates agreement/support:

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

Synthesis that indicates disagreement/conflict:

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

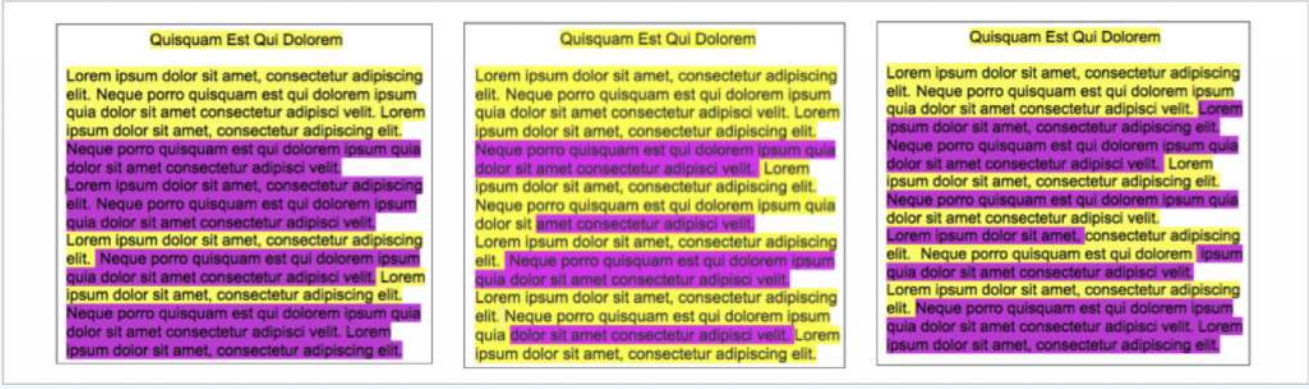
What the above examples indicate is that synthesis is the careful weaving in of outside opinions in order to show your reader the many ideas and arguments on your topic and further assert your own. Notice, too, that the above examples are also **signal phrases**: language that introduces outside source material to be either quoted or paraphrased, i.e., "contrary to what Source A has argued, source B maintains _____ ."

? ? Try It: Balancing Sources and Synthesis

Here's a technique to quickly assess whether there is enough of your original thought in your essay or paper, as opposed to information from your sources: Highlight what you have included as quotes, paraphrases, and summaries from your sources. Next, highlight in another color what you have written yourself. Then take a look at the pages and decide whether there is enough of your own thinking in them.

For the mocked-up pages below, assume that the yellow-highlighted lines were written by the writer and the pink-highlighted lines are quotes, paraphrases, and summaries she pulled from her sources.

Which page most demonstrates the writer's own ideas?



Mocked-up passages showing the division between quotes, paraphrases, and summaries and original ideas

Source: Joy McGregor. “A Visual Approach: Teaching Synthesis,” School Library Monthly, Volume XXVII, Number 8/May-June 2011.

[reveal-answer q=”149882″]Show Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a=”149882″]

Answer: The Middle Sample.

The yellow-highlighted sections in the middle sample shows more contributions from the author than from quotes, paraphrases, and summaries of other sources.

[/hidden-answer]

GLOSSARY

signal phrase: a phrase that introduces outside sources material that will be quoted or paraphrased

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5.17: Putting It Together- Analysis and Synthesis



The ability to analyze effectively is fundamental to success in college and the workplace, regardless of your major or your career plans. Now that you have an understanding of what analysis is, the keys to effective analysis, and the types of analytic assignments you may face, work on improving your analytic skills by keeping the following important concepts in mind:

1. Recognize that analysis comes in many forms. Any assignment that asks how parts relate to the whole, how something works, what something means, or why something is important is asking for analysis.
2. Suspend judgment before undertaking analysis.
3. Craft analytical theses that address how, why, and so what.
4. Support analytical interpretations with clear, explicitly cited evidence.
5. Remember that all analytical tasks require you to break down or investigate something.

Analysis is the first step towards synthesis, which requires not only thinking critically and investigating a topic or source, but combining thoughts and ideas to create new ones. As you synthesize, you will draw inferences and make connections to broader themes and concepts. It's this step that will really help add substance, complexity, and interest to your essays.

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5.18: Discussion- Ad Rhetorical Analysis

A rhetorical analysis requires taking a closer look at the persuasiveness of a message. In this discussion forum, you will find an advertisement of any sort—a video, print, or radio ad—and complete a critical analysis.

STEP 1: Post a link to the advertisement you've selected. Analyze its effectiveness by first answering the following questions:

1. What is the purpose of the ad?
2. What is the argument of the ad?
3. Who is the "author" of the ad?
4. Who is the intended audience for the ad?
5. What is the tone of the ad?
6. What is the style and tone of the ad?
7. What kind of supporting appeals, evidence, or examples does this ad use or rely on?

Write a summary paragraph about why you believe the ad is effective or ineffective. This paragraph should include a *claim* (whether or not you think it is effective), *evidence*, as demonstrated in the ad, and *support* for that evidence (as explained in the reading on critical analysis from the module).

STEP 2: Respond in two separate posts to two classmates (in at least 75 words). Explicitly address their examples and try to extend, complicate, or redirect their points in a substantive, knowledge-demonstrating way.

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5.19: Assignment- The Role of Inference in Reading and Understanding Satire

The 18th century Irish essayist and clergyman Jonathan Swift published his influential satire "A Modest Proposal" in 1729. In the module we learned that satire is a type of humorous writing that relies on exaggeration to make its points. Unlike an argumentative essay that directly states its main claim and strives to clearly contextualize its evidence, a satire implies its meanings so as to persuade the reader to reach certain conclusions or to ponder certain issues. Given this indirect mode of persuasion, we can see that readers of satire will need to read analytically, carefully noting related details in order to infer the writer's meaning.

In Swift's piece, he is addressing the real and pressing issue of material poverty in his time. Much of its impact comes from the jarring mismatch between his serious tone and the absurd nature of the "proposal" he offers and then elaborates upon.

STEP 1: First, read Swift's satire here.

Be sure to read analytically, looking for ideas that seem to be related to each other and to the main question or issue that drives the piece. Pay close attention to any perspectives, concepts, or solutions that you think are being implied but not directly stated.

STEP 2: Next, answer the following questions in complete sentences and with sufficient detail to demonstrate understanding:

1. What are four benefits that Swift explicitly claims will follow from adopting his proposal?
2. What perspectives does Swift seem to be mocking through his exaggerations?
3. What authorities or individuals seem to be responsible for the suffering and misfortune that Swift describes?
4. What more realistic actions is Swift implying have not been taken previously, thus making his proposal necessary and plausible?
5. Finally, what are some recent forms of satire you've encountered? What current events or issues do you think those films, novels or TV shows were addressing? Write at least a paragraph for this answer.

Criteria	Proficient	Developing	Points
Degree of analysis	Correctly answers questions 1-3 and provides evidence showing an understanding of Swift's proposal.	Partially answers questions 1 through 3 or does not give enough of a response to demonstrate an understanding of the text	__/5
Understanding of inference	Correctly answers questions four with evidence and understanding from Swift's essay	Does not thoroughly answer question four about implications of Swift's essay	__/5
Application of concept	Answers questions five and provides a detailed response with an example that demonstrates an understanding of what satire is and what it looks like.	Partially answers question five or provides insufficient example of satire	__/5
		Total	__/15

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

6: Writing a Research Paper

6.1: The Purpose of Research Writing
6.2: Choosing Your Topic
6.3: Managing Your Research
6.4: Gathering Your Sources (Part 1)
6.5: Gathering Your Sources (Part 2)
6.6: Evaluating and Processing Your Sources
6.7: Applying Your Research
6.8: Writing Your Draft
6.9: Documenting Your Source Material
6.10: Revising Your Draft (Part 1)
6.11: Revising Your Draft (Part 2)

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6.1: The Purpose of Research Writing

Who has written poetry about exile? **What** roles did women play in the American Revolution? **Where** do cicadas go during their 'off' years? **When** did bookmakers start using movable type? **Why** was the Great Wall of China built? **How** does the human brain create, store, and retrieve memories?

You may know the answers to these questions off the top of your head. If you are like most people, however, you find answers to tough questions like these by searching the Internet, visiting a library, or asking others for information. To put it simply, you perform research.

Whether or not you realize it, you probably already perform research in your everyday life. When your boss, your instructor, or a family member asks you a question that you don't know the answer to, you locate relevant information, analyze your findings, and share your results. Locating, analyzing, and sharing information are key steps in the research process. In this chapter, you will learn more about each step. By developing your research writing skills, you will prepare yourself to answer challenging questions.

Sometimes you perform research simply to satisfy your own curiosity. Once you find the answer to your questions, your search may be over, or it may lead to more in-depth research about that topic or about another topic. Other times, you want to communicate what you have learned to your peers, your family, your teachers, or even the editors of magazines, newspapers, or journals. In your personal life, you might simply discuss the topic with your friends. In more formal situations, such as in business and school, you communicate your findings in writing or in a presentation. A report may simply relay the results of your research in an organized manner. In contrast, a research paper presents an original thesis about a topic and develops that thesis with ideas and information gathered from a variety of sources. In a research paper, you use facts, interpretations, and opinions you encounter in your research to create a narrative and support an argument about your topic.

A student in an art history course might write a research paper about an artist's work or an aesthetic movement. A student in a psychology course might write a research paper about current findings in childhood development. No matter what field of study you pursue, you will most likely be asked to write a research paper in your college degree program and to apply the skills of research and writing in your career. For similar reasons as professionals, students do research to answer specific questions, to share their findings with others, to increase their understanding of challenging topics, and to strengthen their analytical skills.

Having to write a research paper may feel intimidating at first. After all, researching and writing a long paper requires a lot of time, effort, and organization. However, its challenges have rewards. The research process allows you to gain expertise on a topic of your choice. The writing process helps you to remember what you learned and to understand it on a deeper level. Thus writing a research paper can be a great opportunity to explore a topic that particularly interests you and to grow as a person.

Writing at Work

Knowing how to write a good research paper is a valuable skill that will serve you well throughout your career. For example, laboratory technicians and information technology professionals do research to learn about the latest technological developments in their fields. A small business owner may conduct research to learn about the latest trends in his or her industry. A freelance writer will need to research his or her topics to write informed, up-to-date articles. Whether you are developing a new product, studying the best way to perform a procedure, discovering the challenges and opportunities in your field of employment, or learning about how to find a job, you will use research techniques to guide your exploration. Because effective communication is essential to any company, employers seek to hire people who can write clearly and professionally.

? Exercise 1

Think about the job of your dreams. How might you use research writing skills to perform that job? Create a list of ways in which strong researching, organizing, writing, and critical thinking skills could help you succeed at your dream job. How might these skills help you obtain that job?

Process Overview

How does a research paper grow from a folder of notes to a polished final draft? No two projects are identical, but most writers of research papers follow six basic steps.

Step 1: Choosing a Topic

To narrow the focus of your topic, brainstorm using Prewriting Techniques. Starting with your topic, formulate a specific research question—a broad, open-ended question that will guide your research—as well as propose a possible answer, or a working thesis.

Step 2: Planning and Scheduling

Before you start researching your topic, take time to plan your researching and writing schedule. Research projects can take days, weeks, or even months to complete. Creating a schedule is a good way to ensure that you do not end up being overwhelmed by all the work you have to do as the deadline approaches. During this step of the process, it is also a good idea to plan the resources and organizational tools you will use to keep yourself on track throughout the project. Flowcharts, calendars, and checklists can all help you stick to your schedule.

Step 3: Conducting Research

When going about your research, you will likely use a variety of sources—anything from books and periodicals to video presentations and in-person interviews. However, you should pay close attention to instructions; instructors often specify what kinds of sources they require for research papers. Some may assign you to only use scholarly (peerreviewed) sources. For some assignments, your sources might include both primary sources and secondary sources. Primary sources provide firsthand information or raw data. For example, surveys, in-person interviews, historical documents, works of art, and works of literature are primary sources. Secondary sources, such as biographies, literary reviews, or news articles, include some analysis or interpretation of the information presented. As you conduct research, you should take detailed, careful notes about your discoveries. You should also evaluate the reliability of each source you find, especially sources that are not peer-reviewed.

Step 4: Organizing Your Research and Ideas

When your research is complete, you will organize your findings and decide which sources to cite in your paper. You will also have an opportunity to evaluate the evidence you have collected and determine whether it supports your thesis, or the focus of your paper. You may decide to adjust your thesis or conduct additional research to ensure that your thesis is well supported.

Step 5: Drafting Your Paper

Now you are ready to combine your research findings with your critical analysis of the results in a rough draft. You will incorporate source materials into your paper and discuss each source thoughtfully in relation to your thesis or purpose statement. It is important to pay close attention to standard conventions for citing sources in order to avoid plagiarism, which is the practice of using someone else's words without acknowledging the source. Later in this chapter, you will learn how to incorporate sources in your paper and avoid some of the most common pitfalls of attributing information.

Step 6: Revising and Editing Your Paper

In the final step of the research writing process, you will revise and polish your paper. You might reorganize your paper's structure or revise for unity and cohesion, ensuring that each element in your paper smoothly and logically flows into the next. You will also make sure that your paper uses an appropriate and consistent tone. Once you feel confident in the strength of your writing, you will edit your paper for proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, mechanics, and formatting. When you complete this final step, you will have transformed a simple idea or question into a thoroughly researched and well-written paper of which you can be proud.

Writing a good research paper takes time, thought, and effort. Although this assignment is challenging, it is manageable. Focusing on one step at a time will help you develop a thoughtful, informative, well-supported research paper.

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6.2: Choosing Your Topic

Your first step is to choose a topic and then to develop research questions and a working thesis. It's important to set aside adequate time for this part of the process. Fully exploring ideas will help you build a solid foundation for your paper.

Identifying Potential Topics

When you choose a topic for a research paper, you are making a major commitment. Your choice will help determine whether you enjoy the lengthy process of research and writing—and whether your final paper fulfills the assignment requirements. If you choose your topic hastily, you may later find it difficult to work with your topic. By taking your time and choosing carefully, you can ensure that this assignment is not only challenging but also rewarding.

Writers understand the importance of choosing a topic that fulfills the assignment requirements and fits the assignment's purpose and audience. Choosing a topic that genuinely interests you is also crucial. You instructor may provide a list of suggested topics or ask you to develop a topic on your own. You may find inspiration for topic ideas in your everyday life, by browsing magazines, or looking at lists of topics or themes in online databases such Opposing Viewpoints, CQ Researcher Online, Bloom's Literary Reference Online, and Literature Resource Center. In addition to Prewriting Techniques, use tools on the Web, such as Topic-o-rama and Wridea, to help you brainstorm your topic.

You may benefit from identifying several possibilities before committing to one idea. Building a list of potential topics will help you to identify additional, related topics. In this chapter, you will follow a writer named Jorge, who is studying healthcare administration, as he prepares a research paper. Jorge was assigned to write a research paper on current debates about healthy living for an introductory course in health care. Although a general topic was selected for the students, Jorge had to decide which specific issues interested him. He brainstormed the following list of possibilities:

Example 6.2.1:

- Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) in the news
- Sexual education programs
- Hollywood and eating disorders
- Americans' access to public health information
- Medial portrayals of health care reform
- Depictions of drugs on television
- The effect of the Internet on mental health
- Popularized diets (such as low-carbohydrate diets)
- Fear of pandemics (bird flu, H1N1, SARS)
- Electronic entertainment and obesity
- Advertisements for prescription drugs
- Public education and disease prevention

Focusing on a Topic

After identifying potential topics, you will need to evaluate your list and choose one topic to pursue as the focus of your research paper. Discussing your ideas with your instructor, peers, and tutors will help ensure that you choose a manageable topic that fits the requirements of the assignment. The following are some questions to consider:

- Will you be able to find enough information about the topic?
- Can you take an arguable position on the topic?
- Is the topic too broad or too narrow for the scope of the assignment? If so, can you modify the topic so it is more manageable?

You will also need to narrow your topic so you can formulate a concise, manageable thesis about it. Most writers find that the topics they listed during brainstorming or idea mapping are broad—too broad for the scope of the assignment. Working with an overly broad topic, such as sexual education programs or popularized diets, can be frustrating and overwhelming. Each topic has so many facets that it would be impossible to cover them all in a college research paper. However, more specific choices, such as the

pros and cons of sexual education in kids' television programs or the physical effects of the South Beach diet, are specific enough to write about without being so narrow that they can't sustain an entire research paper. A good research paper provides focused, in-depth information and analysis. If your topic is too broad, you will find it difficult to do more than skim the surface when you research it and write about it. To narrow your focus, explore your topic in writing. Also, conduct preliminary research, including discussing the topic with others.

You may be asking yourself, "How am I supposed to narrow my topic when I haven't even begun researching yet?" In fact, you may already know more than you realize. Review your list and identify your top two or three topics. Set aside some time to explore each one through Prewriting Techniques. Taking the time to focus on your topic may yield fresh angles. For example, Jorge knew that he was especially interested in the topic of diet fads, but he also knew that it was much too broad for his assignment. He used freewriting to explore his thoughts so he could narrow his topic. Read Jorge's following ideas from freewriting.

> *Our instructors are always saying that accurate, up-to-date information is crucial in encouraging people to make better choices about their health. I don't think the media does a very good job of providing that, though. Every time I go on the Internet, I see tons of ads for the latest 'miracle food'. One week it's acai berries, the next week it's green tea, and then six months later I see a news story saying all the fabulous claims about acai berries and green tea are overblown! Advice about weight loss is even worse. Think about all the diet books that are out there! Some say that a low-fat diet is best; some say you should cut down on carbs; and some make bizarre recommendations like eating half a grapefruit with every meal. I don't know how anybody is supposed to make an informed decision about what to eat when there's so much confusing, contradictory information. I bet even doctors, nurses, and dieticians have trouble figuring out what information is reliable and what is just the latest hype.*

Another way that writers focus on a topic is by conducting preliminary research. Talk about your ideas with your classmates, friends, and family. Like freewriting, exploratory reading can help you identify interesting angles. Surfing the web is a good way to start. Find out what people are saying about your topic in online newspapers, magazines, blogs, and discussion boards. Keep in mind that the reliability of online sources varies greatly. In this exploratory phase of your research, you do not need to evaluate sources as closely as you will later; however, use common sense as you refine your paper topic. If you read a fascinating blog comment that gives you a new idea, search for some fully developed sources on that topic to see if it's worth pursuing. If you are writing a research paper for a specialized course, look back through your notes and course activities to identify potential topics. Remind yourself of reading assignments and class discussions that especially engaged you. Doing so can help you identify topics to pursue. If the readings or viewings assigned in your course deal with your topic, then review and take notes on those materials. Librarians and instructors can help you to determine if there are enough sources available on your topic, or if there are so many sources that it would be wise to narrow your topic further.

Jorge's freewriting exercise helped him realize that the assigned topic of current debates about healthy living intersected with a few of his own interests—diet, nutrition, and obesity. Preliminary online research and discussions with his classmates strengthened his impression that many people are confused or misled by media coverage of these subjects. Jorge decided to focus his paper on a topic that had garnered a great deal of media attention—low-carbohydrate diets. He wanted to find out whether low-carbohydrate diets were as effective as their proponents claimed.

Writing at Work

At work, you may need to research a topic quickly to find general information. This information can be useful in understanding trends in a given industry or generating competition. For example, a company may research a competitor's prices and use the information when pricing their own product. You may find it useful to skim a variety of sources and take notes on your findings.

? Exercise 2

Set a timer for five minutes. Use prewriting techniques to create a list of topics you would be interested in researching for a paper about the influence of the Internet on social networking. Which social networking sites do you and your friends use? Do you closely follow a particular social media website, such as Twitter? Would you like to learn more about a certain industry, such as online dating? Would you like to learn more about people's use of the Internet to build support for social causes? List as many ideas related to this topic as you can.

? Exercise 3

Choose two topics from the list you created above. Spend five minutes freewriting about each of these topics. Choose the topic about which you more enjoyed freewriting. Then, review your freewriting to identify possible areas of focus.

? Exercise 4

Collaborative exercise: Swap lists of potential topics with a classmate. Select one or two topics on your classmate's list about which you would like to learn more. Explain to your classmate why you find those topics interesting. Ask your classmate which of the topics on your list s/he would like to learn more about and why.

Determining Paths of Inquiry

Your freewriting and preliminary research have helped you choose a focused, manageable topic for your research paper. To work with your topic successfully, you will need to determine what exactly you want to learn about it—and what you want to say about it. Before you begin conducting in-depth research, you will further define your focus by developing research questions and a working thesis.

By forming research questions about your topic, you are setting a goal for your research. Determine your main question—the primary focus of your paper—and several subquestions that you will need to research in more depth to answer your main question. Your main research question should be substantial enough to form the guiding principle of your paper—but focused enough to guide your research. A strong research question requires you not only to find information but also to put together different pieces of information, interpret and analyze them, and figure out what you think. As you consider potential research questions, ask yourself whether they would be too hard or too easy to answer. Review the results of your prewriting, and skim through your preliminary research. From these, write both simple, factual questions and more complex questions that would require analysis and interpretation to answer.

Below are the research questions Jorge will use to focus his research. Notice that his main research question has no obvious, straightforward answer. Jorge will need to research his subquestions, which address narrower topics, to answer his main question.

Topic: Low-carbohydrate diets

Main question: Are low-carbohydrate diets as effective as they have been portrayed to be by media sources?

Subquestions:

- Who can benefit from following a low-carbohydrate diet?
- What are the supposed advantages to following a low-carbohydrate diet?
- When did low-carbohydrate diets become a 'hot' topic in the media?
- Where do average consumers get information about diet and nutrition?
- Why has the low-carb approach received so much media attention?
- How do low-carb diets work?

A working thesis concisely states a writer's initial answer to the main research question. It does not merely state a fact or present a subjective opinion. Instead, it expresses a debatable idea or claim that you hope to prove through research. Your working thesis is called a working thesis for a reason: it is subject to modification. You may adapt your thinking in light of your research findings. Let your working thesis serve as a guide to your research, but do not hesitate to change your path as you learn about your topic.

One way to determine your working thesis is to consider how you would complete statements that begin, “I believe…” or “My opinion is…”. These first-person phrases are useful starting points even though you may eventually omit them from sentences in your research paper. Generally, formal research papers use an assertive, objective voice and, therefore, do not include first-person pronouns. Some readers associate I with informal, subjective writing. Some readers think the first-person point of view diminishes the impact of a claim. For these reasons, some instructors will tell you not to use I in research papers.

Jorge began his research with a strong point of view based on his preliminary writing and research. Read his working thesis statement, below, which presents the point he will argue. Notice how it states Jorge’s tentative answer to his research question.

Main research question: Are low-carb diets as effective as they have sometimes been portrayed to be by the mass media?

Working thesis statement: Low-carb diets do not live up to the media hype surrounding them.

Writing at Work

Before you begin a new project at work, you may have to develop a project summary document that states the purpose of the project, explains why it would be a wise use of company resources, and briefly outlines the steps involved in completing the project. This type of document is similar to a research proposal for an academic purpose. Both define and limit a project, explain its value, discuss how to proceed, and identify what resources you will use.

? Exercise 5

Using the topic you have selected, write your main research question and at least four subquestions. Check that your main research question is appropriately complex for your assignment.

? Exercise 6

Write a working thesis statement that presents your preliminary answer to the research question you wrote above. Think about whether your working thesis statement presents an idea or claim that could be supported or refuted by evidence from research.

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6.3: Managing Your Research

Step 1 “Choosing a Topic,” helped you begin to plan the content of your research paper—your topic, research questions, and preliminary thesis. It is equally important to plan out the process of researching and writing the paper. Although some types of writing assignments can be completed relatively quickly, developing a good research paper is a complex process that takes time and attention. Careful planning helps ensure that you will keep your project running smoothly and produce your best work. Think about how you will complete each step and what resources you will use. Resources may include anything from online databases and digital technologies to interview subjects and writing tutors.

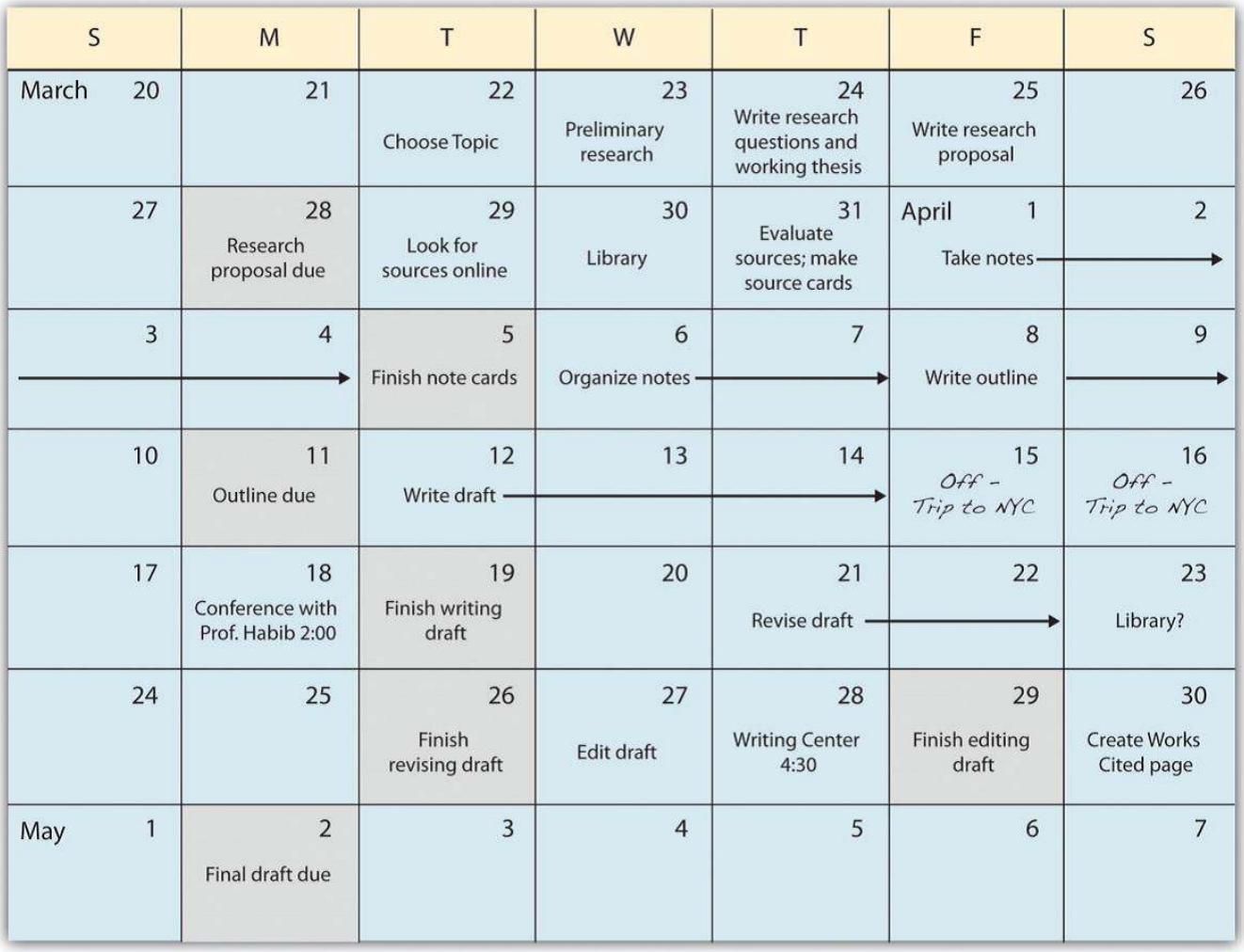
Scheduling Research and Writing

Set up a project schedule that shows when you will complete each step. To develop your schedule, use a calendar and work backward from the date your final draft is due. Generally, it is wise to divide half of the available time on the research phase of the project and half on the writing phase. For example, if you have a month to work, plan for two weeks for each phase. If you have a full semester, plan to begin research early and to start writing by the middle of the term. You might think that no one really works that far ahead, but try it. You will probably be pleased with the quality of your work and with the reduction in your stress level.

Plan your schedule realistically, and consider other commitments that may sometimes take precedence. A business trip or family visit may mean that you are unable to work on the research project for a few days. Make the most of the time you have available. Plan for unexpected interruptions, but keep in mind that a short time away from the project may help you come back to it with renewed enthusiasm. Another strategy many writers find helpful is to finish each day’s work at a point when the next task is an easy one. That makes it easier to start again.

As you plan, break down major steps into smaller tasks if necessary. For example, Step 3, Conducting Research, involves locating potential sources, evaluating their usefulness and reliability, reading, and taking notes. Defining these smaller tasks makes the project more manageable by giving you concrete goals to achieve.

Jorge had six weeks to complete his research project. Working backward from a due date of May 2, he mapped out a schedule for completing his research by early April so that he would have ample time to write. Jorge chose to write his schedule in his weekly planner to help keep himself on track. Review Jorge’s schedule. Key target dates are shaded. Note that Jorge planned times to use available resources by visiting the library and writing center and by meeting with his instructor.



S	M	T	W	T	F	S
March 20	21	22 Choose Topic	23 Preliminary research	24 Write research questions and working thesis	25 Write research proposal	26
27	28 Research proposal due	29 Look for sources online	30 Library	31 Evaluate sources; make source cards	April 1 Take notes →	2 →
3 →	4 →	5 Finish note cards	6 Organize notes →	7 →	8 Write outline	9 →
10	11 Outline due	12 Write draft →	13 →	14 →	15 Off - Trip to NYC	16 Off - Trip to NYC
17	18 Conference with Prof. Habib 2:00	19 Finish writing draft	20	21 Revise draft →	22 →	23 Library?
24	25	26 Finish revising draft	27 Edit draft	28 Writing Center 4:30	29 Finish editing draft	30 Create Works Cited page
May 1	2 Final draft due	3	4	5	6	7

Figure **6.3.1** - Sample Schedule for Writing a Research Paper

Staying Organized

Although setting up a schedule is relatively easy, sticking to one is challenging. Even if you are the rare person who never procrastinates, unforeseen events may interfere with your ability to complete tasks on time. A self-imposed deadline may slip your mind despite your best intentions. Organizational tools (e.g., calendars, checklists, note cards, software) and setting up a buddy system with a classmate can help you stay on track.

Throughout your project, organize both your time and resources systematically. Review your schedule frequently and check your progress. It helps to post your schedule in a place where you will see it every day. Email systems usually include a calendar feature where you can record tasks, arrange to receive daily reminders, and check off completed tasks. Electronic devices such as smartphones have similar features. There are online task-management tools you may use for free on the Web, such as Google Tasks, HiTask, Nirvana, and Remember the Milk. Some people enjoy using the most up-to-date technology to help them stay organized. Other people prefer simple methods, such as crossing off items on a checklist. The key to staying organized is finding a system you like enough to use daily. The particulars of the method are not important as long as you are consistent.

Organize project documents in a binder or digital folder. Label these clearly. Use note cards, an electronic document, an online database folder (this will require you to set up a free account on the database), or free downloadable software such as Colwiz and Zotero to record bibliographical information for sources you want to use in your paper. Tracking this information during the research process will save you time when Creating a List of References.

Writing at Work

When you create a project schedule at work, you set target dates for completing certain tasks and identify the resources you plan to use on the project. It is important to build in some flexibility. Materials may not be received on time because of a shipping delay. An employee on your team may be called away to work on a higher-priority project. Essential equipment may malfunction. You should always plan for the unexpected.

? Exercise 7

Working backward from the date your final draft is due, create a project schedule. You may choose to write a sequential list of tasks, record tasks on a calendar, or set up your project's timeline using an online task-management tool, such as Google Tasks, HiTask, Nirvana, and Remember the Milk. Select a format you think will help you stay on track from day to day. Use a calendar accessible on your smartphone, record your schedule in a weekly planner, post it by your desk, or set your email or task-management tool to send you reminders. Review your schedule to be sure you have broken each step into smaller tasks and assigned a target completion date to each key task. Review your target dates to make sure they are realistic. Allow more time than you think you will need.

Anticipating Challenges

Do any of these scenarios sound familiar? You have identified a book that would be a great resource for your project, but it is currently checked out of the library. You planned to interview a subject-matter expert on your topic, but she calls to cancel. You have begun writing your draft, but now you realize that you will need to modify your thesis and conduct additional research. Or, you have finally completed your draft when your computer crashes, and days of hard work disappear in an instant. These troubling situations are all too common. No matter how carefully you plan your schedule, you may encounter a glitch or setback. Managing your project effectively means anticipating potential problems, taking steps to minimize them where possible, and allowing time in your schedule to handle any setbacks.

Many times a situation becomes a problem due only to lack of planning. For example, if a book is checked out of your college's library, you can request it through interlibrary loan to have it delivered to your campus in a few days. Alternatively, you might locate another equally useful source. If you have allowed enough time for research, a brief delay will not become a major setback.

You can manage other potential problems by staying organized and maintaining a takecharge attitude. Take the time to save a backup copy of your work on a portable flash drive. Or, instead of using the hard drive of one computer to save your work, create your word-processing files using cloud storage such as Dropbox or Google Drive, which you can access with a username and password from any computer with an Internet connection. If you don't have a reliable Internet connection off campus, then visit a computer lab on campus or a public library with desktop computers, or you can go to a coffee shop with a laptop; it is important to find a space where you can concentrate and that is open during times that work with your schedule. As you conduct research, maintain detailed records and notes of sources—doing so will make citing sources in your draft infinitely easier. If you run into difficulties with your research or your writing, ask your instructor or a librarian for help, or meet with a peer or writing tutor.

Writing at Work

In the workplace, documents prepared at the beginning of a project often include a detailed plan for risk management. When you manage a project, it makes sense to anticipate and prepare for potential setbacks. For example, to roll out a new product line, a software development company must strive to complete tasks on a schedule in order to meet the new product release date. The project manager may need to adjust the project plan if one or more tasks fall behind schedule.

? Exercise 8

Identify five potential problems you might encounter in the process of researching and writing your paper. Write them on a separate sheet of paper. For each problem, write at least one strategy for solving the problem or minimizing its effect on your project.

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6.4: Gathering Your Sources (Part 1)

Now that you have planned your research project, you are ready to begin the research. This phase can be both exciting and challenging. As you read this section, you will learn ways to locate sources efficiently, so you will have enough time to read the sources, take notes, and think about how to use them in your research paper. In addition to finding sources, research entails determining the relevance and reliability of sources, organizing findings, as well as deciding whether and how to use sources in your paper. The technological advances of the past few decades—particularly the rise of online media—mean that, as a twenty-first-century student, you have countless sources of information available at your fingertips. But how can you tell whether a source is reliable? This section will discuss strategies for finding and evaluating sources so that you can be a media-savvy researcher.

Depending on your assignment, you will likely search for sources by using

- **Internet search engines** to locate sources freely available on the web.
- **A library's online catalog** to identify print books, ebooks, periodicals, DVDs, and other items in the library's collection. The catalog will help you find journals by title, but it will not list the journal's articles by title or author.
- **Online databases** to locate articles, ebooks, streaming videos, images, and other electronic resources. These databases can also help you identify articles in print periodicals.

Your instructor, as well as writing tutors and librarians, at your college can help you determine which of these methods will best fit your project and learn to use the search tools available to you. You can also find research guides and tutorials on library websites and *YouTube* channels that can help you identify appropriate research tools and learn how to use them. As you gather sources, you will need to examine them with a critical eye. Smart researchers continually ask themselves two questions: "Is this source relevant to my purpose?" and "Is this source reliable?" The first question will help you avoid wasting valuable time reading sources that stray too far from your specific topic and research questions. The second question will help you find accurate, trustworthy sources.

Writing at Work

Businesses, government organizations, and nonprofit organizations produce published materials that range from brief advertisements and brochures to lengthy, detailed reports. In many cases, producing these publications requires research. A corporation's annual report may include research about economic or industry trends. A charitable organization may use information from research in materials sent to potential donors. Regardless of the industry you work in, you may be asked to assist in developing materials for publication. Often, incorporating research in these documents can make them more effective in informing or persuading readers.

Identifying Primary and Secondary Sources

When you chose a paper topic and determined your research questions, you conducted preliminary research to stimulate your thinking. Your research plan included some general ideas for how to go about your research—for instance, interviewing an expert in the field or analyzing the content of popular magazines. You may even have identified a few potential sources. Now it is time to conduct a more focused, systematic search for informative primary and secondary sources. Writers classify research resources in two categories: primary sources and secondary sources.

Primary sources are direct, firsthand sources of information or data. For example, if you were writing a paper about the First Amendment right to freedom of speech, the text of the First Amendment in the Bill of Rights would be a primary source. Other primary sources include the following:

- Data
- Works of visual art
- Literary texts
- Historical documents such as diaries or letters
- Autobiographies, interviews, or other personal accounts

Secondary sources discuss, interpret, analyze, consolidate, or otherwise rework information from primary sources. In researching a paper about the First Amendment, you might read articles about legal cases that involved First Amendment rights, or editorials expressing commentary on the First Amendment. These sources would be considered secondary sources because they are one step removed from the primary source of information. The following are examples of secondary sources:

- Literary criticism
- Biographies
- Reviews
- Documentaries
- News reports

Your topic and purpose determine whether you must cite both primary and secondary sources in your paper. Ask yourself which sources are most likely to provide the information that will answer your research questions. If you are writing a research paper about reality television shows, you will need to use some reality shows as a primary source, but secondary sources, such as a reviewer's critique, are also important. If you are writing about the health effects of nicotine, you will probably want to read the published results of scientific studies, but secondary sources, such as magazine articles discussing the outcome of a recent study, may also be helpful.

Some sources could be considered primary or secondary sources, depending on the writer's purpose for using them. For instance, if a writer's purpose is to inform readers about how the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation has affected elementary education in the United States, then a *Time* magazine article on the subject would be a secondary source. However, suppose the writer's purpose is to analyze how the news media has portrayed the effects of NCLB. In that case, articles about the legislation in news magazines like *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *US News & World Report* would be primary sources. They provide firsthand examples of the media coverage the writer is analyzing.

Once you have thought about what kinds of sources are most likely to help you answer your research questions, you may begin your search for sources. The challenge here is to conduct your search both efficiently and thoroughly. On the one hand, effective writers use strategies to help them find the sources that are most relevant and reliable while steering clear of sources that will not be useful; on the other hand, they are open to pursuing different lines of inquiry that come up along the way than those that seemed relevant at the start of research. As a process of discovery, good research requires critical thinking about, and often revising of, writers' plans and ideas.

Reading Popular and Scholarly Periodicals

When you search for periodicals, be sure to distinguish among different types. Mass-market publications, such as newspapers and popular magazines, differ from scholarly publications in their accessibility, audience, and purpose. Newspapers and magazines are written for a broader audience than scholarly journals. Their content is usually quite accessible and easy to read. Trade magazines that target readers within a particular industry may presume the reader has background knowledge, but these publications are still reader-friendly for a broader audience. Their purpose is to inform and, often, to entertain or persuade readers as well.

Scholarly or academic journals are written for a much smaller and more expert audience. The creators of these publications are experts in the subject and assume that most of their readers are already familiar with the main topic of the journal. The target audience is also highly educated. Informing is the primary purpose of a scholarly journal. While a journal article may advance an agenda or advocate a position, the content will still be presented in an objective style and formal tone. Entertaining readers with breezy comments and splashy graphics is not a priority.

Because of these differences, scholarly journals are more challenging to read. That doesn't mean you should avoid them. On the contrary, they can provide in-depth information unavailable elsewhere. Because knowledgeable professionals carefully review the content before publication in a process called "peer-review," scholarly journals are far more reliable than much of the information available in popular media. Seek out academic journals along with other resources. Just be prepared to spend a little more time processing the information.

Writing at Work

Periodicals databases are not just for students writing research papers. They also provide a valuable service to workers in various fields. The owner of a small business might use a database such as *Business Source Premiere* to find articles on management, finance, or trends within a particular industry. Health care professionals might consult databases such as MedLine to research a particular disease or medication. Regardless of what career path you plan to pursue, periodicals databases can be a useful tool for researching specific topics and identifying periodicals that will help you keep up with the latest news in your industry.

Using Sources from the Open Web

When faced with the challenge of writing a research paper, some students rely on popular search engines, such as Google, as their only source of information. Typing a keyword or phrase into a search engine instantly pulls up links to dozens, hundreds, or even thousands of related websites—what could be easier? While the Web is useful for retrieving information, you should be wary of limiting your research to sources from the open Web.

For example, **wikis**, including online encyclopedias, such as *Wikipedia*, and community-driven question-and-answer sites, such *Yahoo Answers*, are very easy to access on the Web. They are free, and they appear among the first few results when using a search engine. Because these sites are created and revised by a large community of users, they cover thousands of topics, and many are written in an informal and straightforward writing style. However, these sites may not have a reliable control system for researching, writing, and reviewing posts. While wikis may be a good starting point for finding other, more trustworthy, more fully developed sources, usually they should not be your final sources.

Despite its apparent convenience, researching on the open Web has the following drawbacks to consider:

- Results do not consider the reliability of the sources. The first few hits that appear in search results often include sites whose content is not always reliable. Search engines cannot tell you which sites have accurate information.
- Results may be influenced by popularity or advertisers. Search engines find websites that people visit often and list the results in order of popularity rather than relevance to your topic.
- Results may be too numerous for you to use. Search engines often return an overwhelming number of results. Because it is difficult to filter results for quality or relevance, the most useful sites may be buried deep within your search results. It is not realistic for you to examine every site.
- Results do not include many of the library's high quality electronic resources that are only available through password-protected databases or on campus.
- Because anyone can publish anything on the Web, the quality of the information varies greatly and you will need to evaluate web resources carefully.

Nevertheless, a search on the open Web can provide a helpful overview of a topic and may pull up genuinely useful sources. You may find specialized search engines recommended on your college library's website. For example, http://www.usa.gov will search for information on United States government websites. If you are working at your personal computer, use the Bookmarks or Favorites feature of your web browser to save and organize sites that look promising.

To get the most out of a search engine, use strategies to make your search more efficient. Depending on the specific search engine you use, the following options may be available:

- Limit results to websites that have been updated within a particular time frame.
- Limit results by language or region.
- Limit results to scholarly works available online. Google Scholar is an example.
- Limit results by file type.
- Limit results to a particular site or domain type, such as .edu (school and university sites) or .gov (government sites). This is a quick way to filter out commercial sites that often lead to less objective results.

Types and Formats of Library Sources

Information accessible through a college library comes in a variety of types and formats of sources. Books, DVDS, and various types of periodicals can be found in physical form at the library. Many of these same materials are available in electronic format in the form of ebooks, electronic journal articles, and streaming videos. Your college library may have some resources in both print and electronic formats while others may be available exclusively in one format. The following lists different types of resources available at college libraries. In addition to the resources noted, library holdings may include primary sources such as historical documents, letters, diaries, and images.

Types of sources

- **Reference works** provide a summary of information about a particular topic. Almanacs, encyclopedias, atlases, medical reference books, and scientific abstracts are examples of reference works. In most cases, reference books may not be checked

out of a library. Note that reference works are many steps removed from original primary sources and are often brief, so these should be used only as a starting point when you gather information.

  - **Examples**: *The World Almanac and Book of Facts 2010*; *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, published by the American Psychiatric Association.
- **Nonfiction books** provide in-depth coverage of a topic. Trade books, biographies, and how-to guides are usually written for a general audience. Scholarly books and scientific studies are usually written for an audience that has specialized knowledge of a topic.
  - **Examples**: *The Low-Carb Solution: A Slimmer You in 30 Days; Carbohydrates, Fats and Proteins: Exploring the Relationship Between Macronutrient Ratios and Health Outcomes.*
- **Periodicals** are published at regular intervals—daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly. Newspapers, magazines, and academic journals are different kinds of periodicals. Some periodicals provide articles on subjects of general interest while others are more specialized.
  - **Examples**: *The New York Times; PC Magazine; JAMA: The Journal of the American Medical Association.*
- **Government publications** by federal, state, and local agencies publish information on a variety of topics. Government publications include reports, legislation, court documents, public records, statistics, studies, guides, programs, and forms.
  - **Examples**: *The Census 2000 Profile; The Business Relocation Package*, published by the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce.
- **Business publications** and publications by nonprofit organizations are designed to market a product, provide background about the organization, provide information on topics connected to the organization, or promote a cause. These publications include reports, newsletters, advertisements, manuals, brochures, and other print documents.
  - **Examples**: a company's instruction manual explaining how to use a specific software program; a news release published by the Sierra Club.
- **Documentaries** are the moving-image equivalent of nonfiction books. They cover a range of topics and can be introductory or scholarly. Newsreels can be primary sources about then-current events. Feature-length programs or episodes of a series can be secondary sources about historical phenomena or life stories. You may view a documentary in a movie theater, on television, on an open website, or in a subscription-accessed database such as Films on Demand.
  - **Examples**: *Freedom Riders*, directed by Stanley Nelson; *Finding Your Roots*, with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

As you gather information, strive for a balance of accessible, easy-to-read sources and more specialized, challenging sources. Relying solely on lightweight books and articles written for a general audience will drastically limit the range of useful, substantial information. However, restricting oneself to dense, scholarly works could make the research process overwhelming. An effective strategy for unfamiliar topics is to begin your reading with works written for the general public, and then move to more scholarly works as you learn more about your topic.

Using Databases

While library catalogs can help you locate print and electronic book-length sources, as well as some types of non-print holdings, such as CDs, DVDs, and audiobooks, the best way to locate shorter sources, such as articles in magazines, newspapers, and journals, is to search online databases accessible through a portal to which your college's library subscribes. In many cases, the full texts of articles are available from these databases. In other instances, articles are indexed, meaning there is a summary and publication information about the article, but the full text is not immediately available in the database; instead, you may find the indexed article in a print periodical in your college's library holdings, or you can submit an online request for an interlibrary loan, and a librarian will email a digitized copy of the article to you.

When searching for sources using a password-protected portal, such as the University System of Georgia's GALILEO, it's important to understand where and how to look up your topic. On its homepage, GALILEO contains a general search bar called the "Discover" tool, which allows you to search many (but not all) databases at once. If you don't find useful sources using the portal's general search bar, then you may retrieve better results by going to specific databases within the portal. This video tutorial, titled "GALILEO at GPC Libraries, Including the Discover Tool," created by the Georgia Perimeter College (GPC) Libraries, explains how to search for sources using GALILEO. For specific guidance on using a password-protected portal to find sources for a literary

research paper, watch videos in the GPC Libraries' "Literature Research Series" on *YouTube*. As these tutorials show, on a portal such as GALILEO, you can choose specific databases by going to "Databases A-Z" or "Databases by Subject." Databases may be general, including many types of resources on a broad range of subjects, or they may be specialized, focusing on a particular format of resource or a specific subject area. The following list describes some commonly used indexes and databases accessible through libraries' research portals.

- **Academic Search Complete** includes articles on a wide variety of topics published in various forums, both scholarly and popular.
- **Opposing Viewpoints** includes articles, statistics, and recommended websites related to a wide range of controversial issues.
- **CQ Researcher Online** has full-text articles about issues in the news.
- **Lexis Nexis** has articles from newspapers and other periodicals, news transcripts, and business and legal information.
- **Business Source Complete** comprises business-related content from magazines, journals, and trade publications.
- **Films on Demand** has streaming video of documentaries and historic newsreels.
- **Artstor** has high-quality images of works of visual art of various media, as well as information on the creators, subjects, materials, and holdings of artworks.
- **JSTOR** includes full-text scholarly secondary sources, including books and articles, as well as primary sources on a wide variety of topics, mostly in the humanities and social sciences.
- **History Reference Center** has full-text articles from reference books, encyclopedias, and scholarly journals, as well as images and streaming videos on most of the world's cultures and time periods.
- **Literature Resource Center** includes full-text print and electronic sources relevant to literature, such as biographies of authors, reviews of works, overviews of plots and characters, analyses of themes, and scholarly criticism.
- **Science and Technology Collection** has full-text articles from journals in various scientific and technical fields.
- **MEDLINE, Proquest Nursing**, and **Consumer Health Source** contain articles in medicine and health.

Sometimes you will know exactly which source you are looking for, for example, if your instructor or another writer references that source. Having the author (if available), title, and other information about the source included in an end-of-text citation will help you to find that source. The sequence of images below shows how to use the research portal GALILEO to find two sources with given citations, which indicate the sources are from the databases *Academic Search Complete* and *History Reference Center*.

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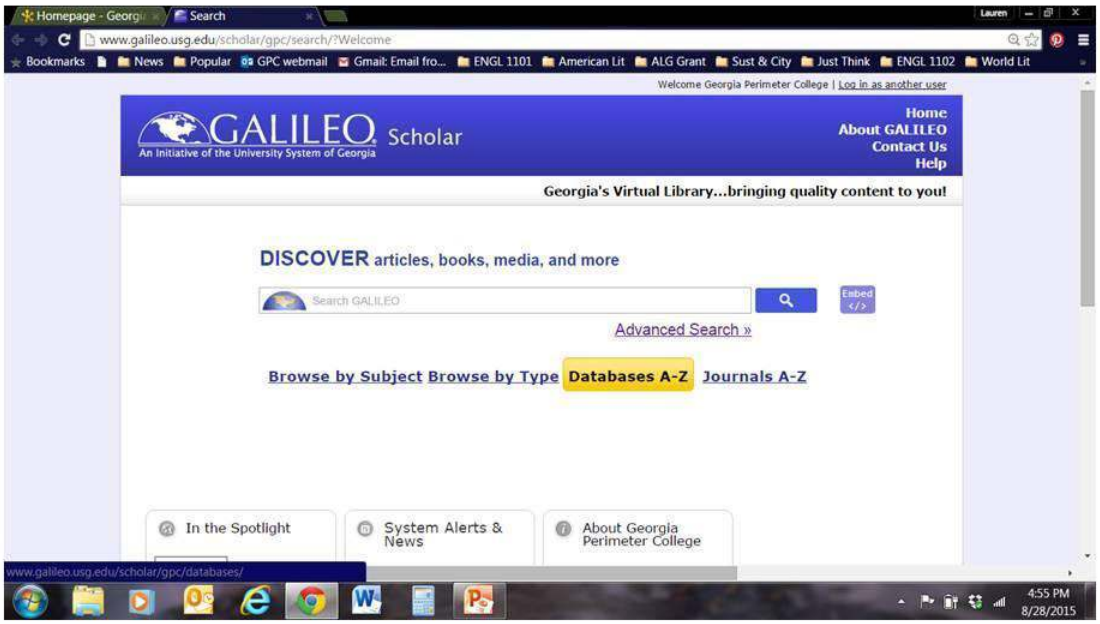
Finding Specific Sources in GALILEO

by Dr. Curtright

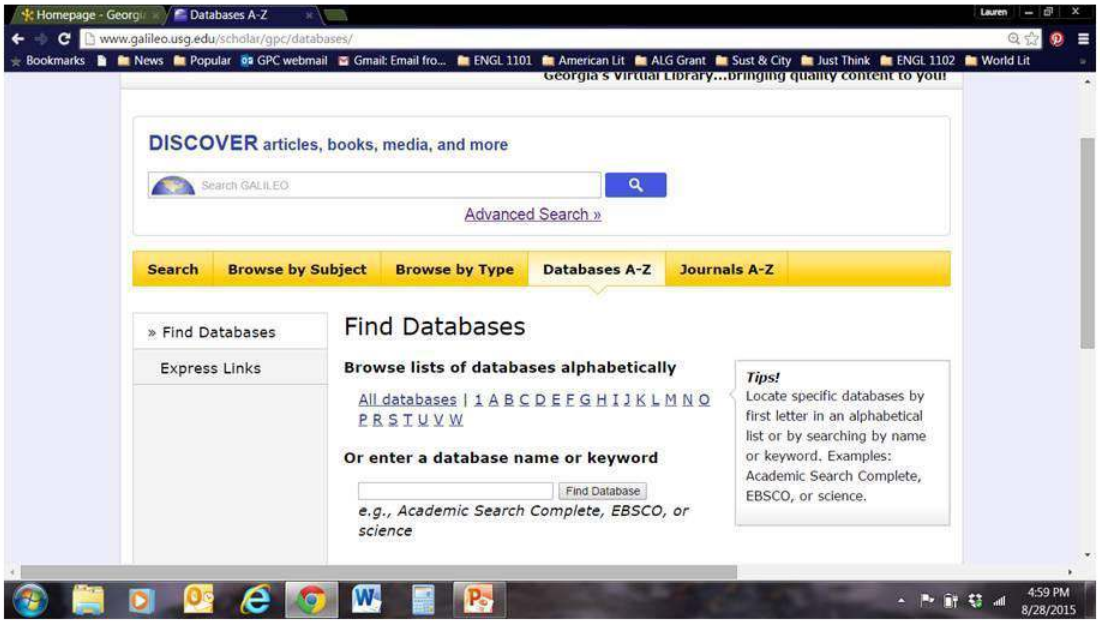
Using the following citations as examples, this presentation explains how to use GALILEO to find sources whose citations show they are from online library databases. Note: the item before "Web" in the citation is the title of the database.

"Alabama's Scandal." *Time* 67.8 (1956): 42. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 23 July 2015.

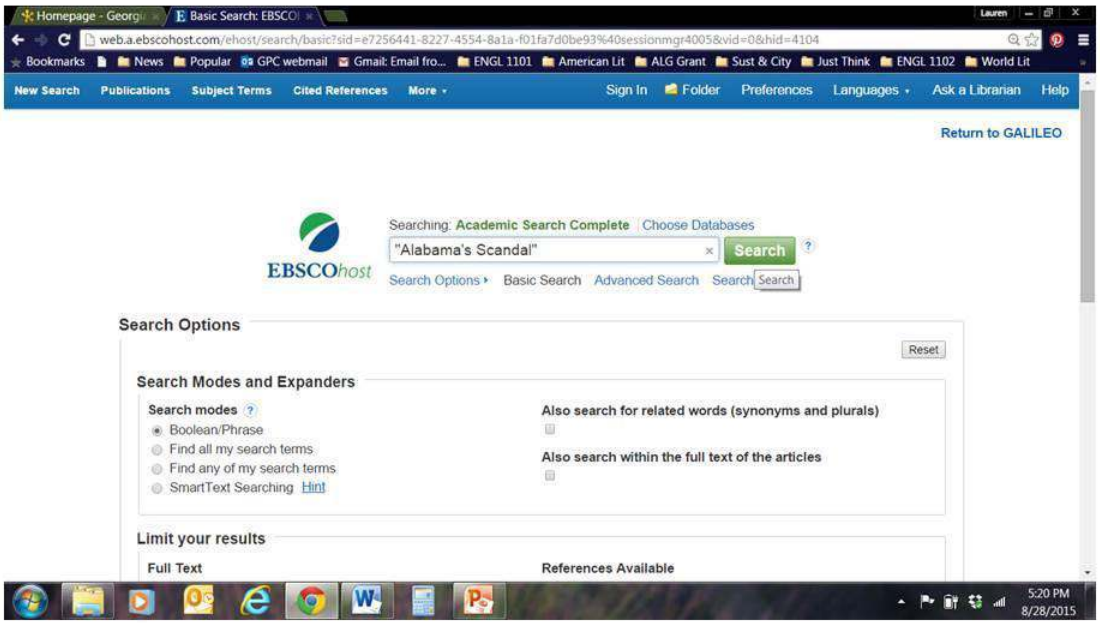
Wynn, Linda T. "Foster, Autherine Juanita Lucy (1929-)." *Freedom Facts & Firsts: 400 Years of the African American Civil Rights Experience* (2009): 103-104. *History Reference Center*. Web. 23 July 2015.



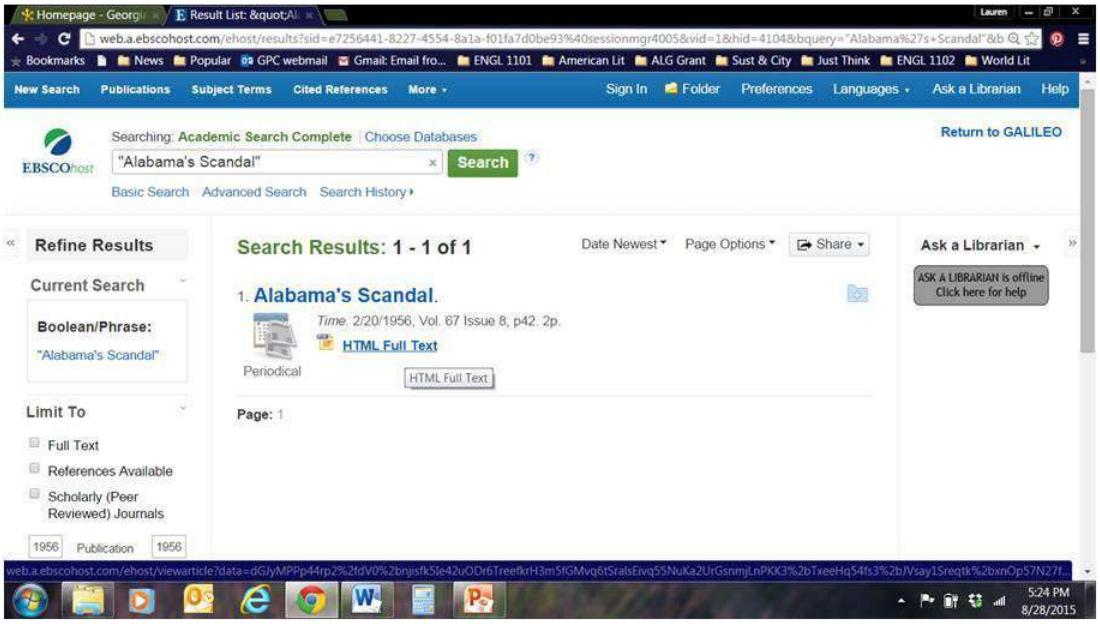
Once the GALILEO website loads in the browser, click on **Databases A-Z**.



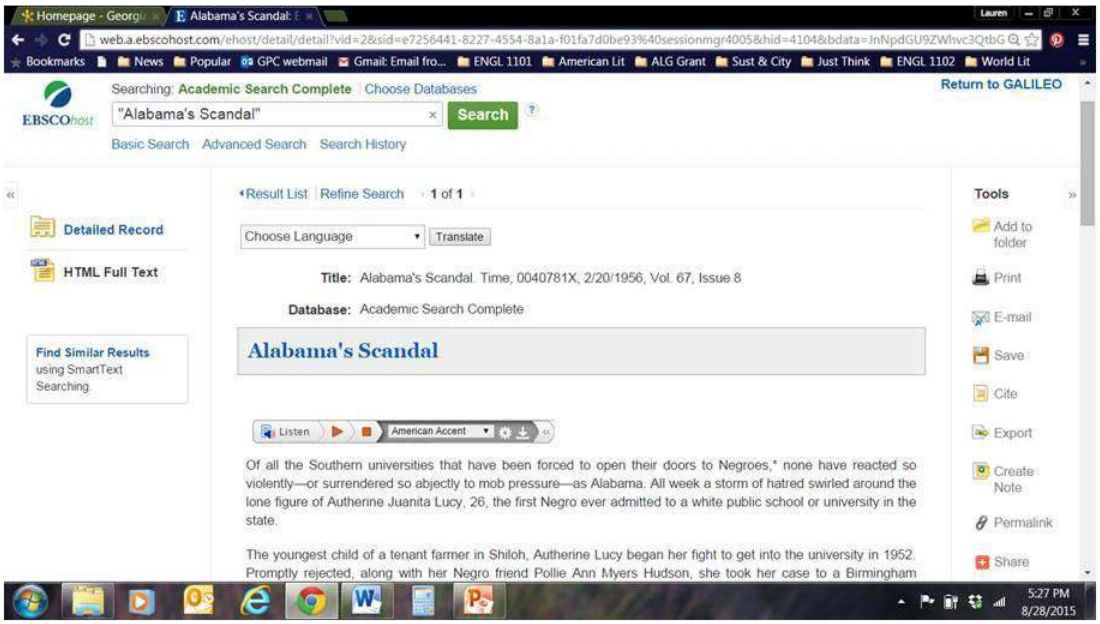
Search by first letter of the database or by words in its title at “Find Database”.



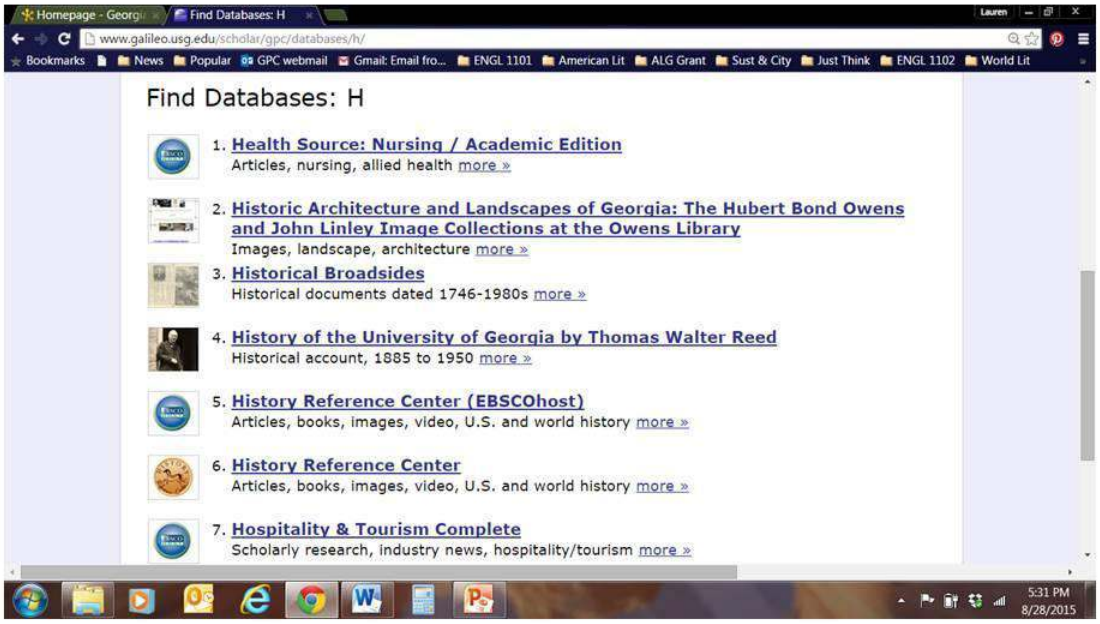
In the search bar, enter the first item of the citation, e.g. the source's title, in quotation marks; then click Search.



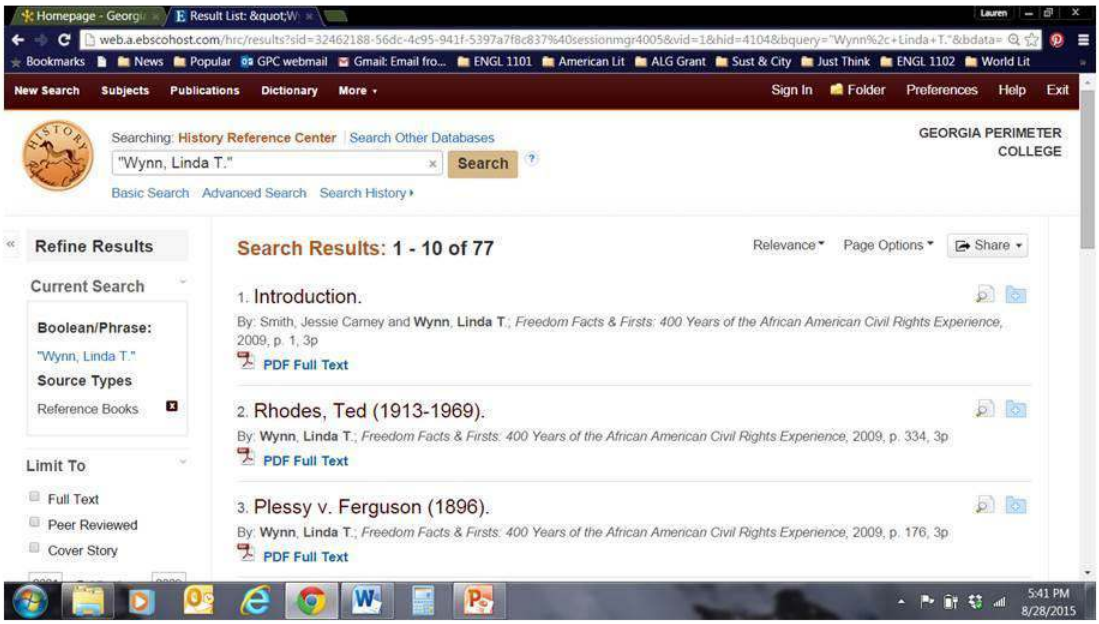
From the list of results, click on "HTML Full Text" to view the source.



Read the source, or use tools in the column at right to read it elsewhere.



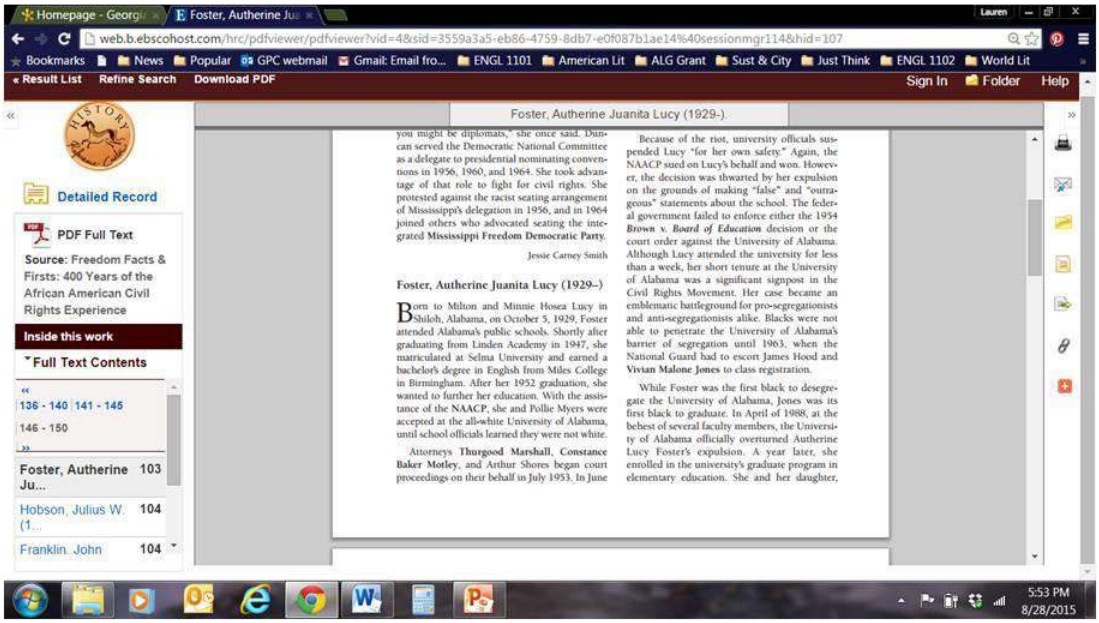
To find the next source, return to GALILEO; then look up the database **History Reference Center**.



Search the author's name (the first item in the citation) in quotations.



To narrow your search, add the source's title in quotations; type AND in-between the search phrases.



Click on “PDF Full Text” to open the source; then scroll down to read it. Note the tools at right to read it later.

As you go through the process of gathering sources, you will likely need to find specific sources referenced by others to build your list of useful sources; use the steps above to help you do this. However, keep in mind that, especially when you first start researching, you will also need to find sources about your topic having little or no idea what sources are out there. Therefore, rather than authors and titles, you will need to enter keywords, or subject search terms, related to your topic. The next section instructs you on how to do that.

Entering Search Terms

One of the most important steps in conducting research is to “learn how to speak database,” as the sock puppet explains to the student in this video tutorial, titled “How to Use a Database,” created by the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC) Library. As the video shows, to find reliable sources efficiently, you must identify single words or phrases that represent the major concepts of your research—that is, your keywords, or subject search terms. Your starting points for developing search terms are the topic and the research questions you identify, but you should also think of synonyms for those terms. Furthermore, as you begin searching for sources, you should notice additional terms in the subjects listed in the records of your results. These subjects will help you find additional sources.

As Jorge used his library’s catalog and databases, he worked to refine his search by making note of subjects associated with sources about low-carb dieting. His search helped him to identify the following additional terms and related topics to research:

- Low-carbohydrate diet
- Insulin resistance reducing diets
- Glycemic index
- Dietary carbohydrates

Searching the library’s online resources is similar in many ways to searching the Internet, except some library catalogs and databases require specific search techniques. For example, some databases require that you use **Boolean operators** to connect your search terms. In other databases, Boolean operators are optional, but can still help you get better search results. Here are some of the ways you can use Boolean operators:

- **Connect keywords with AND** to limit results to citations that include both keywords—for example, carbohydrates AND diet.
- **Connect keywords with OR** to search for results that contain either of two terms. For example, searching for diet OR nutrition locates articles that use “diet” as a keyword as well as articles that use “nutrition” as a keyword.
- **Connect keywords with NOT** to search for the first word without the second. This can help you eliminate irrelevant results based on words that are similar to your search term. For example, searching for obesity NOT childhood locates materials on obesity but excludes materials on childhood obesity.
- **Enclose a phrase in quotation marks** to search for an exact phrase, such as “morbid obesity.”

Many databases offer tools for improving your search. Make your search in library catalogs and databases more effective by using the following tips:

- **Use limiters** (often located on the left side of the search results) to further refine your results after searching.
- **Change the sort of your results** so the order of the articles best fits your needs. Sorting by date allows you to put the most recent or the oldest articles at the top of the results list. Other types of sorts include relevance, alphabetical by author’s name or alphabetical by article title.
- **Use the Advanced Search** functions of your database to further refine your results or to create more complex combinations of search terms.
- **Use the Help section of the database** to find more search strategies that apply to that particular database.

Here is an example of using Boolean operators in an Advanced Search:



Figure **6.5.1**

Consulting a Reference Librarian

Sifting through library stacks and database search results to find the information you need can be like trying to find a needle in a haystack. Knowing the right keywords can sometimes make all the difference in conducting a successful search. If you are not sure how you should begin your search, or if your search is yielding too many, or too few, results, then you are not alone. Many students find this process challenging, although it does get easier with experience. One way to learn better search strategies is to consult a reference librarian and watch online tutorials that research experts have created to help you. If you have trouble finding sources on a topic, consult a librarian.

Reference librarians are intimately familiar with the systems that libraries use to organize and classify information. They can help you locate a particular book in the library stacks, steer you toward useful reference works, and provide tips on how to use databases and other electronic research tools. Take the time to see what resources you can find on your own, but if you encounter difficulties, ask for help. Many academic librarians are available for online chatting, texting, and emailing as well as face-to-face reference consultations. To make the most of your reference consultation, be prepared to explain, to the librarian, the assignment and your timeline as well as your research questions and ideas for keywords. Because they are familiar with the resources available, librarians may be able to recommend specific resources that fit your needs and tailor your keywords to the search tools you are using.

? Exercise 9

At the Library of Congress’s website, search for results on a few terms related to your topic. Review your search results to identify six to eight additional terms you might use when you search for sources using your college library’s catalog and databases.

? Exercise 10

Visit your library’s website or consult with a reference librarian to determine which databases would be useful for your research. Depending on your topic, you may rely on a general database, a specialized database for a particular subject area, or both. Identify at least two relevant databases. Conduct a keyword search in these databases to find potentially relevant sources

on your topic. Also, search your college's online library catalog. If the catalog or database you are using provides abstracts of sources, then read them to determine how useful the sources are likely to be. Print out, email to yourself, or save your search results.

? Exercise 11

In your list of results, identify three to five sources to review more closely. If the full text is available online, set aside time to open, save, and read it. If not, use the "Find It" tool to see if the source is available through your college's library. Visit the library to locate any sources you need that are only available in print. If the source is not available directly through your school's library, then use the library's online tool to request an interlibrary loan of the source: librarians will send the source in digital form to your email address for you to open and save, or they will send it in print form to your campus library for you to check out.

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6.6: Evaluating and Processing Your Sources

Determining Whether a Source Is Relevant

At this point in your research process, you may have identified dozens of potential sources. It is easy for writers to get so caught up in checking out books and printing out articles that they forget to ask themselves how they will use these resources in their research. Now is a good time to get a little ruthless. Reading and taking notes takes time and energy, so you will want to focus on the most relevant sources.

You may benefit from seeking out sources that are current, or up to date. Depending on your topic, sources may become outdated relatively soon after publication, or they may remain useful for years. For instance, online social networking sites have evolved rapidly over the past few years. An article published in 2002 about this topic will not provide current information. On the other hand, a research paper on elementary education practices might refer to studies published decades ago by influential child psychologists. When using websites for research, look on the webpage to see when the site was last updated. Many non-functioning links are a sign that a website is not regularly updated. Do not be afraid to ask your instructor, tutors, and librarians for suggestions if you find that many of your most relevant sources are not especially reliable, or that your most reliable sources are not relevant.

To weed through your collection of books and articles, skim their contents. Read quickly with your research questions and subtopics in mind. The following tips explain how to skim to get a quick sense of what topics are covered. If a book or article is not especially relevant, put it aside. You can always come back to it later if you need to.

Tips for Skimming Books

1. Read the book cover and table of contents for a broad overview of the topics covered.
2. Use the index to locate more specific topics and see how thoroughly they are covered.
3. Flip through the book and look for subtitles or key terms that correspond to your research.

Tips for Skimming Articles

1. Journal articles often begin with an abstract or summary of the contents. Read it to determine the article's relevance to your research.
2. Skim the introduction and conclusion for summary material.
3. Skim through subheadings and text features such as sidebars.
4. Look for keywords related to your topic.

Determining Whether a Source Is Reliable

All information sources are not created equal. Sources can vary greatly in terms of how carefully they are researched, written, edited, and reviewed for accuracy. Common sense will help you identify obviously questionable sources, such as tabloids that feature tales of alien abductions, or personal websites with glaring typos. Sometimes, however, a source's reliability—or lack of it—is not so obvious. To evaluate your research sources, you will use critical thinking skills consciously and deliberately.

Sources you encounter will be written for distinct purposes and with particular audiences in mind, which may account for differences such as the following:

- How thoroughly writers cover a given topic
- How carefully writers research and document facts
- How editors review the work
- What biases or agendas affect the content

A journal article written for an academic audience for the purpose of expanding scholarship in a given field will take an approach quite different from a magazine feature written to inform a general audience. Textbooks, hard news articles, and websites approach a subject from different angles as well. To some extent, the type of source provides clues about its overall depth and reliability. Use the following descriptions of types of sources to help you determine the quality of your sources.

- **High Quality Sources** provide the most in-depth information. They are written and reviewed by subject-matter experts. Examples: books published by University presses and articles in scholarly journals, such as *Mosaic: A Journal for the*

Interdisciplinary Study of Literature; trade books and magazines geared toward an educated general audience, such as *Smithsonian Magazine*; government documents; documents by reputable organizations, such as universities and research institutes.

- **Varied Quality Sources** are often useful; however, they do not cover subjects in as much depth as high-quality sources, and they are not always rigorously researched and reviewed. Some, such as popular magazine articles or company brochures, may be written to market a product or a cause. Textbooks and reference books are usually reliable, but they may not cover a topic in great depth. Use them with caution. Examples: news stories and feature articles (print or online) from reputable newspapers, magazines, or organizations, such as *The New York Times* or the *Public Broadcasting Service*; popular magazine articles, which may or may not be carefully researched and fact checked; documents by businesses and nonprofit organizations.
- **Questionable Sources** are often written primarily to attract a large readership or to present the author's opinions, and they are not subject to careful review. Generally, avoid using these as final sources. If you want to use a source that fits into this category, then carefully evaluate it using criteria below. Examples: loosely regulated or unregulated media content, such as Internet discussion boards, blogs, free online encyclopedias, talk shows, television news shows with obvious political biases, personal websites, and chat rooms.

Even when you are using a type of source that is generally reliable, you will still need to evaluate the author's credibility and the publication itself on an individual basis. To examine the author's credibility—that is, how much you can believe of what the author has to say—examine his or her credentials. What career experience or academic study shows that the author has the expertise to write about this topic? Keep in mind that expertise in one field is no guarantee of expertise in another, unrelated area. For instance, an author may have an advanced degree in physiology, but this credential is not a valid qualification for writing about psychology. Check credentials carefully.

Just as important as the author's credibility is the publication's overall reputability. Reputability refers to a source's standing and reputation as a respectable, reliable source of information. An established and well-known newspaper, such as *The New York Times* or *The Wall Street Journal*, is more reputable than a college newspaper put out by comparatively inexperienced students. A website that is maintained by a well-known, respected organization and regularly updated is more reputable than one created by an unknown author or group.

Whenever you consult a source, always think carefully about the author's or authors' purpose in presenting the information. Few sources present facts completely objectively. In some cases, the source's content and tone are significantly influenced by biases or hidden agendas. Bias refers to favoritism or prejudice toward a particular person or group. For instance, an author may be biased against a certain political party and present information in a way that subtly—or not so subtly—makes that organization look bad. Bias can lead an author to present facts selectively, edit quotations to misrepresent someone's words, and distort information. Hidden agendas are goals that are not immediately obvious but influence how an author presents the facts. For instance, an article about the role of beef in a healthy diet would be questionable if it were written by a representative of the beef industry—or by the president of an animalrights organization. In both cases, the author would likely have a hidden agenda.

As Jorge conducted his research, he read several research studies in which scientists found significant benefits to following a low-carbohydrate diet. He also noticed that many studies were sponsored by a foundation associated with the author of a popular series of low-carbohydrate diet books. Jorge read these studies with a critical eye, knowing that a hidden agenda might be shaping the researchers' conclusions.

In sum, to evaluate a source, you should consider not only how current the source is but also criteria such as the type of source, its intended purpose and audience, the author's (or authors') qualifications, the publication's reputation, any indications of bias or hidden agendas, and the overall professionalism of the source's language, ideas, and design. You should consider these criteria as well as your overall impressions of sources' quality. Read carefully, and notice how well authors present and support their statements. Stay actively engaged—do not simply accept sources' words as truth.

Writing at Work

The critical thinking skills you use to evaluate research sources as a student are equally valuable when you conduct research on the job. If you follow certain periodicals or websites, you have probably identified publications that consistently provide reliable information. Reading blogs and online discussion groups is a great way to identify new trends and hot topics in a particular field, but these sources should not be your final sources if you're doing substantial research.

? Exercise 12

Choose a source you found that you think is relevant but you're unsure if it's reliable. Answer the following questions about the source:

a. Can you establish that the author is credible and the publication is reputable?
b. Does the author support ideas with specific facts and details that are carefully documented? Is the source of the author's information clear? When you use secondary sources, look for sources that are not too removed from primary research.
c. Does the author leave out any information that you would expect to see in a discussion of this topic?
d. Does the source include any factual errors or instances of faulty logic?
e. Do the author's conclusions logically follow from the evidence that is presented? Can you see how the author gets to one point from another?
f. Is the writing clear and free from errors, clichés, and empty buzzwords?
g. Is the tone objective, balanced, and reasonable? Does the source convey any biases? Be on the lookout for extreme, emotionally-charged language.
h. Based on what you know about the author, is he or she likely to have any hidden agendas?
i. Is the source's design professional? Are graphics informative, useful, and easy to understand? If the source is a website, is it well-organized, easy to navigate, and free of clutter like flashing ads and unnecessary sound effects?
j. Is the source contradicted by information you found in other sources? If so, it is possible that your sources are presenting similar information but taking different perspectives, which requires you to think carefully about which sources you find more convincing and why. Be suspicious, however, of any source that presents facts you cannot confirm elsewhere.

Keeping Track of Sources

As you determine which sources you will rely on most, it is important to establish a system for keeping track of your sources and taking notes. There are several ways to go about it, and no one system is necessarily superior. Here's what matters: you keep materials in order; record bibliographical information you will need later; and take detailed, organized notes.

Think ahead to a moment a few weeks from now, when you've written your research paper and are almost ready to submit it for a grade. There is just one task left—writing your list of sources. As you begin typing your list, you realize you need to include the publication information for a book you cited frequently. Unfortunately, you already returned it to the library several days ago. You do not remember the URLs for some of the websites you used or the dates you accessed them—information that also must be included in your bibliography. With a sinking feeling, you realize that finding this information and preparing your bibliography will require hours of work.

This stressful scenario can be avoided. Taking time to organize source information now will ensure that you are not scrambling to find it at the last minute. Throughout your research, record bibliographical information for each source as soon as you begin using it. You may use pen-and-paper methods, such as a notebook or note cards, or maintain an electronic list. (If you prefer the latter option, many office software packages include separate programs for recording bibliographic information.) The following table shows the specific details you should record for commonly used source types. Use these details to develop a working bibliography —a preliminary list of sources that you will later use to develop the references section of your paper. It will save you time later on to record, from the start, all information you will need about your sources to create a Works Cited page. The following lists what you should record for some common types of sources. Your research may involve other types of sources not listed below. **For more information on formatting citations**, consult the APA website at http://www.apa.org or the APA Guide or MLA Guide on the Purdue University Online Writing Lab website at http://owl.english.purdue.edu.

- **Book**: the author(s), title, subtitle, publisher, city of publication, and year of publication.
- **Work** (e.g., article) in an anthology (i.e., book): the work's author(s), title, and subtitle; the book's title, subtitle, editor(s); any edition and volume numbers of the book; the book's publisher, city of publication, and year of publication; the pages on which the work appears in the book.
- **Periodical**: the author(s), title of the article, title of the publication, date of publication, volume and issue number, and range of page numbers of the article.

- **Online source**: the author(s); the title of the work or web page; the title of the website; the organization that sponsors the website; the database name; the date of publication or date of last update; the date you accessed the source.
- **Interview**: the name of the person interviewed; the method of communication (e.g., in-person, video chat, email, or phone call); the date of the interview.

As you conduct research, you may wish to record additional details, such as a book's call number, the contact information for a person you interviewed, or the URL of an online source. That will make it easier for you to quickly locate the source again. You may also wish to assign each source a code (e.g., a number, letter, symbol, or color) to use when taking notes.

Taking Notes Efficiently

Writers sometimes get caught up in taking extensive notes, so much so that they lose sight of how their sources help them to answer their research questions. The challenge is to stay focused and organized as you gather information from sources. Before you begin taking notes, take a moment to step back and remind yourself of your goal as a researcher: to find information that will help you answer your research questions. That goal will determine what information you record and how you organize it. When you write your paper, you will present your conclusions about the topic supported by research. Therefore, you do not need to write down every detail of your sources; some of the information in relevant sources will be irrelevant to your research questions.

There are several formats you can use to take notes. No technique is necessarily better than the others—it is more important to choose a format you are comfortable using. Choose a note-taking method from among those listed below that works best for you, and use it as you gather sources. Using the techniques discussed in this section will prepare you for the next step in writing your research paper: organizing and synthesizing the information you find.

Use index cards. This traditional format involves writing each note on a separate index card. It takes more time than copying and pasting into an electronic document, which encourages you to be selective in choosing which ideas to record. Recording notes on separate cards makes it easy to later organize your notes according to major topics. Some writers color-code their cards to make them still more organized.

Maintain a research notebook. Instead of using index cards or electronic note cards, you may wish to keep a notebook or electronic folder, allotting a few pages (or one file) for each of your sources. This method makes it easy to create a separate column or section of the document where you add your responses to the information you encounter in your research.

Annotate your sources. This method involves making handwritten notes in the margins of sources that you have printed or photocopied. If using electronic sources, you can make comments within the source document. For example, you might add comment boxes to a PDF version of an article. This method works best for experienced researchers who have already thought a great deal about the topic because it can be difficult to organize your notes later when starting your draft.

Use note-taking software. There are many options for taking and organizing notes electronically. These include word-processing software that you can use offline on a computer. They also include tools like Diigo, Evernote, and Mindomo, available on the Web for free or reduced prices if you will use the tool for educational purposes. Although you may need to set aside time to learn how to use them, digital tools offer you possibilities that handwritten note cards do not, such as searching your notes, copying and pasting your notes into your paper, and saving and sharing your notes online.

Whether you use old-fashioned index cards or organize your notes digitally, you should keep all your notes in one place, and use topic headings to group related details. Doing so will help you identify connections among different sources. It will also help you make connections between your notes and the research questions and subtopics you identified earlier. Throughout the process of taking notes, be scrupulous about making sure you have correctly attributed each idea or piece of information to its source. Always include source information or use a code system (e.g., numbers, letters, symbols, or colors) so you know exactly which claims or evidence came from which sources.

Effective researchers make choices about which types of notes are most appropriate for their purpose. Your notes may fall into three categories:

Summary notes sum up the main ideas in a source in a few sentences or a short paragraph. A summary is considerably shorter than the original text and captures only the major ideas. Use summary notes when you do not need to record specific details but you intend to refer to broad concepts the author discusses.

Paraphrased notes restate a fact or idea from a source using your own words and sentence structure.

Direct quotations use the exact wording used by the original source and enclose the quoted material in quotation marks. It is a good strategy to copy direct quotations when an author expresses an idea in an especially lively or memorable way. However, do not rely exclusively on direct quotations in your note taking.

Summarizing and **paraphrasing** as you take notes is usually a better strategy than copying direct quotations because it forces you to think through the claims and evidence in your source and to understand it well enough to restate it. In short, these methods of note-taking help you to stay engaged with your topic instead of simply copying and pasting text from sources. Using them will help you when you draft your paper.

Paraphrase ideas carefully, and check your paraphrased notes against the original text to make sure you have restated the author's ideas accurately.

Use quotation marks to set off any words for phrases taken directly from the source. With direct quotations, again, make sure your notes accurately reflect the content of the original text: check that quoted material is copied verbatim. If you omit words from a quotation, use ellipses to show the omission, and make sure the omission does not change the author's meaning. If you add your own responses and ideas to your notes, mark them as such so that your own thinking about the topic stands out from ideas you summarized or paraphrased.

? Exercise 13

Review your research, then set a timer for ten minutes and freewrite about your topic, using your questions and thesis to guide your writing. Complete this exercise without looking over your notes or sources. Base your writing on the overall impressions and concepts you have absorbed while conducting research. If additional, related questions come to mind, jot them down.

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6.7: Applying Your Research

At this point in your project, you are preparing to move from the research phase to the writing phase. You have gathered much of the information you will use, and soon you will be ready to begin writing your draft. This section helps you transition smoothly from one phase to the next.

Beginning writers sometimes attempt to transform a pile of note cards into a formal research paper without any intermediary step. This approach presents problems. The writer's original question and thesis may be buried in a flood of disconnected details taken from researched sources. The first draft may present redundant or contradictory information. Worst of all, the writer's ideas and voice may be lost.

An effective research paper focuses on the writer's ideas—from the question that sparked the research process to how the writer answers that question based on the research findings. Before beginning a draft, or even an outline, good writers pause and reflect. They ask themselves questions such as the following:

- How has my thinking changed based on my research? What have I learned?
- Was my working thesis on target? Do I need to rework my thesis based on what I have learned?
- How does the information in my sources mesh with my research questions and help me answer those questions?
- Have any additional important questions or subtopics come up that I will need to address in my paper?
- How do my sources complement each other? What ideas or facts recur in multiple sources?
- Where do my sources disagree with each other, and why?

In this section, you will reflect on your research and review the source material you have gathered. You will determine what you now think about your topic. You will synthesize, or put together, different pieces of information that help you answer your research questions. Finally, you will determine the organizational structure that works best for your paper and begin planning your outline.

Selecting Useful Details

At this point in the research process, you have gathered evidence, ideas, and information from a wide variety of sources. Now it is time to think about how you will use your source materials as a writer. When you conduct research, you keep an open mind and seek out many promising sources. You take notes on any information that looks like it might help you answer your research questions. Often, new ideas and terms come up in your reading, and these, too, find their way into your notes. You may record claims or examples that catch your attention and seem relevant to your research questions. By now, you have probably amassed an impressively detailed collection of notes. However, you will not use all of your notes in your paper.

Effective writers are selective. They determine which information is most relevant and appropriate for their purpose. They include details that develop or explain their ideas— and they leave out details that do not. The writer, not the notes, is the controlling force. The writer shapes the content of the research paper. While gathering sources, you used strategies to filter out irrelevant and unreliable sources and details. Now you will apply your critical-thinking skills to the details you recorded—analyzing how it is relevant, determining the ways in which it meshes with your ideas and forms patterns.

As Jorge reviewed his research, he realized that some of the information was not especially useful for his purpose. His notes included several statements about the relationship between soft drinks that are high in sugar and childhood obesity—a subtopic that was too far outside of the main focus of the paper. Jorge decided to cut this material.

Do not feel anxious if you still have trouble seeing the big picture. Systematically looking through your notes will help you. Begin by identifying the notes that clearly support your thesis. Mark or group these, either physically or using the cut-and-paste function in your word-processing program. As you identify the crucial details that support your thesis, make sure you analyze them critically. Ask the following questions to focus your thinking:

- **Is this detail from a reliable, high-quality source?** Is it appropriate for me to cite this source in an academic paper? The bulk of the support for your thesis should come from reliable, reputable sources. You've already thought about and made choices in the quality of sources you gathered earlier in the research process. If most of the details that support your thesis are from less-reliable sources, you may need to do additional research or modify your thesis.
- **Is the link between this information and my thesis obvious—or will I need to explain it to my readers?** Remember, you have spent more time thinking and reading about this topic than your audience. Some connections might be obvious to both you

and your readers. More often, however, you will need to provide the analysis or explanation that shows how the information supports your thesis. As you read through your notes, jot down ideas you have for making those connections clear.

- **What personal biases or experiences might affect the way I interpret this information?** No researcher is 100 percent objective. We all have personal opinions and experiences that influence our reactions to what we read and learn. Good researchers are aware of this human tendency. They keep an open mind when they read opinions or facts that contradict their beliefs.

It can be tempting to ignore information that does not support your thesis or that contradicts it outright. However, such information is important. At the very least, it gives you a sense of what has been written about the topic. More importantly, it can help you question and refine your own thinking so that writing your research paper is a true learning process. Remember, your working thesis is not set in stone. You can and should change your working thesis throughout the research writing process if the evidence you find does not support your tentative thesis. Never try to force evidence to fit your argument. For example, suppose your tentative thesis is "Mars cannot support life-forms." Yet, a week into researching your topic, you find an article in *The New York Times* detailing new findings of bacteria under the Martian surface. Instead of trying to argue that bacteria are not life forms, you would do better to alter your thesis to "Mars cannot support complex life-forms." In sum, you should carefully consider how information that challenges your thesis fits into the big picture of your research. You may decide that the source is unreliable or the information is irrelevant, or you may decide that it is an important point you need to bring up. What matters is that you give careful consideration to various perspectives and current research on the topic.

Writing at Work

When you create workplace documents based on research, selectivity remains important. A project team may spend months conducting market surveys to prepare for rolling out a new product, but few managers have time to read the research in its entirety. Most employees want the research distilled into a few well-supported points. Focused, concise writing is highly valued in the workplace.

Finding Connections between Sources

As you find connections between your ideas and information in your sources, also look for commonalities between your sources. Do most sources seem to agree on a particular idea? Are some facts mentioned repeatedly in many different sources? What key terms or major concepts come up in most of your sources regardless of whether the sources agree on the finer points? Identifying these connections will help you identify important ideas to discuss in your paper. Look for subtler ways your sources complement one another, too. Does one author refer to another's book or article? How do sources that are more recent build upon the ideas developed in earlier sources?

Be aware of any redundancies in your sources. If you have amassed solid support from a reputable source, such as a scholarly journal, there is no need to cite the same facts from an online encyclopedia article that is many steps removed from any primary research. If a given source adds nothing new to your discussion and you can cite a stronger source for the same information, use the stronger source.

Determine how you will address any contradictions found among different sources. For instance, if one source cites a startling fact that you cannot confirm anywhere else, it is safe to dismiss the information as unreliable. However, if you find significant disagreements among reliable sources, you will need to review them and evaluate each source. Which source presents a sounder argument or more solid evidence? It is up to you to determine which source is the most credible and why.

Reevaluating Your Working Thesis

A careful analysis of your notes will help you reevaluate your working thesis and determine whether you need to revise it. Remember that your working thesis was the starting point—not necessarily the end point—of your research. You should revise your working thesis if your ideas have changed. Even if your sources generally confirmed your preliminary thinking on the topic, it is still a good idea to tweak the wording of your thesis to incorporate the specific details you learned from research.

Jorge realized that his working thesis oversimplified the issues. He still believed that the media was exaggerating the benefits of low-carb diets. However, his research led him to conclude that these diets did have some advantages. Read Jorge's revised thesis:

> *Although following a low-carbohydrate diet can benefit some people, these diets are not necessarily the best option for everyone who wants to lose weight or improve their health.*

? Exercise 14

Review your research questions and working thesis again. This time, keep them nearby as you review your research notes. Identify information that supports your working thesis. Identify details that call your thesis into question. Determine whether you need to modify your thesis. Use your research questions to identify key ideas in your paper. Begin categorizing your notes according to which topics are addressed. You may find yourself adding important topics or deleting unimportant ones as you proceed. Write out your revised thesis and at least two or three big ideas.

Synthesizing Source Material

By now, your ideas about your topic are taking shape. You have a sense of what major ideas to address in your paper, what points you can easily support, and what questions or subtopics might need a little more thought. In short, you have begun the process of synthesizing source material—that is, of putting the pieces together into a coherent whole.

It is normal to find this part of the process a little difficult. Some questions or concepts may still be unclear to you. You may not yet know how you will tie all of your research together. Synthesizing is a complex, demanding mental task, and even experienced researchers struggle with it at times. A little uncertainty is often a good sign. It means you are challenging yourself to work thoughtfully with your topic instead of simply restating the same information.

You have already considered how your notes fit with your working thesis. Now, take your synthesis a step further. Analyze how your notes relate to your major research question and the subquestions you identified at the start of the research process. Organize your notes with headings that correspond to those questions. As you proceed, you might identify some important subtopics that were not part of your original plan, or you might decide that some questions are not relevant to your paper.

Categorize information carefully, and continue to think critically about the material. Ask yourself whether the connections between ideas are clear. Remember, your ideas and conclusions will shape the paper. They are the glue that holds the rest of the content together. As you work, begin jotting down the big ideas you will use to connect the dots for your reader. (If you are not sure where to begin, try answering your major research question and subquestions. Add and answer new questions as appropriate.) You might record these big ideas on paper sticky notes or type them into a word-processing document or other digital format.

Jorge looked back on the list of research questions that he had written down earlier. He changed a few to match his new thesis, and he began the following rough outline for his paper:

Topic: Low-carbohydrate diets

Main question: Are low-carbohydrate diets as effective as they have been portrayed to be by media sources?

Thesis: Although following a low-carbohydrate diet can benefit some people, these diets are not necessarily the best option for everyone who wants to lose weight or improve their health.

Main points:

How do low-carb diets work? Low-carb diets cause weight loss by lowering insulin levels, causing the body to burn stored fat.

When did low-carbohydrate diets become a 'hot' topic in the media? The Atlkins diet was created by Richard Atkins in 1972, but it didn't gain wide-scale attention until 2003. The South Beach diet and other low-carb diets became popular around the same time, and led to a lowcarb craze in America from 2003 to 2004.

What are the supposed advantages to following a low-carbohydrate diet? They are said to help you lose weight faster than other diets and allow people to continue eat protein and fats while dieting.

What are some of the negative effects of a low-carb diet? Eating foods higher in saturated fats can increase your cholesterol levels and lead to heart disease. Incomplete fat breakdown can lead to a condition called ketosis, which puts a strain on the liver and can be fatal.

Planning How to Organize Your Paper

You may be wondering how your ideas are supposed to shape the paper, especially since you are writing a research paper based on your research. Integrating your ideas and your information from research is a complex process, and sometimes it can be difficult to separate the two. Some paragraphs in your paper will consist mostly of details from your research. That is fine, as long as you explain what those details mean or how they are linked. You should also include sentences and transitions that show the relationship between different claims and evidence from your research by grouping related ideas or pointing out connections or contrasts. The result is that you are not simply presenting information; you are synthesizing, analyzing, and interpreting it.

The final step to complete before beginning your draft is to choose an organizational structure. For some assignments, this may be determined by the instructor's requirements. For instance, if you are asked to explore the impact of a new communications device, a cause-and-effect structure is obviously appropriate. In other cases, you will need to determine the structure based on what suits your topic and purpose. For more information about the structures used in writing, see the chapter on Rhetorical Modes of Writing.

The purpose of Jorge's paper was primarily to persuade. With that in mind, he planned the following outline.

I. Introduction
   A. Background
   B. Thesis

II. Purported Benefits of Low-Carbohydrate Diets
   A. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) nutrition guidelines
   B. Potential flaws in USDA nutrition guidelines
      1. Effects of carbohydrates on blood sugar, insulin
      2. Relationship to metabolism and obesity

III. Research on Low-Carbohydrate Diets and Weight Loss
   A. Short-term effectiveness for weight-loss
   B. Long-term effectiveness not established

IV. Other Long-Term Health Outcomes
   A. Cholesterol and heart disease
   B. Blood pressure
   C. Diabetes

V. Conclusion

Writing at Work

The structures described in this section and in the chapter on Rhetorical Modes can also help you organize information in different types of workplace documents. For instance, medical incident reports and police reports follow a chronological structure. If the company must choose between two vendors to provide a service, you might write an email to your supervisor comparing and contrasting the choices. Understanding when and how to use each organizational structure can help you write workplace documents efficiently and effectively.

? Exercise 15

Review the organizational structures discussed in Rhetorical Modes. Working with the notes you organized earlier, follow these steps to begin planning how to organize your paper. Create an outline that includes your thesis, major subtopics, and supporting points. The major headings in your outline will become sections or paragraphs in your paper. Remember that your ideas should form the backbone of the paper. For each major section of your outline, write out a topic sentence stating the main point you will make in that section. You may find that some points are too complex to explain in a sentence. Consider whether any major sections of your outline need to be broken up, and jot down additional topic sentences as needed. Review your notes and determine how the different pieces of information fit into your outline as supporting points.

Exercise 16

Collaborative exercise: Exchange outlines of your research papers with a classmate. Examine your classmate's outline to see if any questions come to mind and if you see any levels that would benefit from additional support, elaboration, or clarification. Return outlines to each other and compare observations.

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6.8: Writing Your Draft

At last, you are ready to begin writing the rough draft of your research paper. Putting your thinking and research into words is exciting. It can also be challenging. In this section, you will learn strategies for drafting your research paper, such as integrating material from your sources, citing information correctly, and avoiding misuse of your sources.

The Structure of a Research Paper

Research papers generally follow the same basic structure: an introduction that presents the writer's thesis; a body section that develops the thesis with supporting points and evidence; and a conclusion that revisits the thesis and provides additional insights or suggestions for further research.

Your writing voice will come across most strongly in your **introduction** and **conclusion** as you work to attract your readers' interest and establish your thesis. These sections usually do not cite sources at length. They focus on the big picture, not specific details. In contrast, the body of your paper will cite sources extensively. As you present your ideas, you will support your points with details from your research.

Writing Your Introduction

There are several approaches to writing an introduction, each of which fulfills the same goals. The introduction should get readers' attention, provide background information, and present the writer's thesis. Many writers like to begin with one of the following catchy openers:

- A surprising fact
- A thought-provoking question
- An attention-getting quote
- A brief anecdote that illustrates a larger concept
- A connection between your topic and your readers' experiences

The next few sentences place the opening in context by presenting background information. From there, the writer builds toward a thesis, which is traditionally placed at the end of the introduction. Think of your thesis as a signpost that lets readers know in what direction the paper is headed.

Jorge decided to begin his research paper by connecting his topic to readers' daily experiences. Read the **first draft of his introduction**. The thesis is in bold. Note how Jorge progresses from the opening sentences, to background information, to his thesis.

Introduction Draft

> *Beyond the Hype: Evaluating Low-Carb Diets*
>
> *Over the past decade, increasing numbers of Americans have jumped on the low-carb bandwagon. Some studies, such as those conducted by Lisa Sanders and David L. Katz and by Julie Hirsch, estimate that approximately forty million Americans, or about twenty percent of the population, are attempting to restrict their intake of food high in carbohydrates. Proponents of low-carb diets say they are not only the most effective way to lose weight, but they also yield health benefits such as lower blood pressure and improved cholesterol levels. Meanwhile, some doctors claim that low-carb diets are overrated and caution that their long-term effects are unknown.* ***Although following a low-carbohydrate diet can benefit some people, these diets are not necessarily the best option for everyone who wants to lose weight or improve their health.***

Writers often work out of sequence when writing a research paper. If you find yourself struggling to write an engaging introduction, you may wish to write the body of your paper first. Writing the body sections first will help you clarify your main

points. Writing the introduction should then be easier. You may have a better sense of how to introduce the paper after you have drafted some or all of the body.

? Exercise 17

Draft the introductory paragraph of your research paper. Use one of the common techniques for writing an engaging introduction. Be sure to include background information about the topic that leads to your thesis.

Writing Your Conclusion

In your introduction, you tell readers where they are headed. In your conclusion, you recap where they have been. For this reason, some writers prefer to write their conclusions soon after they have written their introduction. However, this method may not work for all writers. Other writers prefer to write their conclusion at the end of the paper, after writing the body paragraphs. No process is absolutely right or absolutely wrong; find the one that best suits you.

No matter when you compose the conclusion, it should revisit your thesis and sum up your main ideas. The conclusion should not simply echo the introduction or rely on bland summary statements, such as "In this paper, I have demonstrated that.…" In fact, avoid repeating your thesis verbatim from the introduction. Restate it in different words that reflect the new perspective gained through your research. That helps keep your ideas fresh for your readers. An effective writer might conclude a paper by asking a new question the research inspired, revisiting an anecdote presented earlier, or reminding readers of how the topic relates to their lives.

Using Primary and Secondary Research

As you write your draft, be mindful of how you are using primary and secondary source material to support your points. Recall that primary sources present firsthand information. Secondary sources are one step removed from primary sources. They present analyses or interpretations of primary sources. How you balance primary and secondary source material in your paper will depend on the topic and assignment.

Some types of research papers must use primary sources extensively to achieve their purpose. Any paper that analyzes a primary text or presents the writer's own experimental research falls in this category. Here are a few examples:

- A paper for a **literature** course analyzing several poems by Emily Dickinson
- A paper for a **political science** course comparing televised speeches delivered by two presidential candidates
- A paper for a **communications** course discussing gender biases in television commercials
- A paper for a **business administration** course that discusses the results of a survey the writer conducted with local businesses to gather information about their work-from-home and flextime policies
- A paper for an **elementary education** course that discusses the results of an experiment the writer conducted to compare the effectiveness of two different methods of mathematics instruction

For these types of papers, primary research is the main focus. If you are writing about a work (including non-print works, such as a movie or a painting), it is crucial to gather information and ideas from the original work, rather than relying solely on others' interpretations. And, of course, if you take the time to design and conduct your own field research, such as a survey, a series of interviews, or an experiment, you will want to discuss it in detail. Interviews may provide interesting responses that you want to share with your readers.

Even if your paper is largely based on primary sources, you may use secondary sources to develop your ideas. For instance, an analysis of Alfred Hitchcock's films would focus on the films themselves as primary sources, but it might also cite commentary and interpretations by critics. A paper that presents an original experiment would include some discussion of similar prior research in the field.

For some assignments, it makes sense to rely more on secondary sources than primary sources. If you are not analyzing a text or conducting your own field research, then you will need to use secondary sources extensively. As much as possible, use secondary sources that are closely linked to primary research, such as a journal article that presents the results of the authors' scientific study or a book that cites interviews and case studies. These sources are more reliable and add more value to your paper than sources that are further removed from primary research. For instance, a popular magazine article on junk-food addiction might be several steps

removed from the original scientific study on which it is loosely based. As a result, the article may distort, sensationalize, or misinterpret the scientists' findings.

Jorge knew he did not have the time, resources, or experience needed to conduct original experimental research for his paper. Because he was relying on secondary sources to support his ideas, he made a point of citing sources that were not far removed from primary research.

Incorporating Source Material into Your Body Paragraphs

One of the challenges of writing a research paper is successfully integrating your ideas with material from your sources. Your paper must explain what you think, or it will read like a disconnected string of facts and quotations. However, you also need to support your ideas with research, or they will seem insubstantial. How do you strike the right balance?

You have already taken a step in the right direction if you have drafted your introduction and conclusion. The introduction and conclusion function like the frame around a picture. They define and limit your topic and place your research in context. However, you may choose to wait to write your introduction and conclusion until after writing your body paragraphs. Either way, as you draft your body paragraphs, you must express your critical thinking about the ideas and information that you incorporate from your sources. You must offer claims of your own that either challenge or extend points from your sources.

In the body paragraphs of your paper, you will need to integrate ideas carefully at the paragraph level and at the sentence level. Use topic sentences and concluding sentences of body paragraphs to make sure readers understand the significance of any facts, details, or points you cite. In particular, you must continually explain how source material relates to your thesis. Indicate your interpretation of, and attitude toward, source material within and between sentences in which you summarize, paraphrase, or quote material from your sources. You will also include sentences that transition between ideas from your research, either within a paragraph or from one paragraph to the next. At the sentence level, you will need to think carefully about how you introduce your summarized, paraphrased, and quoted material.

You have already learned about summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting sources when taking notes. Here, you will learn how to use these techniques in the body of your paper to weave in source material to develop your ideas.

Introducing Cited Material Effectively

Including a signal phrase in your text, such as "Jackson wrote" or "Copeland found," often helps you integrate source material smoothly. This citation technique also helps convey that you are actively engaged with your source material. Unfortunately, during the process of writing your research paper, it is easy to fall into a rut and use the same few dull verbs repeatedly, such as "Jones said," "Smith stated," and so on. Punch up your writing by using strong verbs that help your reader understand how the source material presents ideas. There is a world of difference between an author who "suggests" and one who "claims," one who "questions" and one who "criticizes." You do not need to consult your thesaurus every time you cite a source, but do think about which verbs will accurately represent the ideas and make your writing more engaging.

The following list includes some possibilities:

- argue
- ask
- assert
- assess
- believe
- claim
- compare
- conclude
- contrast
- determine
- evaluate
- explain
- find
- hypothesize

- insist
- measure
- point out
- propose
- question
- recommend
- study
- suggest
- sum up
- warn

Summarizing Sources

When you summarize material from a source, you zero in on the main points and restate them concisely in your own words. This technique is appropriate when only the major ideas are relevant to your paper or when you need to simplify complex information into a few key points for your readers. Be sure to review the source material as you summarize it. Identify the main idea and restate it as concisely as you can— preferably in one sentence. Depending on your purpose, you may also add another sentence or two condensing any important details or examples. Check your summary to make sure it is accurate and complete.

In his draft, Jorge summarized research materials that presented scientists' findings about low-carbohydrate diets. Read the following passage from a trade magazine article and Jorge's summary of the article.

Assessing the Efficacy of Low-Carbohydrate Diets (from Adrienne Howell, Ph.D.)

Over the past few years, a number of clinical studies have explored whether high-protein, low-carbohydrate diets are more effective for weight loss than other frequently recommended diet plans, such as diets that drastically curtail fat intake (Pritikin) or that emphasize consuming lean meats, grains, vegetables, and a moderate amount of unsaturated fats (the Mediterranean diet). A 2009 study found that obese teenagers who followed a low-carbohydrate diet lost an average of 15.6 kilograms over a six-month period, whereas teenagers following a low-fat diet or a Mediterranean diet lost an average of 11.1 kilograms and 9.3 kilograms respectively. Two 2010 studies that measured weight loss for obese adults following these same three diet plans found similar results. Over three months, subjects on the low-carbohydrate diet plan lost anywhere from four to six kilograms more than subjects who followed other diet plans.

Sample Summary

> *Adrienne Howell points out that in three recent studies, researchers compared outcomes for obese subjects who followed either a low-carbohydrate diet, a low-fat diet, or a Mediterranean diet and found that subjects following a low-carbohydrate diet lost more weight in the same time.*

A summary restates ideas in your own words—but for specialized or clinical terms, you may need to use terms that appear in the original source. For instance, Jorge used the term obese in his summary because related words such as heavy or overweight have a different clinical meaning.

Paraphrasing Sources

When you paraphrase material from a source, restate the information from an entire sentence or passage in your own words, using your own original sentence structure. A paraphrased source differs from a summarized source in that you focus on restating the ideas, not condensing them. Again, it is important to check your paraphrase against the source material to make sure it is both accurate and original. Inexperienced writers sometimes use the thesaurus method of paraphrasing—that is, they simply rewrite the source material, replacing most of the words with synonyms. This constitutes a misuse of sources. A true paraphrase restates ideas using the writer's own language and style.

In his draft, Jorge frequently paraphrased details from sources. At times, he needed to rewrite a sentence more than once to ensure he was paraphrasing ideas correctly. Read the following passage from a website. Then read Jorge's initial attempt at paraphrasing

it, followed by the final version of his paraphrase.

Original Source (from Tracy Niethercott) Some insulin users in particular find that their blood glucose is far easier to control when they limit the carbs in their diet.

Initial Paraphrase

> *According to one source, some people find they can control their blood glucose when they limit the carbs they eat (Neithercott).*

After reviewing the paraphrased sentence, Jorge realized he was following the original source too closely. He did not want to quote the full passage verbatim, so he again attempted to restate the idea in his own style.

Revised Paraphrase

> *Some people with diabetes are better able to control their blood sugar when they reduce their carb intake (Neithercott).*

Quoting Sources Directly

Most of the time, you will summarize or paraphrase source material instead of quoting directly. Doing so shows that you understand your research well enough to write about it confidently in your own words. However, direct quotes can be powerful when used sparingly and with purpose.

Quoting directly can sometimes help you make a point in a colorful way. If an author's words are especially vivid, memorable, or well phrased, quoting them may help hold your reader's interest. Direct quotations from an interviewee or an eyewitness may help you personalize an issue for readers. And when you analyze primary sources, such as a historical speech or a work of literature, quoting extensively is often necessary to illustrate your points. These are valid reasons to use quotations.

Less experienced writers, however, sometimes overuse direct quotations in a research paper because it seems easier than paraphrasing. At best, this reduces the effectiveness of the quotations. At worst, it results in a paper that seems haphazardly pasted together from outside sources. Use quotations sparingly for greater impact. When you do choose to quote directly from a source, follow these guidelines:

- Make sure you have transcribed the original statement accurately.
- Represent the author's ideas honestly. Quote enough of the original text to reflect the author's point accurately.
- Never use a stand-alone, or "dropped in," quotation. Always integrate the quoted material into your own sentence.
- Use ellipses (…) if you need to omit a word or phrase. Use brackets [ ] if you need to replace a word or phrase or add any explanation or clarification of the original.
- Make sure any omissions or changed words do not alter the meaning of the original text. Omit or replace words only when absolutely necessary to shorten the text or to make it grammatically correct within your sentence.
- Remember to include correctly formatted citations that follow the assigned style guide.

Jorge wanted to use the following information from an article on the American Heart Association's website.

Original Source (from the American Heart Association)

> *A high carbohydrate diet that includes fruits, vegetables, nonfat dairy products and whole grains also has been shown to reduce blood pressure.*

Because this particular sentence would be difficult to paraphrase properly, Jorge decided to quote it instead.

Quotation from the Source

> *According to the American Heart Association, "A high carbohydrate diet that includes fruits, vegetables, nonfat dairy products and whole grains also has been shown to reduce blood pressure."*

Notice how Jorge smoothly integrated the quoted material by starting the sentence with an introductory, or "**signal**," phrase.

Writing at Work

It is important to accurately represent a colleague's ideas or communications in the workplace. When writing professional or academic papers, be mindful of how the words you use to describe someone's tone or ideas carry certain connotations. Do not say a source argues a particular point unless an argument is, in fact, presented. Use lively language, but avoid language that is emotionally charged. Doing so will ensure you have represented your colleague's words in an authentic and accurate way.

? Exercise 18

Write a one-sentence summary of a useful passage in one of your sources.

? Exercise 19

To practice paraphrasing, choose an important idea or detail from your notes. Without looking at the original source, restate the idea in your own words. Check your paraphrase against the original text in the source. Make sure both your language and your sentence structure are original. Revise your paraphrase if necessary.

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6.9: Documenting Your Source Material

A reader interested in your subject wants not only to read what you wrote but also to be aware of the works that you used to create it. Readers may want to enter the discussion on your topic, using some of the same sources that you have. They also may want to examine your sources to see if you know your subject, if you missed anything, or if you offer anything new and interesting. Your sources may offer the reader additional insight on the subject being considered. It also demonstrates that you, as the author, are up-todate on what is happening in the field or on the subject. In sum, giving credit where it is due contributes to research on your topic and enhances your credibility.

Throughout the writing process, be scrupulous about documenting information taken from sources.

Again, there are multiple reasons for doing so:

- To give credit to others for their ideas
- To allow your reader to follow up and learn more about the topic if desired
- To build your own reputation as a writer

It is important to indicate the source both in your essay and in a bibliography, list of references, or Works Cited, to prevent the possibility of plagiarism. If you follow the appropriate style guide (e.g., APA, Chicago Manual, and MLA), pay attention to detail, and clearly indicate your sources, then this approach to formatting and citation offers a proven way to demonstrate your respect for others and earn their respect in return.

Citing Sources in Your Paper

You need to cite all your information: if someone else wrote it, said it, drew it, demonstrated it, or otherwise expressed it, you need to cite it. The exception to this statement is common, widespread knowledge, but if you are ever in doubt, go ahead and document the material.

If you are using MLA style, then your citation of the source in the body of the essay will point to the Works Cited page at the end. You must cite your sources as you use them, mentioning the author or title of the source by name if you summarize its ideas and giving the author or title of the source as well as the page number (if available) in parentheses if you paraphrase or directly quote the source. The reference to the author or title is like a signal to readers that information has been incorporated from a separate source. It also provides readers with the information they need to locate the source in the Works Cited at the end of your essay where they can find the complete reference.

Rules for In-Text Citations:

The following examples illustrate basic rules for documenting sources within the text of your paper in MLA style:

Author named in the introduction to the paraphrase or quote: Jacob Leibowitz found that low-carbohydrate diets often helped subjects with Type II diabetes maintain a healthy weight and control blood-sugar (56). Leibowitz states, “People with Type II diabetes should follow a low-carbohydrate diet in order to prevent weight gain and unbalanced blood-sugar levels” (56).

Author named in parentheses: One source indicates that low-carbohydrate diets often helped subjects with Type II diabetes maintain a healthy weight and control blood-sugar (Leibowitz 56). A noted nutritionist advises diabetics: “People with Type II diabetes should follow a low-carbohydrate diet in order to prevent weight gain and unbalanced blood-sugar levels” (Leibowitz 56).

Unknown author: One website points out that a low-carbohydrate diet may aggravate a heart condition by raising a person’s bad cholesterol (“Cholesterol and the Low-carb Diet”).

Unknown or No Page Reference: The risks of following a low-carbohydrate diet outweigh any benefits according to one researcher (Jones). Gerald Jones believes that “a balanced diet is still the safest and most effective approach to good health.”

A source quoted in another source (an indirect quotation): “For the chronically overweight,” states Martin Rogers, “a low-carbohydrate diet may provide a viable option for weight loss” (qtd. in Evans 46).

? Exercise 20

Review in-text citations in your draft. Look for places where you introduce source material using a signal phrase in your sentence. Highlight the verbs used in your signal phrases, and make note of any that seem to be overused throughout the paper. Identify places where a stronger verb could be used. Revise your draft accordingly.

Creating a List of References

Each of the sources you cite in the body of your paper should appear in a list of references at the end of your paper. If you're using MLA style, then your Works Cited should list the sources alphabetically by last name, or by title if the author is not identified. While in-text citations provide the most basic information about the source, your Works Cited will include more complete publication details. There are a number of ways to learn how to properly cite your sources on your Works Cited:

- The MLA Guide at Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL)
- A current edition of The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.
- Online videos found by searching for "MLA style" on YouTube.
- For an overview of citing sources in MLA style and APA style, watch this module created in 2008 by Aline Soules of California State University, East Bay, and licensed under a Creative Commons AttributionNonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 United States.

One of the many advantages of using sources from databases is that the databases themselves, or the platforms which host them, usually include a citation of the source at the bottom of the HTML full text of the source or a "Cite" tool accessible from the record of the source in the list of search results. When using these automatically-generated citations, be sure to select and copy the citation in the style that you have been assigned to use. Also, be sure to review the citation that the database or platform has generated, as it may include some errors in it. An error that consistently occurs using a "Cite" tool is the capitalization of titles; in the United States, the first letters of the first and last words of titles are always capitalized, and so are the first letters of all words inbetween except for articles (a, an, the), conjunctions (and, but, or), and prepositions (at, by, for, in, of, on, etc.). The "Cite" tool does not distinguish between parts of speech when capitalizing words in titles, so you will need to change some letters in titles to lowercase in order to properly format your citations.

Avoiding Plagiarism

Your research paper presents your thinking about a topic, supported and developed by other people's ideas and information. It is crucial to always distinguish between the two—as you conduct research, as you plan your paper, and as you write. Failure to do so can lead to plagiarism.

If you incorporate the words or ideas of a source into your own writing without giving full credit, then you are plagiarizing that source. In both professional and academic settings, the penalties for plagiarism are severe. In the professional world, plagiarism may result in loss of credibility, diminishment in compensation, and even loss of employment, including future opportunities. That is, employees may be fired for plagiarism and do irreparable damage to their professional reputation. In a class, a student's plagiarism may result in a range of sanctions, from the loss of points on an assignment to a failing grade in the course to expulsion from college.

The concepts and strategies discussed in this section connect to a larger issue— academic integrity. You maintain your integrity as a member of an academic community by representing your work and others' work honestly and by using other people's work only in legitimately accepted ways. It is a point of honor taken seriously in every academic discipline and career field. Even when cheating and plagiarism go undetected, they still result in a student's failure to learn necessary research and writing skills. In short, it is never worth the risk to plagiarize. For more information about Academic Integrity, consult your college's Student Handbook.

Working with Sources Carefully

Disorganization and carelessness sometimes lead to plagiarism. For instance, writers may be unable to provide complete, accurate citations if they did not record bibliographical information. Writers may cut and paste passages from websites into their papers and later forget where the material came from. Writers who procrastinate may rush through drafts; this easily leads to sloppy paraphrasing and inaccurate quotations. Any of these actions can create the appearance of plagiarism and lead to negative consequences. Carefully organizing your time and notes is the best guard against these forms of plagiarism. As discussed above, you should maintain a detailed working bibliography and thorough notes throughout the research process. As you incorporate

source material into your draft, check original sources again to clear up any uncertainties. Schedule plenty of time for writing your draft so there is no temptation to cut corners.

Intentional and Accidental Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of misrepresenting someone else's work as your own. Sometimes a writer plagiarizes work on purpose—for instance, by purchasing an essay from a website and submitting it as original course work. In other cases, a writer may commit accidental plagiarism due to carelessness, haste, or misunderstanding. To avoid unintentional plagiarism, follow these guidelines:

- Understand what types of information must be cited.
- Understand what constitutes fair use of a source.
- Keep source materials and notes carefully organized.
- Follow guidelines for summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting sources.

When to Cite

Whether it is quoted or paraphrased, any idea or fact taken from an outside source must be cited, in both the body of your paper and your list of references. The only exceptions are facts or general statements that are common knowledge. Common-knowledge facts or general statements are commonly supported by and found in multiple sources. For example, a writer would not need to cite the statement that most breads, pastas, and cereals are high in carbohydrates; this is well known and well documented. However, if a writer explained in detail the differences among the chemical structures of carbohydrates, proteins, and fats, a citation would be necessary. When in doubt, cite.

Fair Use

In recent years, issues related to the fair use of sources have been prevalent in popular culture. Recording artists, for example, may disagree about the extent to which one has the right to sample another's music. For academic purposes, however, the guidelines for fair use are reasonably straightforward. Writers may quote from or paraphrase material from previously published works without formally obtaining the copyright holder's permission. Fair use means that the writer legitimately uses brief excerpts from source material to support and develop his or her own ideas. For instance, a columnist may excerpt a few sentences from a novel when writing a book review. However, quoting or paraphrasing another's work at excessive length, to the extent that large sections of the writing are unoriginal, is not fair use.

As he worked on his draft, Jorge was careful to cite his sources correctly and not to rely excessively on any one source. Occasionally, however, he caught himself quoting a source at great length. In those instances, he highlighted the paragraph in question so that he could go back to it later and revise. Read the example, along with Jorge's revision.

Initial Use of Source Material

> *Heinz found that "subjects in the low-carbohydrate group (30% carbohydrates; 40% protein, 30% fat) had a mean weight loss of 10 kg (22 lbs) over a 4-month period." These results were "noticeably better than results for subjects on a low-fat diet (45% carbohydrates, 35% protein, 20% fat)" whose average weight loss was only "7 kg (15.4 lbs) in the same period." From this, it can be concluded that "low-carbohydrate diets obtain more rapid results." Other researchers agree that "at least in the short term, patients following low-carbohydrate diets enjoy greater success" than those who follow alternative plans (Johnson and Crowe).*

After reviewing the paragraph, Jorge realized that he had drifted into unoriginal writing. Most of the paragraph was taken verbatim from a single article. Although Jorge had enclosed the material in quotation marks, he knew it was not an appropriate way to use the research in his paper.

Revised Use of Source Material

> *Low-carbohydrate diets may indeed be superior to other diet plans for short-term weight loss. In a study comparing low-carbohydrate diets and low-fat diets, Heinz found that subjects who followed a low-carbohydrate plan (30% of total calories) for four months lost, on average, about three kilograms more than subjects who followed a low-fat diet for the same time. Heinz concluded that these plans yield quick results, an idea supported by a similar study conducted by Johnson and Crowe. What remains to be seen, however, is whether this initial success can be sustained for longer periods.*

As Jorge revised the paragraph, he realized he did not need to quote these sources directly. Instead, he paraphrased their most important findings. He also made sure to include a topic sentence stating the main idea of the paragraph and a concluding sentence that transitioned to the next major topic in his essay.

Writing at Work

Citing other people's work appropriately is just as important in the workplace as it is in school. If you need to consult outside sources to research a document you are creating, follow the general guidelines already discussed, as well as any industry-specific citation guidelines. For more extensive use of others' work—for instance, requesting permission to link to another company or organization's website on your own employer's website—always follow your employer's established procedures.

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6.10: Revising Your Draft (Part 1)

Given all the time and effort you have put into your research paper, you will want to make sure that your final draft represents your best work. This requires taking the time to revise and edit your paper carefully. You may feel that you need a break from your paper before you revise and edit it. That is understandable—but leave yourself with enough time to complete this important stage of the writing process. In this section, you will learn the following specific strategies that are useful for revising and editing a research paper:

- How to evaluate and improve the overall organization and cohesion
- How to maintain an appropriate style and tone
- How to use checklists to identify and correct any errors in language, citations, and formatting

Revising Your Paper's Organization and Cohesion

When writing a research paper, it is easy to become overly focused on editorial details, such as the proper format for bibliographic entries. These details do matter. However, before you begin to address them, it is important to spend time reviewing and revising the content of the paper. A good research paper is both organized and cohesive. Organization means that your argument flows logically from one point to the next. Cohesion means that the elements of your paper work together smoothly and naturally. In a cohesive research paper, information from research is seamlessly integrated with the writer's ideas.

When you revise to improve organization, you look at the flow of ideas throughout the essay as a whole and within individual paragraphs. You check to see that your essay moves logically from the introduction to the body paragraphs to the conclusion, and that each section reinforces your thesis. Writers choose transitions carefully to show the relationships between ideas—for instance, to make a comparison or elaborate on a point with examples. Make sure your transitions suit your purpose, and avoid overusing the same ones. You can reference the Table of Common Transitional Words and Phrases to help find a variety of transition words.

Jorge reread his draft paragraph by paragraph. As he read, he highlighted the main idea of each paragraph so he could see whether his ideas proceeded in a logical order. For the most part, the flow of ideas was clear. However, he did notice that one paragraph did not have a clear main idea. It interrupted the flow of the writing. During revision, Jorge added a topic sentence that clearly connected the paragraph to the one that had preceded it. He also added transitions to improve the flow of ideas from sentence to sentence. Read the following paragraphs: the first example is Jorge's first draft without any changes, and the second paragraph shows his revisions underlined.

First Draft:

> *Picture this: you're standing in the aisle of your local grocery store when you see a chubby guy nearby staring at several brands of ketchup on display. After deliberating for a moment, he reaches for the bottle with the words "Low Carb!" displayed prominently on the label. (You can't help but notice that the low carb ketchup is higher priced.) Is he making a smart choice that will help him lose weight and enjoy better health—or is he just buying into the latest diet fad? Some researchers estimate that approximately forty million Americans, or about one fifth of the population, have attempted to restrict their intake of foods high in carbohydrates (Sanders and Katz; Hirsch). Proponents of low carb diets say they are the most effective way to lose weight. They yield health benefits such as lower blood pressure and improved cholesterol levels. Some doctors claim that low carbohydrate diets are overrated and caution that their long term effects are unknown. Although following a low carbohydrate diet can have many benefits—especially for people who are obese or diabetic—these diets are not necessarily the best option for everyone who wants to lose weight or improve their health.*

Revised Paragraph:

> *Picture this: you're standing in the aisle of your local grocery store when you see a chubby guy nearby staring at several brands of ketchup on display. After deliberating for a moment, he reaches for the bottle with the words "Low Carb!" displayed prominently on the label. (You can't help but notice that the low carb ketchup is higher priced.) Is he making a smart choice that will help him lose weight and enjoy better health—or is he just buying into the latest diet fad? Proponents of low carb diets say they are not only the most effective way to lose weight but also yield health benefits such as lower blood pressure and improved cholesterol levels. Meanwhile, some doctors claim that low carbohydrate diets are overrated and caution that their long term effects are unknown. Although following a low carbohydrate diet can have many benefits—especially for people who are obese or diabetic—these diets are not necessarily the best option for everyone who wants to lose weight or improve their health.*

When you revise to improve cohesion, you analyze how the parts of your paper work together. You look for anything that seems awkward or out of place. Revision may involve deleting unnecessary material or rewriting parts of the paper so that the out-of-place material fits in smoothly. In a research paper, problems with cohesion usually occur when a writer has trouble integrating source material. If facts or quotations have been awkwardly dropped into a paragraph, they distract or confuse the reader instead of working to support the writer's point. Overusing paraphrased and quoted material has the same effect.

As Jorge reread his draft, he looked to see how the different pieces fit together to prove his thesis. He realized that he had too much information on the popularity of low-carb diets and the debate over their effect on weight loss, when his focus only emphasized the various health risks of low-carb diets, so he had to eliminate some material. He also realized that some of his supporting information needed to be integrated more carefully. Read the following paragraph, first without Jorge's revisions and then with them.

Initial Paragraph:

> *One likely reason for these lackluster long-term results is that a low carbohydrate diet—like any restrictive diet—is difficult to adhere to for any extended period. Most people enjoy foods that are high in carbohydrates, and no one wants to be the person who always turns down that slice of pizza or birthday cake. In commenting on the Gardner study, experts at the Harvard School of Public Health noted that women in all four diet groups had difficulty following the plan. They further comment that because it is hard for dieters to stick to a low-carbohydrate eating plan, the initial success of these diets is short lived. Medical professionals caution that low carbohydrate diets are difficult for many people to follow consistently and that, to maintain a healthy weight, dieters should try to develop nutrition and exercise habits they can incorporate in their lives in the long term (Mayo Foundation). "For some people, [low carbohydrate diets] are great, but for most, any sensible eating and exercise plan would work just as well" (Kwon 78).*

Revised Paragraph:

> *One likely reason for these lackluster long-term results is that a low carbohydrate diet—like any restrictive diet—is difficult to adhere to for any extended period. In commenting on the Gardner study, experts at the Harvard School of Public Health noted that women in all four diet groups had difficulty following the plan. They further comment that*

> *because it is hard for dieters to stick to a low-carbohydrate eating plan, the initial success of these diets is short lived. Medical professionals caution that low carbohydrate diets are difficult for many people to follow consistently and that, to maintain a healthy weight, dieters should try to develop nutrition and exercise habits they can incorporate in their lives in the long term (Mayo Foundation).*

Jorge decided that his comment about pizza and birthday cake came across as subjective and was not necessary to make his point, so he deleted it. He also realized that not only was the quotation at the end of the paragraph "dropped in," but also it was awkward and ineffective. How would his readers know who Kwon was or why her opinion should be taken seriously? Adding a signal phrase helped Jorge integrate this quotation smoothly and establish the credibility of his source.

Writing at Work

Understanding cohesion can also benefit you in the workplace, especially when you have to write and deliver a presentation. Speakers sometimes rely on cute graphics or funny quotations to hold their audience's attention. If you choose to use these elements, make sure they work well with the substantive content of your presentation. For example, if you are asked to give a financial presentation and the financial report shows that the company lost money, then funny illustrations would not be relevant or appropriate for the presentation.

? Exercise 21

Read your paper paragraph by paragraph. Highlight your thesis and the topic sentence of each paragraph. Using the thesis and topic sentences as starting points, outline the ideas you presented—just as you would do if you were outlining a chapter in a textbook. Do not look at the outline you created during prewriting. You may write in the margins of your draft or create a formal outline on a separate sheet of paper. Next, reread your paper more slowly, looking for how ideas flow from sentence to sentence. Identify places where adding a transition or recasting a sentence would make the ideas flow more logically. Review the topics on your outline. Is there a logical flow of ideas? Identify any places where you may need to reorganize ideas.

? Exercise 22: Collaborative Exercise

Exchange papers with a classmate. Apply the steps in Exercise 21 to your peer's draft. Share and discuss your observations about the draft's organization and clarity with your peer.

? Exercise 23

Read the body paragraphs of your paper first. Each time you come to a place that cites information from sources, ask yourself what purpose this information serves. Check that it helps support a point and that it is clearly related to the other sentences in the paragraph. Identify unnecessary information from sources that you can delete. Identify places where you need to revise your writing so that readers understand the significance of the details cited from sources. Skim the body paragraphs once more, looking for any paragraphs that seem packed with citations. Review these paragraphs carefully for cohesion. Review your introduction and conclusion. Make sure the information presented works with ideas in the body of the paper.

? Exercise 24: Collaborative Exercise

Exchange papers with a classmate. Identify places your peer needs to revise so that readers understand the significance of the details cited from sources. Share and discuss your observations about the draft's incorporation of source material with your peer.

Revising to Improve Style and Tone

Once you are certain that the content of your paper fulfills your purpose, you can begin revising to improve style and tone. Together, your style and tone create the voice of your paper, or how you come across to readers. Style refers to the way you use

language as a writer—the sentence structures you use and the word choices you make. Tone is the attitude toward your subject and audience that you convey through your word choice.

Although accepted writing styles will vary within different disciplines, the underlying goal is the same—to come across to your readers as a knowledgeable, authoritative guide. Writing about research is like being a tour guide who walks readers through a topic. A stuffy, overly formal tour guide can make readers feel put off or intimidated. Too much informality or humor can make readers wonder whether the tour guide really knows what he or she is talking about. Extreme or emotionally charged language comes across as unbalanced.

To help prevent being overly formal or informal, determine an appropriate style and tone at the beginning of the research process. Consider your topic and audience because these can help dictate style and tone. For example, a paper on new breakthroughs in cancer research should be more formal than a paper on ways to get a good night's sleep. A strong research paper comes across as straightforward, appropriately academic, and serious.

Using plural nouns and pronouns or recasting a sentence can help you keep your language gender neutral while avoiding awkwardness. For example, the following sentence is gender-biased: "When a writer cites a source in the body of his paper, he must list it on his references page." The following is less gender biased but awkward: "When a writer cites a source in the body of his or her paper, he or she must list it on his or her references page." Making the subject third-person plural avoids bias and awkwardness: "Writers must list any sources cited in the body of a paper on the references page."

As you revise your paper, make sure your style is consistent throughout. Look for instances where a word, phrase, or sentence just does not seem to fit with the rest of the writing. It is best to reread for style after you have completed the other revisions so you are not distracted by any larger content issues. Revising strategies to use include the following:

- **Read your paper aloud**. Sometimes your ears catch inconsistencies that your eyes miss.
- **Share your paper** with another reader whom you trust to give you honest feedback. It is often difficult to evaluate one's own style objectively—especially in the final phase of a challenging writing project. Another reader may be more likely to notice instances of wordiness, confusing language, or other issues that affect style and tone.
- **Line edit** your paper slowly, sentence by sentence. You may even wish to use a sheet of paper to cover everything on the page except the paragraph you are editing—that forces you to read slowly and carefully. Mark any areas where you notice problems in style or tone, and then take time to rework those sections.

On reviewing his paper, Jorge found that he had generally used an appropriate academic style and tone. However, he noticed one glaring exception—his first paragraph. He realized there were places where his overly informal writing could come across as unserious or, worse, disparaging. Revising his word choice and omitting a humorous aside helped Jorge maintain a consistent tone. Read his revision below.

Initial Opening Paragraph:

> *Picture this: you're standing in the aisle of your local grocery store when you see a chubby guy nearby staring at several brands of ketchup on display. After deliberating for a moment, he reaches for the bottle with the words "Low-Carb!" displayed prominently on the label. (You can't help but notice that the low-carb ketchup is higher priced.) Is he making a smart choice that will help him lose weight and enjoy better health—or is he just buying into the latest diet fad?*

Revised Opening Paragraph:

> *Picture this: standing in the aisle of your local grocery store, you see an overweight man nearby staring at several brands of ketchup on display. After deliberating for a moment, he reaches for the bottle with the words "Low-Carb!" displayed prominently on the label. Is he making a smart choice that will help him lose weight and enjoy better health—or is he just buying into the latest diet fad?*

Editing Your Paper

After revising your paper to address problems in content or style, you will complete one final editorial review. Perhaps you have already caught and corrected minor mistakes during previous revisions. Nevertheless, give your draft a final edit to make sure it is error-free. Given how much work you have put into your research paper, you will want to check for any errors that could distract or confuse your readers. Using the spell-checking feature in your word-processing program can be helpful, but this should not replace a full, careful review of your document. Be sure to check for any errors that may have come up frequently for you in the past. Your final edit should focus on two broad areas:

- Errors in citing and formatting sources
- Errors in grammar, mechanics, usage, and spelling

For in-depth information on these topics, see the chapter on Grammar, the Purdue University's Online Writing Lab, or a print writing manual, such as *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.

During the process of revising and editing, Jorge made changes in the content and style of his paper. He also gave the paper a final review to check for overall correctness and, particularly, correct style for his citations and formatting. Read the final draft of his paper.

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6.11: Revising Your Draft (Part 2)

Sample Research Paper

Jorge Ramirez

Professor Thompson

English 1101

1 May 2014

Beyond the Hype: Evaluating Low-Carb Diets

Picture this: standing in the aisle of your local grocery store, you see an overweight man nearby staring at several brands of ketchup on display. After deliberating for a moment, he reaches for the bottle with the words “Low-Carb!” displayed prominently on the label. Is he making a smart choice that will help him lose weight and enjoy better health—or is he just buying into the latest diet fad? Over the past decade, increasing numbers of Americans have jumped on the low-carb bandwagon. Regardless of whether or not low-carb diets are most effective for weight loss, their potential benefits for weight loss must be weighed against other long-term health outcomes such as hypertension, the risk of heart disease, and cholesterol levels. Research findings in these areas are mixed. For this reason, people considering following a low-carbohydrate diet to lose weight should be advised of the potential risks in doing so.

Research on how low-carbohydrate diets affect cholesterol levels is inconclusive. Some researchers have found that low-carbohydrate diets raise levels of HDL, or “good” cholesterol (Ebbeling et al. 2093). Unfortunately, they may also raise levels of LDL, or “bad” cholesterol, which is associated with heart disease (Ebbeling et al. 2094). A particular concern is that as dieters on a low-carbohydrate plan increase their intake of meats and dairy products—foods that are high in protein and fat—they are also likely to consume increased amounts of saturated fats, resulting in clogged arteries and again increasing the risk of heart disease. Studies have identified possible risks to cardiovascular health associated with low-carb diets, so the American Heart Association cautions that doctors cannot yet assess how following a low-carbohydrate diet affects patients’ health over a long-term period.

Some studies have found that following a low-carb diet helped lower patients’ blood pressure (Bell 32). Again, however, excessive consumption of foods high in saturated fats may, over time, lead to the development of clogged arteries and increase risk of hypertension. According to the American Heart Association, “a high carbohydrate diet that includes fruits, vegetables, nonfat dairy products and whole grains also has been shown to reduce blood pressure.” Eliminating those foods in a low-carb diet may raise blood pressure because intake of sodium may increase and intake of minerals like calcium, potassium, and magnesium, all of which are important for maintaining healthy blood pressure, may be decreased. Choosing lean meats over those high in fat and supplementing the diet with high-fiber, lowglycemic index carbohydrates, such as leafy green vegetables, is a healthier plan for dieters to follow

Perhaps most surprisingly, low-carbohydrate diets are not necessarily advantageous for patients with Type II diabetes. According to Tracey Neithercott, some people with diabetes are better able to control their blood sugar when they reduce their carb intake, but others are not, and there are no studies that prove one single approach is best for everyone. One problem is that there are no long-term studies of a large scale that have examined this issue in detail. Neithercott advises diabetics to monitor blood sugar levels carefully and to consult with their health care provider or a registered dietitian to develop a plan for healthy eating.

Low-carb diets have garnered a great deal of positive attention, and it is not entirely undeserved. These diets do lead to rapid weight loss, and they often result in greater weight loss over a period of months than other diet plans. Significantly overweight or obese people may find low-carb eating plans the most effective for losing weight and reducing the risks associated with carrying excess body fat. However, because these diets are difficult for some people to adhere to and because their potential long-term health effects are still being debated, they are not necessarily the ideal choice for anyone who wants to lose weight. A moderately overweight person who wants to lose only a few pounds is best advised to choose whatever plan will help him stay active and consume fewer calories consistently—whether or not it involves eating low-carb ketchup.

Works Cited

Bell, John R. “Low Carb Beats Low Fat Diet for Early Losses but not Long Term.” *OBGYN News* 41.12 (2006): 32. *Medline with Full Text (at EBSCOhost)*. Web. 15 Apr. 2014.

Ebbeling, Charles B., et al. “Effects of a Low-glycemic Load vs Low-fat Diet in Obese Young Adults: A Randomized Trial.” *Journal of the American Medical Association* 297.19 (2007): 2092-2102. *Medline with Full Text (at EBSCOhost)*. Web. 25 Apr. 2014.

“High Protein Diets.” *American Heart Association*. American Heart Association, 2014. Web. 25 Apr. 2014.

Neithercott, Tracey. “Are Carbs the Enemy? The Debate Over Eating and Diabetes.” *Diabetes Forecast: The Healthy Living Magazine*. March 2011. Web. 18 Apr. 2014.

Writing at Work

Following MLA style guidelines may require time and effort. However, it is good practice to learn how to follow accepted conventions in any professional field. Many large corporations create a style manual with guidelines for editing and formatting documents produced by that corporation. Employees should follow the style manual when creating internal documents and documents for publication.

Checklist for Revision

Ask yourself the following about your draft to help you revise for:

Organization

Overall:

- Does my introduction proceed clearly from the opening to the thesis?
- Does each body paragraph have a clear main idea that relates to the thesis?
- Do the main ideas in the body paragraphs flow in a logical order? Is each paragraph connected to the one before it?
- Do I need to add or revise topic sentences or transitions to make the overall flow of ideas clearer?
- Does my conclusion summarize my main ideas and revisit my thesis?

At the paragraph level:

- Does the topic sentence clearly state the main idea?
- Do the details in the paragraph relate to the main idea?
- Do I need to recast any sentences or add transitions to improve the flow of sentences?

Cohesion

- Does the opening of the paper clearly connect to the broader topic and thesis?
- Do entertaining quotations or anecdotes serve a purpose?
- Have I included support from research for each main point in the body of my paper?
- Have I included introductory material before any quotations so quotations do not stand alone in paragraphs?
- Does paraphrased and quoted material clearly serve to develop my own points?
- Do I need to add to or revise parts of the paper to help the reader understand how certain information from a source is relevant?
- Are there any places where I have overused material from sources?
- Does my conclusion make sense based on the rest of the paper?
- Are any new questions or suggestions in the conclusion clearly linked to earlier material?

Style and Tone

- Does my paper avoid excessive wordiness?
- Are my sentences varied in length and structure?
- Have I used points of view (pronouns) effectively and appropriately for the assignment?
- Have I used active voice whenever possible?
- Have I defined specialized terms that might be unfamiliar to readers?
- Have I used clear, straightforward language whenever possible and avoided unnecessary jargon?
- Does my paper support my argument using a balanced tone—neither too indecisive nor too forceful?

- Does my paper avoid vague or imprecise terms? Slang? Repetition of the same phrases (“Smith states…, Jones states…”) to introduce quoted and paraphrased material? Exclusive use of masculine pronouns or awkward use of he or she? Use of language with negative connotations? Use of outdated or offensive terms?

Apply the following checklists to your paper before submitting your final draft:

Grammar, Mechanics, Punctuation, Usage, and Spelling

- My paper is free of grammatical errors, such as errors in subject-verb agreement and sentence fragments. For additional guidance, see: sentence writing, pronouns, verbs.
- My paper is free of errors in punctuation and mechanics, such as misplaced commas or incorrectly formatted source titles. For additional, see: commas, semicolons.
- My paper is free of common usage errors, such as alot and alright. For additional guidance, see: word choice, commonly confused words.
- My paper is free of spelling errors. I have proofread my paper for spelling in addition to using the spell-checking feature in my word-processing program. For additional guidance, see spelling.
- I have checked my paper for any editing errors that I know I tend to make frequently

Citations

- Within the body of my paper, each fact or idea taken from a source is credited to the correct source.
- Each in-text citation includes the source author’s name (or, if no author is given, the organization name or source title).
- I have used the correct format for in-text and parenthetical citations. If my source gives page numbers, I have included page numbers in parentheses directly after the quote or paraphrase taken from that page or pages.
- Each source cited in the body of my paper has a corresponding entry in the Works Cited at the end of my paper.

Formatting

- All entries in my Works Cited are in alphabetical order by author’s last name (or by title or organization if no author is listed).
- My Works Cited is consistently double spaced (both within and between entries), and each entry uses proper indentation (“hanging indent”: indented on the second and all subsequent lines).
- Each entry in my Works Cited includes all the necessary information for that source type, in the correct sequence and format.
- My paper includes a heading (with your name, course information, and date) in the upper left-hand corner of the first page; if no heading is used or your instructor requests it, substitute a title page for the heading.
- My paper includes a title that reflects the topic of my paper.
- My paper includes a running head (page numbers, or a header in the upper right-hand corner of each page of the paper).
- The margins of my paper are set at one inch. The text is double spaced and set in a standard 12-point font.

? Exercise 25

Re-read your paper line by line. Check for the issues noted in the questions about style and tone and the checklists about conventions, above, as well as any other sentence-level aspects of your writing that you have previously identified as areas for improvement. Mark any places in your paper where you notice problems in style, tone, or clarity and then take time to rework those sections.

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7: MLA Documentation and Format

MLA style is the preferred form for documenting research sources in English and other humanities disciplines. The following are general features of MLA style:

- All material borrowed from sources is cited in the text of a paper by the author's name and page number (if available).
- A works-cited list at the end of a paper provides full publication data for each source cited in the text of the paper.
- Additional explanatory information provided by the writer (but not from external sources) goes in either footnotes or endnotes. These notes are optional.

MLA In-Text Citations

In-text citations feature author names, page numbers, and sometimes titles, depending on what information is available. The Index located in H12 provides a listing of the models that are included below.

1. **One Author**

When you quote, paraphrase, or summarize a source, include the last name of the source's author, if known, in a signal phrase or in parentheses at the end of your sentence. Provide the page or pages on which the original material appeared. Do not include the word *page* or the abbreviations *p.* or *pp.* Use a hyphen [-] to indicate a number range (See Spotlight on … Citation for more on quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing sources):

> Becker points out that Joe Biden's views on same-sex marriage changed during a personal visit to a family while he was vice president (285-86).
>
> While he was vice president, Joe Biden's views on same-sex marriage changed during a personal visit with a family (Becker 285-86).

2. **Two or more works by the same author**

If you cite two or more works by the same author in your paper, give the title of the specific work in your sentence or a short version of the title in parentheses:

> According to Lewis Thomas in *Lives of a Cell*, many bacteria become dangerous only if they manufacture exotoxins (76).
>
> According to Lewis Thomas, many bacteria become dangerous only if they manufacture exotoxins (*Lives* 76).
>
> Many bacteria become dangerous only if they manufacture exotoxins (Thomas, *Lives* 76).

See Model 18 for how to cite two works by the same author in the works-cited list.

3. **Two authors**

If you cite a work with two authors, include both authors' names in a signal phrase or in parentheses:

> In the preface to *Half the Sky*, Kristof and WuDunn explain their focus on the issues of sex trafficking and sex work, violence against women, and maternal mortality (xxi).
>
> In the preface to *Half the Sky*, the authors explain their focus on the issues of sex trafficking and sex work, violence against women, and maternal mortality (Kristof and WuDunn xxi).

4. **Three or more authors**

For works with more than two authors, give the last name of the first author followed by "et al.":

> Of the survey respondents, twenty-two percent described themselves as concerned about future job prospects (Pronkowski et al. 9).

5. **Authors with the same last name**

When authors of different sources have the same last name, include their initials:

> Since the legalization of marijuana for recreational use, frequent use among adults has risen (J. T. Greene 21; M. Greene 30).

6. **Organization, government, corporation, or association as author**

When no author is given for a work published by a corporation, a government, an organization, or an association, indicate the group's name in a signal phrase or in parentheses:

> The United States Forest Service describes its mission as "sustain[ing] the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations" (8).

7. **Unknown author**

When the author of a work is unknown, use the work's title in a signal phrase or a shortened version of the title in parentheses and a page number if available. Put quotation marks around article titles, and put book or journal titles in italics:

> In a pointed 2020 editorial, "Don't Let the Games Begin," *The New York Times* argued that college athletic departments should support public health by canceling sports seasons until athletes and the public were vaccinated.

> In a pointed 2020 editorial, *The New York Times* argued that college athletic departments should support public health by canceling sports seasons until athletes and the public were vaccinated ("Don't Let").

8. **Work in more than one volume**

If you cite only one volume of a multivolume work, give the page number in parentheses. If you cite more than one volume of a multivolume work, give the volume number for each citation before the page number, and follow it with a colon and one space:

> Hill notes that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Adventure of the Dancing Men* was first published in the *Strand Magazine* and later in *Collier's Weekly* (1: 332).

9. **Work with no page or other reference numbers**

When the work has no page numbers, give the author's name in a signal phrase or in parentheses. If the source has paragraph, chapter, or section numbers, use them with the abbreviations *par.*, *ch.*, or *sec.*:

> Chen reports that the number of Americans seeking help with mental health rose during the pandemic that began in 2020. (ch. 2)

> The number of Americans seeking help with mental health rose during the pandemic that began in 2020 (Chen, ch. 2).

For an audio or a video recording, give the start and stop times for the segment you are citing shown on the player in hours (if available), minutes, and seconds:

> It is well known that maternity leave is available in countries around the world, including Norway, which popularized its policy in a comic *YouTube* video showing a pregnant woman on skis announcing the start of her one-year paid leave (01:48-02:07).

10. **One-page work or entire work**

When you cite a work that is one page long or an entire work, such as a book, website, single-page article, tweet, video, or film, you do not need to cite a page or give a reference number:

> In *Da 5 Bloods*, director Spike Lee connects the Civil Rights movement to the war in Vietnam through the music, montages of the era, and characters' stories.

11. **Source quoted in another source (indirect quotation)**

When a quotation or any information in your source is originally from another source, try to track down the original source. If you cannot find it, use the abbreviation "qtd. in":

> The group, which has researched global health including access to food, sounded the alarm about a potential "worldwide food crisis" in the early 2000s (qtd. in Sing 32).

12. **Literacy works**

- Poetry and verse plays
  For poems, provide line numbers for reference, and include *line* or *lines* in the first reference:
  In "The Character," Aphra Behn describes a lovely young woman, starting with her eyes: "Her Eyes all sweet, and

languishingly move" (line 4).
Cite verse plays using act, scene, and line numbers, separated by periods: (*Hamlet* 4.4.31-39)

- Fiction and prose plays
  When citing a prose literary work available in various editions, provide additional information after the page number, such as the chapter, act, or scene number, for readers who may be consulting a different edition. Use a semicolon to separate the page number from this additional information: (331; ch. 5) or (78; act 2).

13. **Two or more works in the same citation**

When you cite more than one work in parentheses, use a semicolon between them:

> Americans who resisted or ignored civil defense are often portrayed as heroic people who chose not to build fallout shelters or as marginalized people who could not afford them (Garrison 57; Mechling and Mechling 109).

14. **Sacred text**

When you cite passages from the Bible or another sacred text such as the Qur'an, give the title of the edition you are consulting the first time you refer to it. Then give the book (abbreviate the title if it is longer than four letters), chapter, and verse, separated by periods:

> Several times in the New Testament of the Bible, Jesus comments on wealth, telling his disciples, "And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (*King James Version*, Matt. 19.24).

Endnotes and Footnotes

Writers use notes to offer comments, explanations, or additional information that cannot easily be integrated into the rest of a paper. Use notes to cite several sources within a single context if a series of in-text citations will detract from the readability of the text.

Text with Superscript

The standard ingredients for guacamole include avocados, lemon juice, onion, tomatoes, coriander, salt, and pepper. 1 Hurtado's poem, however, gives this traditional dish a whole new twist.

Note

1. For variations see Beard 314, Egerton 197, Eckhardt 92, and Kafka 26. Beard's version, which includes olives and green peppers, is the most unusual.

A note may be placed as a footnote at the bottom of the page on which the in-text citation appears or on a separate page of endnotes at the end of the paper. This should be titled "Notes" or "Endnotes" and appear between the last page of the paper and the works-cited list. Include all sources given in notes in the works-cited list.

MLA Works Cited

Each source cited in the text of your paper refers readers to the list of works cited, a complete list of all the sources you quoted, paraphrased, or summarized. Every source cited in the text of your paper must be included in the works-cited list, and every source in the works-cited list must be cited in the text of your paper.

Format of the List of Works Cited (MLA)

After the last page of the paper, start a new page with the centered title "Works Cited" at the top. Create an entry for each source using the following guidelines and examples:

- Begin each entry at the left margin, and indent subsequent lines one-half inch. (In Microsoft Word, you can also highlight the entire page when you are finished and select "Hanging" from the Special options on the Indentation section of the Paragraph menu.)
- Alphabetize the entries according to authors' last names. If two or more authors have the same last name, alphabetize by first name or initial. Alphabetize sources with unknown authors by the first word of the title, excluding *a*, *an*, or *the*.
- Double-space the entire page.

Core Elements (MLA)

Each entry in the list of works cited consists of core elements:

- **Author.** *Who is responsible for the work?*
- **Title.** *What is the work called?*
- **Publication information.** *Where can the work be found so that others can consult it?* Publication information includes the date of publication and any larger work, which MLA calls a "container," in which a shorter work is published, such as a journal, magazine, newspaper, database, streaming service, and so on.
  A note on access dates. Although access dates for online sources are not required, MLA acknowledges that an access date can indicate the version of a source you consulted. If you add an access date, place it at the end of the works-cited entry in this format: "Accessed 4 Apr. 2020." Ask your instructors whether they require access dates.

Authors and Contributors for Books and Articles (MLA)

- **Authors.** Give the author's last name, a comma, the author's first name and any middle name or middle initial, and then a period. For works with more than one author, an organization as an author, or an unknown author, see the models below.
- **Contributors.** People who contributed to the work in addition to the author are called contributors. Refer to them by their role in a phrase such as "adapted by," "directed by," "edited by," "illustrated by," "introduction by," "narrated by," "performance by," and "translated by." (See Models 19, 20, 21, 30, and 58 for examples.)

15. **Book: one author**

Sotomayor, Sonia. *My Beloved World*. Vintage Books, 2013.

16. **Book: two atuhors**

Kristoff, Nicholas D., and Sheryl WuDunn. H*alf the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2009.

17. **Book: three or more authors**

Barlow, David H., et al. *Abnormal Psychology: An Integrative Approach*. 8th ed., Cengage Learning, 2017.

18. **Book: two or more works by the same author**

When you cite two works by the same author, use three hyphens in place of the author's name, and alphabetize the works by title:

Trethewey, Natasha. *Memorial Drive: A Daughter's Memoir*. Ecco, 2020.

---. *Native Guard: Poems*. Mariner Books, 2007.

19. **Book author and editor**

Add the editor's name after the title:

Hemingway, Ernest. *Conversations with Ernest Hemingway*, edited by Matthew J. Bruccoli, UP of Mississippi, 1986.

20. **Book author and translator**

Add the translator's name after the title:

Ferrante, Elena. *My Brilliant Friend*. Translated by Ann Goldstein, Europa Editions, 2012.

If you are citing the work of the translator, place the translator's name in the author position:

Goldstein, Ann, translator. *My Brilliant Friend*. By Elena Ferrante, Europa Editions, 2012.

21. **Book author and illustrator**

Add the illustrator's name after the title. If you are citing the work of the illustrator, place the illustrator's name in the author position, as shown in the preceding example:

Fasler, Joe. *Light in the Dark: Writers on Creativity, Inspiration, and the Artistic Process*. Illustrated by Doug McLean, Penguin Books, 2017.

22. **Work by an organization, a government, a corporation, or an association**

If the author and publisher are *not* the same, start with the author:

United States Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration. *Healthy Living Resource Guide*. Government Printing Office, 2020.

If the author and the publisher *are* the same, give the title of the work in place of the author, and list the organization as the publisher:

MLA Handbook. 8th ed., Modern Language Association of America, 2016.

"This Is Who We Are." *U.S. Forest Service*, United States Department of Agriculture, Mar. 2019, www.fs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/This-is-Who-We-Are.pdf.

23. **Unknown author**

If no author is given, start with the title.

"The Most Beautiful Battalion in the Army." *Grunt Magazine*, 1968, pp. 12-15.

Articles in Journals, Magazines, and Newspaper (MLA)

Articles, reviews, editorials, and other short works are published in journals, newspapers, and magazines. They appear in print, on databases, and on websites (though often through a paywall). As a student, you are likely to access many articles and other short research sources primarily through databases available through your library.

24. **Basic format for a journal article in a database**

Author's Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." *Title of Journal*, volume number, issue number, Date of Publication, page numbers. *Title of Database*, DOI or URL.

- **Author.** Give the last name, a comma, the first name, and any middle name or initial. Do not list an author's professional title, such as *Dr.* or *PhD*. End with a period.
- **Title of the article.** Give the full title and any subtitle, separating them with a colon. Capitalize all significant words in the title. Put the title of the article in quotation marks. End with a period inside the closing quotation mark.
- **Title of the journal.** Put the title of the journal in italics. Capitalize all significant words in the title. End the title with a comma.
- **Volume and issue numbers.** Use the abbreviations *vol.* and *no.* followed by the number and a comma.
- **Publication date.** Give the month or season and the year of publication, if available. Use the following abbreviations for months: *Jan.*, *Feb.*, *Mar.*, *Apr.*, *Aug.*, *Sept.*, *Oct.*, *Nov.*, and *Dec*. Do not abbreviate May, June, or July.
- **Page numbers.** Give p. (singular) or pp. (plural) and the page number or numbers of the article, followed by a period.
- **Title of the database.** Put the database title in italics, followed by a comma.
- **Location.** Give a DOI if available, and end with a period. If there is no DOI, give a URL, preferably a permalink, without http://.

25. **Article in an academic journal**

- Database
  Daddis, Gregory A. "Out of Balance: Evaluating American Strategy in Vietnam, 1968–72." *War & Society*, vol. 32, no. 3, Oct. 2013, pp. 252-70. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1179/0729247313Z.00000000026.
- Print
  Daddis, Gregory A. "Out of Balance: Evaluating American Strategy in Vietnam, 1968–72." *War & Society*, vol. 32, no. 3, Oct. 2013, pp. 252-70.
- Online
  Squires, Scot. "Do Generations Differ When It Comes to Green Values and Products?" *Electronic Green Journal*, no. 42, 2019, escholarship.org/uc/item/6f91213q.
  The journal in the example numbers issues only, so no volume number is given.

26. **Article in a weekly or biweekly magazine**

To cite an article in a weekly or biweekly magazine, give the author, title of the article, title of the magazine, publication date (day, month, year), and page numbers. If you found the article through a database, add the title of the database and a DOI or URL. If you

found the article online, add the URL.

- Database
  Sanneh, Kelefa. “The Color of Money.” *The New Yorker*, 8 Feb. 2021, pp. 26-31. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=aph&AN=148411685&site=ehost-live&scope=site.
- Print
  Sanneh, Kelefa. “The Color of Money.” *The New Yorker*, 8 Feb. 2021, pp. 26-31.
- Online
  Ferrer, Ada. “My Brother’s Keeper.” *The New Yorker*, 22 Feb. 2021, www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/ 03/01/my-brothers-keeper.

27. **Article in a monthly or bimonthly magazine**

To cite an article in a monthly or bimonthly magazine, give the author, title of the article, title of the magazine, publication month and year, and page numbers. If you found the article through a database, add the title of the database and a DOI or URL. If you found the article online, add the URL.

- Database
  Sneed, Annie. “Giant Shape-Shifters.” *Scientific American*, Sept. 2017, pp. 20-22. *EBSCOhost*, *doi:10.1038/ scientificamerican1017-20*.
- Print
  Sneed, Annie. “Giant Shape-Shifters.” *Scientific American*, Sept. 2017, pp. 20-22.
- Online
  Stewart, Jamila. “A Look Inside the Black Designers of Canada Initiative.” *Essence*, July 2020, www.essence.com/fashion/black-designers-of-canada-digital-index/.

To cite a comment on an article, see Model 54.

28. **Article in a newspaper**

To cite an article in a newspaper, give the author, title of the article, title of the newspaper, publication date (day, month, year), and the page numbers. If you found the article through a database, add the title of the database and a DOI or a URL. If you found the article online, add the URL.

- Database
  Krueger, Alyson. “When Mom Knows Best, on Instagram.” *The New York Times*, 27 Nov. 2019, pp. B1-B4. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType =aph&AN=139891108&site=ehost-live&scope=site.
- Print
  Krueger, Alyson. “When Mom Knows Best, on Instagram.” *The New York Times*, 27 Nov. 2019, pp. B1-B4.
- Online
  Smith, Doug. “They’re Building Affordable Housing for the Homeless—Without Government Help.” *Los Angeles Times*, 10 Feb. 2021, www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-02-10/theyre-building-affordable-housing-for-the-homeless-without-government-help.

To cite a comment on an article, see Model 54.

29. **Editorial or letter to the editor**

An editorial may or may not have an author’s name attached to it. If it does, give the author’s name first. If it does not, start with the title. In both situations, add the designation Editorial or Letter to the Editor after the title.

“For Better Elections, Copy the Neighbors.” Editorial. The Wall Street Journal, 16 Feb. 2021, www.wsj.com/ articles/for-better-elections-copy-the-neighbors-11613518448.

30. **Review**

To cite a review of a book, film, television show, or other work, give the name of the reviewer and title of the review, add *Review of* before the title of work being reviewed, and give the name of the work’s author, director, or creator after the title.

Girish, Devika. “Refocusing the Lens on Race and Gender.” Review of *Test Pattern*, directed by Shatara Michelle Ford. *The New York Times*, 18 Feb. 2021, www.nytimes.com/2021/02/18/movies/test-pattern-review.html.

Books and Parts of Books (MLA)

Use the following guidelines for books and parts of books, such as a selection from an anthology, an article in a collection, a published letter, and so on.

31. **Basic entry for a book**

Author’s Last Name, First Name. *Title of Book*. Publisher, Year of Publication.

- **Author.** Give the last name, a comma, the first name, and any middle name or initial. Do not list an author’s professional title, such as *Dr.* or *PhD.* End with a period.
- **Title of the book.** Put the book’s title in italics. Give the full title and any subtitle, separating them with a colon. Capitalize all significant words in the title, even if the book’s cover does not use conventional capitalization. End the title with a period.
- **Publisher.** List the publisher’s name without words such as “Inc.” or “Company.” Shorten “University Press” to “UP.” End with a comma.
- **Year of publication.** Provide the publication date, and end with a period.

32. **Print book**

Wilkerson, Isabel. *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration*. Vintage Books, 2010.

33. **E-book formatted for a specific reader device or service**

Wilkerson, Isabel. *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration*. Kindle ed., Vintage Books, 2010.

34. **Book, anthology, or collection with an editor**

Add the abbreviation *ed.* or *eds.* (if more than one) after the editor’s first name:

Lunsford, Andrea, ed. *Reclaiming Rhetorica: Women in the Rhetorical Tradition*. U of Pittsburgh P, 1995.

35. **Work in an anthology or chpater in an edited collection**

After the author and title of the work, give the title of the anthology or edited collection, name of the editor, publication information, and page numbers of the work:

Royster, Jacqueline Jones. “To Call a Thing by Its True Name: The Rhetoric of Ida B. Wells.” *Reclaiming Rhetorica: Women in the Rhetorical Tradition*, edited by Andrea Lunsford, U of Pittsburgh P, 1995, pp. 167-84.

36. **Two or more works in an anthology or edited collection**

When you cite two or more selections from the same anthology or edited collection, list the anthology separately under the editor’s name. In the entries for the selections you cite, include the editor’s name and the page numbers on which the selections appear:

Lipscomb, Drema R. “Sojourner Truth: A Practical Public Discourse." Lunsford, pp. 227-46.

Lunsford, Andrea, ed. *Reclaiming Rhetorica: Women in the Rhetorical Tradition*. U of Pittsburgh P, 1995.

Royster, Jacqueline Jones. “To Call a Thing by Its True Name: The Rhetoric of Ida B. Wells.” Lunsford, pp. 167-84.

37. **Revised or later edition**

For a book published in an edition other than the first, give the edition number after the title:

Strunk, William, Jr., and E. B. White. *The Elements of Style*, 4th ed., Pearson, 2019.

38. **Multivolume work**

For a book published in more than one volume, give the total number of volumes after the title:

Klinger, Leslie S. *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes*. 2 vols., W. W. Norton, 2005.

39. **One volume of a multivolume work**

Klinger, Leslie S. *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes*. Vol. 2, W. W. Norton, 2005.

When each volume of a multivolume set has an individual title, list the volume's full publication information first, followed by series information (number of volumes, dates). When separate volumes were published in different years, give inclusive dates:

Churchill, Winston S. *Triumph and Tragedy*. Houghton Mifflin, 1953. Vol. 6 of *The Second World War*. 6 vols. 1948-53.

However, if the volume you are using has its own title, you may cite the book without referring to the other volumes as if it were an independent publication.

40. **Book in a series**

Add the title of the series at the end of the entry:

Thaiss, Christopher. *Language across the Curriculum in the Elementary Grades*. WAC Clearinghouse, 2011, wac.colostate.edu/books/landmarks/thaiss/. Landmark Publications in Writing Studies.

41. **Republished book**

Give the original publication date after the title and the date the book was republished after the publisher:

Evans, Elizabeth E. G. *The Abuse of Maternity*. 1875. Arno, 1974.

42. **Sacred text**

Give the complete title of the version you consulted followed by the name of the editor and/or translator, the edition, the publisher, and the publication date:

The Bible. Authorized King James Version. Edited by Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett, Oxford UP, 2008.

The Koran. Translated by N. J. Dawood, rev. ed., Penguin Books, 2015.

43. **Introduction, preface, foreword, or afterword**

Start with the author of the introduction, preface, foreword, or afterword, followed by a description of the work you are citing, such as "Foreword." Give the author of the work after the title:

Offill, Jenny. Foreword. *Mrs. Dalloway*, by Virginia Woolf, Penguin Classics, 2021, pp. vii-xiv.

44. **Published letter**

Roosevelt, Theodore. Letter to Upton Sinclair. 15 Mar. 1906. *Theodore Roosevelt: Letters and Speeche*s, edited by Louis Auchincloss, 2004, pp. 310-11.

45. **Conference paper**

Killi, Stainer, and Andrew Morrison. "Could the Food Market Pull 3D Printing Appetites Further?" *Industry 4.0—Shaping the Future of the Digital World: Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Sustainable & Smart Manufacturing*, edited by Paulo Bartolo et al., CRC Press, 2021, pp. 197-203.

Websites and Parts of Websites (MLA)

Use the following guidelines for works that are published *only* online and do not have an overarching publication, such as a journal, newspaper, magazine, or database.

46. **Basic format for a short work or page on a website**

Author's Last Name, First Name. "Title of Short Work." *Title of Website*, Publisher, Publication Date, URL.

- **Author.** Give the last name, a comma, the first name, and any middle name or initial. Do not list an author's professional title, such as *Dr.* or *PhD*. End with a period.
- **Title of the short work.** Put the title in quotation marks. Give the full title and any subtitle, separating them with a colon. Capitalize all significant words in the title. End with a period inside the closing quotation mark.
- **Title of the website.** Put the title of the website in italics. Capitalize all significant words in the title. End the title with a comma.
- **Publisher.** If the publisher of the website is different from the title of the website (as shown in Model 48), give it next, followed by a comma. If they are the same (as shown in Model 47), give only the title of the website.

- **Publication date.** Give the day, month, and year the work was posted, if available. Use the following abbreviations for months: *Jan.*, *Feb.*, *Mar.*, *Apr.*, *Aug.*, *Sept.*, *Oct.*, *Nov.*, and *Dec.* Do not abbreviate May, June, and July.
- **URL.** Give the URL, without "http://."

47. **Short work or page on a website**

Shetterly, Margot Lee. "Katherine Johnson Biography." *NASA*, 24 Feb. 2020, www.nasa.gov/content/katherine-johnson-biography.

If the source you are citing has no author listed, start with the title. If the page has no title, give the name of the site and a descriptive label, such as "Home page" or "Blog post."

48. **Blog post**

Blazich, Frank A. "The Cold Morning of the Day After." Smithsonian Voices, *Smithsonian Magazine*, 5 Feb. 2021, www.smithsonianmag.com/blogs/national-museum-american-history/2021/02/05/cold-morning-day-after/.

49. **Entire website**

Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Yale U, 2021, beinecke.library.yale.edu/.

If the website lists an editor, give the person's name as you would an author, followed by a comma and *ed*.

50. **Wiki**

"Coronavirus." *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, 22 Feb. 2021, en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus.

Social Media (MLA)

51. **Basic format for a social media post**

Author. "Text of untitled post" or "Title of post" or Descriptive label. *Title of Site*, Date of Post, Time of Post, URL.

- **Author.** Give the author's handle and name. End with a period.
- **Text, title, or description of post.** Match the capitalization exactly, add quotation marks, and end with a period inside the closing quotation mark.
- **Title of the social media site.** Put the title of the site in italics, ending with a comma.
- **Publication date and time.** Give the day, month, year, and time of the post. Use the following abbreviations for months: *Jan.*, *Feb.*, *Mar.*, *Apr.*, *Aug.*, *Sept.*, *Oct.*, *Nov.*, and *Dec.* Do not abbreviate May, June, and July.
- **URL.** Give the URL, without "http://."

52. **Social media post**

@Holleratcha (James Holler). "People go out and vote tomorrow!" *Twitter*, 2 Nov. 2020, 2:08 p.m., twitter.com/holleratcha/status/1270432672544784384.

Death Valley National Park. "What does it mean to protect something you love?" *Facebook*, 23 Feb. 2021, 5:01 p.m., www.facebook.com/DeathValleyNPS/posts/4108808255810092.

See Model 54 for how to cite a comment.

53. **Online forum post**

@Duckpond318. "Turkeys in the arboretum." *Reddit*, 15 Mar. 2021, 11:22 a.m., www.reddit.com/r/Wildlife/comments/lqlbo3/turkeys_in_the_arboretum/. Accessed 4 Feb. 2021.

54. **Online comment**

AKJersey. Comment on "Can We Stop Fighting about Charter Schools?" *The New York Times*, 22 Feb. 2021, www.nytimes.com/2021/02/22/opinion/charter-schools-democrats.html#commentsContainer.

Personal Communication (MLA)

Use the following guidelines to cite email, text messages, and letters that you sent or received.

55. **Email**

Roberts, Jeffrey. “Study results.” Received by Kenneth Berg, 21 Oct. 2020.

56. **Text message**

Roberts, Jeffrey. “Study results.” Received by Kenneth Berg, 21 Oct. 2020.

57. **Personal letter**

Atwood, Margaret. Letter to the author. 11 Mar. 2007.

Video, Audio, and Other Media Sources (MLA)

Use the following guidelines to cite various media sources.

58. **Film**

Begin with the title, followed by the director, the studio, and the year released.

Casablanca. Directed by Michael Curtiz, Warner Brothers, 1942.

You may also cite other contributors and their roles after the title (as illustrated below). If your paper is concerned with a particular person’s work on a film, such as the director, an actor, or someone else, begin with that person’s name and arrange all other information accordingly. For a film you stream, add the title of the streaming service and the URL:

Moonlight. Directed by Barry Jenkins, performances by Mahershala Ali, Naomie Harris, and Trevante Rhodes. A24, 2016. *Netflix*, www.netflix.com/watch/80121348?trackId=13752289&tctx=8%2C.

59. **Online video**

NASA. “Apollo 11 Moonwalk – Original NASA EVA Mission Video.” 20 July 1969. *YouTube*, 17 July 2014, www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9HdPi9Ikhk.

60. **Television series or episode**

- TV Series
  The Good Place. Michael Schur, creator. NBC, 2016-20.
- Streamed TV episode
  “Jason Mendoza.” *The Good Place*, season 1, episode 4, NBC, 2016. *Netflix*, www.netflix.com/watch/ 80191852?trackId=13752289&tctx=%2C%2C.

61. **Advertisement**

- Print
  XOFLUZA. Flu medication advertisement. *The New Yorker*, 8. Feb. 2021, pp. 5-6.
- Online
  General Motors. “Will Ferrell Super Bowl Ad.” *YouTube*, 3 Feb. 2021, www.youtube.com/ watch?v=mdsPvbSpB2Y&t=24s.

62. **Cartoon or comic**

- Print
  Davis, Jim. “Garfield.” Cartoon. *Courier* [Findlay, OH], 17 May 1996, p. 18.
  If the source you cite appears in a local newspaper, as it does here, give the city and state in brackets after the name of the newspaper if the city is not part of the newspaper’s name.
- Online
  Gauld, Tom. “Waiting for Godot to Join the Zoom Meeting.” *You’re All Just Jealous of My Jetpack*, 31 Jan. 2021, myjetpack.tumblr.com/.

63. **Painting or other visual artwork**

- Original work
  Rivera, Diego. *Detroit Industry Murals*. 1932-33. Detroit Institute of Art.
  If the city is not part of the name of the museum, add it after museum. For example, if the work you viewed was at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, you would end the entry as follows: Museum of Modern Art, New York.

- Reproduction
  Neel, Alice. *Elenka*. 1936. *Alice Neel: People Come First*, by Kelly Baum and Randall Griffey, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2021, p. 142.
- Online
  Basquiat, Jean-Michel. *Untitled*. 1983. *Museum of Modern Art*, www.moma.org/collection/works/ 63997?artist_id=370&page=1&sov_referrer=artist. Accessed 24 Sept. 2020.

64. **Map, chart, or diagram**

- Print
  Everglades National Park. National Geographic Society Maps, 2019.
- Online
  "Map: Expedition of Lewis and Clark." *National Park Service*, 2 Jan. 2018, nps.gov/subjects/ travellewisandclark/map.htm.

65. **Sound recording**

Sound recordings include songs, albums, and spoken word. If you stream a sound recording or watch a performance online, add the name of the streaming service, such as Spotify, Apple Music, or Amazon Music, after the date. If you access the recording online, add the name of the website and the URL after the date.

- Album
  Prince. *Purple Rain*. Warner Brothers, 1984.
- Song
  The Supremes. "Baby Love." *Where Did Our Love Go*, Motown, 1964. Spotify.
- Online
  Gorman, Amanda. "The Hill We Climb." 20 Jan. 2021, *YouTube*, www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZ055ilIiN4.

66. **Radio**

The Road to Higher Ground. Hosted by Jonathan Overby. WPR, 9 Jan. 2021.

If you listened to the radio program online, add the URL after the date.

67. **Podcast**

McEvers, Kelly, host. "This Is Not a Joke." *Embedded*, season 9, episode 2, NPR, 7 Nov. 2019, Apple Podcasts.

If you listened to the podcast on the web, add the URL instead of the podcast service.

68. **Interview**

- Broadcast
  Wilkerson, Isabel. Interview. *Fresh Air*, NPR, 4 Aug. 2020.
- Online
  Sowell, Thomas. Interview. *Hoover Institution*, 3 Jan. 2015, www.wsj.com/video/uncommon-knowledg-thomas-sowell-basic-economics/51837CB6-9FF2-305AE55D179A.html.
- Personal interview
  Wong, Diana. Personal interview. 12 Sept. 2020.

69. **Video game, software, or app**

Houser, Dan, et al., writers. *Grand Theft Auto V*. Rockstar Games, 2013. Xbox 360.

Other Sources (MLA)

70. **Live lecture, speech, address, or reading**

Diaz, Shanna. "Your Dazzling Brain: The Symphony of Sleep." Community Lecture Series, University of New Mexico Health Science and the City of Albuquerque, 13 Mar. 2018, Albuquerque Academy.

71. **Live performance**

Hamilton. By Lin-Manuel Miranda, directed by Thomas Kail, 11 Mar. 2018, CIBC Theater, Chicago.

If you watch a video of a performance online, cite it as you would cite an online video.

72. **Letter in an archive**

Mucklestone, Ada. Letter to Maj. Gen. Ralph J. Olson. 6 Nov. 1958. Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Alphabetical Subject File, 1950-66, 1715, Box 13.

73. **Dissertation**

- Database
  Park, Eun Jung. *Korean American Artists and the 1992 Los Angeles Riots*. 2013. U of California, San Diego, PhD dissertation. ProQuest, www.proquest.com/doc-view/1425303659.
- Print
  Boothby, Daniel W. *The Determinants of Earnings and Occupation for Young Women*. 1978. U of California, Berkeley, PhD dissertation.

74. **Pamphlet**

"Facts about Fallout." Civil Defense Administration, 1961.

MLA Paper Format

Follow your instructor's formatting guidelines or those indicated here. For sample papers with MLA format and works-cited pages, visit this site (https://openstax.org/r/this-site1).

- **Margins.** Use one-inch margins on all sides.
- **Spacing.** Double-space throughout the paper, including the works-cited page.
- **Paragraph format.** Indent paragraphs one-half inch.
- **Page numbers.** Start numbering on the first page of your paper and continue to the end of the works-cited page. Place page numbers in the upper-right corner, and add your last name before the page number: "Coleman 3."
- **Identifying information.** Put your name, your instructor's name, the course title, and the date in the left corner of the first page of the body of the paper, not in the header. Double-space this information.
- **Title.** Center the title on the first page. Do not use italics, boldface, all capitals, or quotation marks. Do not add extra space below the title.
- **Long quotations and quotations from poetry.** See Quotations for how to cite long quotations and poetry quotations.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

8: Style

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8.1: Academic Style



Figure: Image from Pixabay

Academic Style

Many students enter their first year college reading-writing course thinking that academic style means using "big words," never using I, and making their sentences as long as possible. Student may have read academic readings in which the style sounded "overblown" or wordy. A lot of academic writing exists that does read this way, but such writing is not necessarily *good* academic writing. Some writers come into college already writing in what they feel is academic writing style, and others don't know how to write in that way, but think that is the goal.

In reality, academic style involves using clear, specific word choice and sentence constructions (including active voice as much as possible); staying focused on the topic at hand; generally using third person voice to build your argument and incorporate your sources; and generally avoiding personal experience or discussing your process of writing the paper. Some of these parts of academic style are discussed elsewhere in this e-book (see "Word Choice"). Here, we will focus on some of the sentence level conventions that academic style involves.

Example of Good Academic Style

The following example by Professor Peter Bowler from publicdomainreview.org demonstrates good academic style in humanities writing:

> H. G. Wells worried constantly about the future of humanity. While he hoped for progress in human affairs, he was only too well aware that it was not inevitable and might not be sustained. Throughout his career he celebrated the technological developments that were revolutionizing life but feared they might lead to eventual degeneration or, as came to pass in 1914, a catastrophic war. He was also aware that there were disagreements over what would actually count as progress. Providing everyone with the benefits of modern industry might not be enough, especially as continued technological innovation would require the constant remodeling of society. Progressive steps introducing entirely new functions were episodic, open-ended and unpredictable, in both biological and social evolution. These uncertainties were compounded by a realization that, where technological innovation was concerned, it was virtually impossible to predict future inventions or what their long-term consequences might be. Even if progress continued, it would be much more open-ended than advocates of the traditional idea of progress had imagined.
>
> For Wells the most basic level of uncertainty arose from the fear that the human race might not sustain its current rate of development. In his 1895 story “The Time Machine” he imagined his time traveler projected through eras of future progress: “I saw great and splendid architecture rising about me, more massive than any buildings of our time, and yet, as it seemed, built of glimmer and mist" (27). But the time traveler ends up in a world brought down by social division and degeneration. The brutal Morlocks are the descendants of the industrial workers, while the childlike Eloi are the remnants of the leisured upper classes. This prediction was based on his zoologist friend E. Ray Lankester’s extension of the Darwinian theory. Lankester argued that because evolution works by adapting populations to their environment, progress is not inevitable and any species that adapts itself to a less active and hence less challenging way of life will degenerate (Lankester 127 and 198-202). Here was the model for a more complex vision of progress in which any advance would depend on the circumstances of the time and could not be predicted on the basis of previous trends.

While a couple of uses of the passive voice are present (paragraph 1, sentence 7 and paragraph 2, sentence 4), the uses are acceptable because the author wanted to focus on the object of the sentences and needed them to cohere well with the previous sentences. However, all of the other sentences are in active voice.

The paragraphs focus on the topic at hand and what others say about topic. The author uses many types of descriptive phrases and clauses, uses specific and meaningful word choice, and varies the sentence length depending on what he wants to empahsize. In addition, when writing about an event within a book, he uses simple present tense ("But the time traveler ends up in a world brought down by social division and degeneration.")

Some Academic Style Recommendations

What to Avoid

1. Avoid using "I" unless writing about personal experience or actively comparing your opinion to another author's.

Do not write: *I think greed is the principal cause of Americans' debt.*

Do write: Greed is the principal cause of Americans' debt.

(It will be clear that the opinion is yours simply by the fact that you are writing the paper. If the opinion is someone else's, say whose opinion it is. Otherwise, the focus will move from the topic you are writing about to you.)

2. Avoid "you" (or "your" or "yours") **unless you are seeking to address the reader directly.**

Do not write: *If you shop too much, you can become addicted.*

Do write: People who shop too much can become addicted.

Your audience is a general academic audience, and one's purpose in writing a paper is not generally to give personal advice. "You" addresses one person, but an academic essay's audience is multiple people.

3. Avoid (unanswered) questions, especially if they occur where you should be writing analysis.

Do not write: *How can children know how to resist advertising?*

Do write: Children do not have the maturity to resist advertising.

Just say what you mean to say because questions can prevent a writer from getting their point across with precision. It is occasionally acceptable to use a question as a hook or transition, but avoid using them more than once or twice in an essay.

4. Avoid using casual language or slang unless it contributes to the effect you want.

Do not write: *The author talks about how corporations pollute.*

Do write: The author explains that, without regulation, corporations pollute.

Do not write: The authors describe *this* family, the Joneses…

Do write: The authors describe a family, the Joneses… casual tone might undermine your authority.

A casual tone may undermine your authority and is not the usual accepted tone for academic writing.

5. Avoid sweeping, obvious, vague, or clichéd phrases and statements:

- Nowadays
- In today's society
- This proves that no one cares about anyone but himself.
- Everyone is addicted to shopping.
- Pollution affects everyone and everything.
- Pollution must end today or everyone will die soon.
- In society, many things happen that are connected to each other.

To correct these kinds of statements, refine your thinking and decide what specifically you mean – and can reasonably claim.

What to Do

1. Use simple present verb tense, rather than past tense, when writing about what you read.

Do not write: The author **wrote** about the need to reduce vaping among people of all ages.

Write: The author **writes** about the need to reduce vaping among people of all ages.

Using simple present tense is academic convention because of the idea that once something is written on paper (or recorded on film or video), it always exists and lives in an "eternal present."

2. Vary your sentence length.

Review the example at the top of the page and notice how having short sentences after long sentences helps to keep your attention and move you forward while you read.

3. Use strong, descriptive words -- especially verbs.

Avoid weak verbs that no longer have much meaning, such as "get," "have", "being," "make," and their variants. Also try to avoid verbs that have a preposition (but no prepositional phrase) after them.

Do not write: I **ate up** my food quickly.

Do write: I **gobbled** my food.

Depending on your meaning, the following table includes some stronger words for these notoriously weak verbs.

Get	Have (as a main verb)	Be(ing)	Make
obtain	possess	exist	cause
understand	keep	am	require
fetch	own	feel	produce
receive	contract (as a disease)	are	create

4. Write with focused sentence; this includes active voice.

- Use active voice wherever possible. The situations in which using passive voice is acceptable are when:
- A writer needs to begin with the object of the sentence so that the sentence flows well from the previous sentence (cohesion)
- A writer needs to describe a process they followed (such as might appear in the methodology section of a scientific research paper or lab report)
- The subject or agent of the sentence is unknown.Other guidelines for writing focused sentences can be found here.

The following videos can reinforce what you just read. While they refer to APA style, all of the tips here are relevant for MLA also.



Video **8.1.1**



Video 8.1.1

Writing in an Academic Style Part 1 and 2. **Authored by:** JMU Writing Center. **License:** *All Rights Reserved.* **License Terms:** Standard YouTube License.

Practice with Academic Style

Exercise 1

Rewrite these sentences in a clear, academic style using the above guidelines.

1. You will never be happy if you don't spend time with your friends and family.
2. How can communities regulate corporations without the help of the government?
3. In my opinion, I think that people nowadays are materialistic.
4. There was this guy who was talking in this book called *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs* – I think his name was Arne – saying that women only entered the workforce in the 70s because men were deadbeat earners.
5. Who do you think will make you happy if not yourself?
6. There are all these advertisements that try to get kids to buy things.
7. I believe that advertising damages women.
8. The authors of "Iron Maiden" say that you will have lower self-esteem if you read too many fashion magazines.

Exercise 2

Rewrite the following paragraph in a clear, academic style using the above guidelines.

Food stamps have recently been proposed to be restricted by the U.S. government. To write this paper, I examine five sources that discussed the topic of food stamps. All of the sources look at the topic of food stamps from the federal level, rather than from the perspective of a particular state. Almost all of the sources acknowledge that some people will no longer receive food stamps. In fact, only those with great need could receive help! Food banks will all be inundated with new people who need help, or children will go hungry. And hungry children don't learn as well as those who have had a good breakfast. Food stamps should not be restricted to only the most needy because, in our gig-based economy, many people go hungry some of the time. It's just offloading the problem onto the private sector.

Contributors

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8.2: Point of View

Point of view refers to the vantage point from which a story, event, report, or other written work is told. The point of view in which you write depends on the genre in which you are writing. For example, you will likely use first person in personal narrative writing. For most academic writing, you'll use third person. (See Editing Focus: Characterization and Point of View for a related discussion of point of view in narrative writing.)

First Person

In the first-person point of view, the writer or narrator (*I*, *we*) is present in the writing. First person is commonly used in personal writing genres, such as literacy narratives, memoirs, and profiles, as well as in fiction.

> After midnight—my paper started, my exam studied for—I leave the library and head back to my apartment. In the dark, I listen closely when I hear footsteps behind me, and I step to the edge of the sidewalk to let a man pass. At my door, I fumble for my key, open the door, turn on the light, and step inside. I am safe, ready to eat, read a bit, and return to my paper.

Second Person

Second-person point of view is used occasionally when an outsider (*you*) becomes part of a story. It should not be confused with a writer or speaker using "you" when directly addressing an audience (*you*). Nor should it be confused with giving instructions (*drive forward, add one cup of brown sugar, close the door*) or with its similar use in textbooks such as this one. However, second person is not considered appropriate in most academic writing.

Writers often slip into second person when they intend to write in third person. In the example below, the writer starts in third person and shifts by accident to second person. To check your sentences for second person, search your documents for *you*, and revise as needed.

> **Shift from Third Person to Second Person** The federal government should raise the minimum wage because it has the responsibility to ensure people earn a wage you can live on. The current minimum wage, $7.25 per hour, is not enough to pay rent, let alone support a family. Many people cannot lift themselves out of poverty. A higher minimum wage can help you.
>
> **Revised** The federal government should raise the minimum wage because it has the responsibility to ensure workers earn a wage they can live on. The current minimum wage, $7.25 per hour, is not enough to pay a single person's rent, let alone support a family. Many people cannot lift themselves out of poverty. A higher minimum wage can help them.

Third Person

The third-person point of view (*he*, *she*, *it*, *they*) is customary for fiction and for academic writing, such as research papers, reports, visual and textual analysis papers, argumentative essays, and the like. Third-person point of view emphasizes the information instead of the writer.

> The hikers and other passive trail users argue that mountain bikes should not be allowed on narrow trails traditionally traveled by foot and horse. They point out that the bikes' wide, treaded tires cause erosion, that the bikers' high speeds startle hikers and horses, and that their presence on trails disrupts the tranquility that hikers and bird watchers seek.

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8.3: Commonly Confused Words

Just as a mason uses bricks to build sturdy homes, writers use words to build successful documents. Consider the construction of a building. Builders need to use tough, reliable materials to build a solid and structurally sound skyscraper. From the foundation to the roof and every floor in between, every part is necessary. And builders must use the right part for the job. If they try to use nuts and bolts where nails or screws are needed to hold together a building, the building may fall apart during the first earthquake. Just as builders need to use the right hardware, writers need to use strong, meaningful words from the first sentence to the last and in every sentence in between.

You already know many words that you use everyday as part of your writing and speaking vocabulary. You probably also know that certain words fit better in certain situations. Letters, e-mails, and even quickly jotted grocery lists require the proper selection of vocabulary. Imagine you are writing a grocery list to purchase the ingredients for a recipe but accidentally write down cilantro when the recipe calls for parsley. Even though cilantro and parsley look remarkably alike, each produces a very different effect in food. This seemingly small error could radically alter the flavor of your dish!

Having a solid everyday vocabulary will help you while writing, but learning new words and avoiding common word errors will make a real impression on your readers. Experienced writers know that deliberate, careful word selection and usage can lead to more polished, more meaningful work. This chapter covers word choice that will improve your writing.

Vocabulary and the Reading-Writing Connection

Adults gain most of their vocabulary simply by reading. The best way to improve your vocabulary is to read a wide variety of texts at the reading level you are at or slightly above. This will expose you to a wider range of words than you might be exposed to if you read the same sort of texts all the time. And such reading needn't just be academic in nature. Reading magazines about various hobbies, and with a variety of focuses (business, economics, fashion) will expose you to a wider vocabulary.

Some people complain that while they read a variety of different kinds of texts, they just can't retain the new words they meet. XXXXX

Commonly Confused Words

Some words in English cause trouble for speakers and writers because these words share a similar pronunciation, meaning, or spelling with another word. These words are called commonly confused words. For example, read aloud the following sentences containing the commonly confused words *new* and *knew.*

I liked her *new* sweater.

I *knew* she would wear that sweater today.

These words may sound alike when spoken, but they carry entirely different usages and meanings. *New* is an adjective that describes the sweater, and *knew* is the past tense of the verb *to know*. To read more about adjectives, verbs, and other parts of speech see Chapter 12.



Video **8.3.1**

Commonly Misused & Confused Words -- Part 1. **Authored by:** Vocabulary TV. **License:** *All Rights Reserved.* **License Terms:** Standard YouTube License.

Recognizing Commonly Confused Words

New and *knew* are just two of the words that can be confusing because of their similarities. Familiarize yourself with the following list of commonly confused words. Recognizing these words in your own writing and in other pieces of writing can help you choose the correct word.

Commonly Confused Words

A, An, And

- *A* (article). Used before a word that begins with a consonant

  a key, **a** mouse, **a** screen

- *An* (article). Used before a word that begins with a vowel sound

  an airplane, **an** ocean, **an** igloo

- *And* (conjunction). Connects two or more words, phrases, or clauses together.

  peanut butter **and** jelly, pen **and** pencil, jump **and** shout

Accept, Except

- *Accept* (verb). Means to take or agree to something offered.

  They **accepted** our proposal for the conference.

- *Except* (conjunction). Means only or but.

  We could fly there **except** the tickets cost too much.

Affect, Effect

- *Affect* (verb). Means to create a change

  Hurricane winds **affect** the amount of rainfall.

- *Effect* (noun). Means an outcome or result

  The heavy rains will have an **effect** on the crop growth.

Are, Our

- My cousins **are** all tall and blonde.
- *Are* (linking verb). Use to create the right verb tense

We **are** thinking about going to the movies tonight.

- We will bring **our** cameras to take pictures.

By, Buy

- *By* (preposition). Means next to

  My glasses are **by** the bed.

- *Buy* (verb). Means to purchase

  I will **buy** new glasses after the doctor's appointment.

Capital, Capitol

- *Capital* (adjective). Means upper case or excellent

That is a **capital** idea!

Proper nouns begin with **capital** letters.

- *Capitol* (noun). The place where government is headquartered.

Sacramento is the **capitol** of California.

Its, It’s

- *Its* (pronoun). A form of *it* that shows possession

  The butterfly flapped **its** wings.

- **It’s** the most beautiful butterfly I have ever seen.

Know, No

- *Know* (verb). Means to understand or possess knowledge

  I **know** the male peacock sports the brilliant feathers.

- *No*. Used to make a negative

  I have **no** time to visit the zoo this weekend.

Lessen, Lesson

- *Lessen* (verb). Means to reduce

I will **lessen** the amount I spend on entertainment this month.

- *Lesson* (noun). Something that one is taught

The teacher taught the **lesson** about phonics to the kindergarteners.

Loose, Lose

- *Loose* (adjective). Describes something that is not tight or is detached

  Without a belt, her pants are **loose** on her waist.

- *Lose* (verb). Means to forget, to give up, or to fail to earn something

  She will **lose** even more weight after finishing the marathon training.

Of, Have

- I studied maps **of** the city to know where to rent a new apartment.
- *Have* (verb). Means to possess something

  I **have** many friends to help me move.

- *Have* (linking verb). Used to connect verbs

  I should **have** helped her with that heavy box.

Patience, Patients

- *Patience* (noun). To wait without complaining

The driver showed **patience** while following the slow truck in front of him.

- *Patients* (plural noun). More than one person at the doctor's office or in the hospital.

The **patients** did not have to wait to see the doctor.

Principal, Principle

- *Principal* (noun or adjective). The highest level position or the most important something.

The **principal** component of a cup of tea is water.

The **principal** of the high school hired a new vice principal.

- *Principle* (noun). A philosophical point or fundamental truth

She argued about the ethical **principle.**

Quite, Quiet, Quit

- My work will require **quite** a lot of concentration.

- *Quiet* (adjective). Means not loud

  I need a **quiet** room to complete the assignments.

- *Quit* (verb). Means to stop or to end

  I will **quit** when I am hungry for dinner.

Right, Write

- *Right* (adjective). Means proper or correct

  When bowling, she practices the **right** form.

- *Right* (adjective). Also means the opposite of left

  The ball curved to the **right** and hit the last pin.

- *Write* (verb). Means to communicate on paper

  After the team members bowl, I will **write** down their scores.

Sea, See

- *Sea* (noun). A body of water slightly smaller than an ocean; a portion of an ocean that is partly surrounded by land

They set sail from the Adriatic **Sea.**

- See (verb). To use the sense of the eyes

I **see** all the flowers in the garden!

Set, Sit

- *Set* (verb). Means to put an item down

  She **set** the mug on the saucer.

- *Set* (noun). Means a group of similar objects

  All the mugs and saucers belonged in a **set**.

- *Sit* (verb). Means to lower oneself down on a chair or another place

  I'll **sit** on the sofa while he brews the tea.

Suppose, Supposed

- *Suppose* (verb). Means to think or to consider

  I **suppose** I will bake the bread, because no one else has the recipe.

- *Suppose* (verb). Means to suggest

  Suppose we all split the cost of the dinner.

- *Supposed* (verb). The past tense form of the verb suppose, meaning required or allowed

  She was **supposed** to create the menu.

Than, Then

- *Than* (conjunction). Used to connect two or more items when comparing

  Registered nurses require less schooling **than** doctors.

- *Then* (adverb). Means next or at a specific time

  Doctors first complete medical school and **then** obtain a residency.

Their, They're, There

- *Their* (pronoun). A form of *they* that shows possession

  The dog walker feeds **their** dogs everyday at two o'clock.

- **They’re** the sweetest dogs in the neighborhood.
- *There* (adverb). Indicates a particular place

  The dogs’ bowls are over **there**, next to the pantry.

- *There* (pronoun). Indicates the presence of something

  There are more treats if the dogs behave.

Though, Tho

- *Tho* (not a word). This is shorthand but is not really a word.
- *Though* (subordinating conjuntion). Joins a less important idea to a more important idea

Though many people may disagree, I get excited before finals week.

Threw, Through

Till, Until

- *Till* (verb). Means to prepare soil for planting

The farmer **tilled** the soil before planting lettuce seed.

- *Until* (subordinating conjunction). Joins a clause that talks about something that happens before a certain time.

We can't go on vacation **until** we have turned in our work.

To, Two, Too

- *To* (preposition). Indicates movement

  Let’s go **to** the circus.

- *To* A word that completes an infinitive verb

  to play, **to** ride, **to** watch.

- *Two* is the number after one. It describes how many.

  Two clowns squirted the elephants with water.

- The tents were **too** loud, and we left.

Use, Used

- *Use* (verb). Means to apply for some purpose

  We **use** a weed whacker to trim the hedges.

- He **used** the lawnmower last night before it rained.
- *Used to*. Indicates something done in the past but not in the present

  He **used to** hire a team to landscape, but now he landscapes alone.

Vain, Vein

- *Vain* (adjective, noun compliment). Conceited, stuck on one's self.

The vain people couldn't stop admiring themselves in the mirror.

- *Vein* (noun). A cavity in the body through which blood flows that is smaller than an artery by larger than a capillary.

The nurse had to find a vein in my arm in order to draw some blood.

- *Vein* (noun). A metaphoric usage meaning "along those lines."

I will continue in that vein when I take over the acting role.

Who’s, Whose

- **Who’s** the new student? **Who’s** met him?
- *Whose* (pronoun). A form of *who* that shows possession

Whose schedule allows them to take the new student on a campus tour?

Your, You're

- *Your* (pronoun). A form of *you* that shows possession

  Your book bag is unzipped.

- **You're** the girl with the unzipped book bag.

Tip: If you know you tend to confuse certain words, search for those words (the way you normally spell them) using the "find" feature in your word processing program. Then check to see if you have used and spelled that word correctly in the context you have written.

The English language contains so many words; no one can say for certain how many words exist. In fact, many words in English are borrowed from other languages. Many words have multiple meanings and forms, further expanding the immeasurable number of English words. Although the list of commonly confused words serves as a helpful guide, even these words may have more meanings than shown here. When in doubt, consult an expert: the dictionary!

? Exercise 1

Complete the following sentences by selecting the correct word.

1. My little cousin turns _____(to, too, two) years old tomorrow.
2. The next-door neighbor's dog is _____(quite, quiet, quit) loud. He barks constantly throughout the night.
3. _____(Your, You're) mother called this morning to talk about the party.
4. I would rather eat a slice of chocolate cake _____(than, then) eat a chocolate muffin.
5. Before the meeting, he drank a cup of coffee and _____(than, then) brushed his teeth.
6. Do you have any _____(loose, lose) change to pay the parking meter?
7. Father must _____(have, of) left his briefcase at the office.
8. Before playing ice hockey, I was _____(suppose, supposed) to read the contract, but I only skimmed it and signed my name quickly, which may _____(affect, effect) my understanding of the rules.
9. Tonight she will _____(set, sit) down and _____(right, write) a cover letter to accompany her résumé and job application.
10. It must be fall, because the leaves _____(are, our) changing, and _____(it's, its) getting darker earlier.

? Exercise 2

Complete the following sentences by filling in the blank line with the correct homynym or frequently misspelled words.

1. Kevin asked me a serious question and _____ (than/then) interrupted me when I attempted to answer.

2. A hot compress will _____ (lessen, lesson) the pain of muscle cramps.

3. Ashley was not a graceful _____ (looser, loser) because she knocked her chair over and stormed off the basketball court.

4. (Accept, Except) _____ for A. J., we all had our tickets to the play.

5. I am _____ (threw, through) with this magazine, so you can read it if you like.

6. I don't care _____ (who's, whose) coming to the party and _____ (who's, whose) not.

7. Crystal could _____ (sea, see) the soaring hawk through her binoculars.

8. The _____ (principal, principle) gave a long-winded speech about peer pressure.

9. Dr. Fox nearly lost her _____(patience, patients) with one of her _____ (patience, patients).

When writing, you need to choose the correct word according to its spelling and meaning in the context. Not only does selecting the correct word improve your vocabulary and your writing, but it also makes a good impression on your readers. It also helps reduce confusion and improve clarity. The following strategies can help you avoid misusing confusing words.

1. **Use a dictionary.** Keep a dictionary at your desk while you write. Look up words when you are uncertain of their meanings or spellings. **Do not rely on spell check** for commonly confused words. These are all words, and because word processing programs don't really understand meaning, they won't catch words that are correctly spelled but are used incorrectly.
2. **Keep a list of words you commonly confuse.** Be aware of the words that often confuse you. When you notice a pattern of confusing words, keep a list nearby, and consult the list as you write. Check the list again before you submit an assignment to your instructor.
3. **Study the list of commonly confused words.** You may not yet know which words confuse you, but before you sit down to write, study the words on the list. Prepare your mind for working with words by reviewing the commonly confused words identified in this chapter.

✔ Writing at Work 8.3.1

All employers value effective communication. From an application to an interview to the first month on the job, employers pay attention to your vocabulary. You do not need a large vocabulary to succeed, but you do need to be able to express yourself clearly and avoid commonly misused words.

When giving an important presentation on the effect of inflation on profit margins, you must know the difference between *effect* and *affect* and choose the correct word. When writing an e-mail to confirm deliveries, you must know if the shipment will arrive in *to*days, *too* days, or *two* days. Confusion may arise if you choose the wrong word.

Consistently using the proper words will improve your communication and make a positive impression on your manager and colleagues.

? Exercise 3

The following paragraph contains eleven errors. Find each misused word and correct it by adding or changing a word to the proper word.

The original United States Declaration of Independence sets in a case at the Rotunda for the Charters of Freedom as part of the National Archives in Washington, DC. Since 1952, over one million visitors each year of passed through the Rotunda too snap a photograph to capture they’re experience. Although signs state, “No Flash Photography,” forgetful tourists leave the flash on, an a bright light flickers for just a millisecond. This millisecond of light may not seem like enough to effect the precious document, but supposed how much light could be generated when all those milliseconds are added up. According to the National Archives administrators, its enough to significantly damage the historic document. So, now, the signs display quit a different message: “No Photography.” Visitors continue to travel to see the Declaration that began are country, but know longer can personal pictures serve as mementos. The administrators’ compromise, they say, is a visit to the gift shop for a preprinted photograph.

Once you have found the errors, compare what you found with a classmate. If you disagree about any changes, bring up the question in class.

? Exercise 4

Proofread the following paragraph and correct any commonly confused or misspelled words.

Grunge, or the Seattle sound, is a type of rock music that became quiet popular in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It began in Seattle, Washington. Grunge musicians rejected the dramatic an expensive stage productions that were trendy at the time. There music was striped down with an emphasis on distorted electric guitars. Grunge musicians did not ware makeup or sport extravagent hairstyles like many of the day’s rock musicians and bands. Many grunge musicians would by they’re clothes from secondhand stores. The lyrics too grunge songs were also quit different compared two what was populer

at the time. Grunge lyrics are charecterized by dark or socially conscience themes. Grunge music is still admired today buy music lovers of all ages.

Writing Application

Review the latest assignment you completed for school or for work. Does it contain any commonly confused words? Circle each example and use the circled words to begin your own checklist of commonly confused words. Continue to add to your checklist each time you complete an assignment and find a misused word.

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8.4: Word Choice

Effective writing involves making conscious choices with words. When you prepare to sit down to write your first draft, you likely have already completed some free writing exercises, chosen your topic, developed your thesis statement, written an outline, and even selected your sources. When it is time to write your first draft, start to consider which words to use to best convey your ideas to the reader.

Some writers are picky about word choice as they start drafting. They may practice some specific strategies, such as using a dictionary and thesaurus, using words and phrases with proper connotations, and avoiding slang, clichés, and overly general words. The danger of being picky about your words as you draft (especially during your first draft) is that you may end up forgetting what you want to write while you search for that perfect word. This can cripple your writing process and create writer's block. One way to make sure that -- at some point in your writing process -- that you do choose the exact word that you mean is to place question marks "?" by the word you can't think of or that you think you might want to change, and then continue to draft. Once you are ready to edit your work at the sentence level (all of your content development and organization are complete) then you can search for question marks to find the places where you wanted to consider the word choice more carefully. Also, you may receive feedback from readers about word choice they find confusing or that you may want to re-consider.

Use the following strategies to help you with your word choice. Once you understand these tricks of the trade, you can move ahead confidently in writing your assignment. Remember, the skill and accuracy of your word choice is a major factor in developing your writing style. Precise selection of your words will help you be more clearly understood—in both writing and speaking.

Using a Dictionary and Thesaurus

Even professional writers need help with the meanings, spellings, pronunciations, and uses of particular words. In fact, they rely on dictionaries and thesauruses to help them write better. No one knows every word in the English language and their multiple uses and meanings, so all writers, from novices to professionals, can benefit from the use of dictionaries and thesauruses.

Most dictionaries provide the following information:

- **Spelling.** How the word and its different forms are spelled.
- **Pronunciation.** How to say the word.
- **Part of speech.** The function of the word.
- **Definition.** The meaning of the word.
- **Synonyms.** Words that have similar meanings.
- **Etymology.** The history of the word.

Look at the following sample dictionary entry and see which of the preceding information you can identify:

Definition

myth, mith, *n.* [Gr. *mythos*, a word, a fable, a legend.] A fable or legend embodying the convictions of a people as to their gods or other divine beings, their own beginnings and early history and the heroes connected with it, or the origin of the world; any invented story; something or someone having no existence in fact.—**myth • ic**, **myth • i • cal**

Like a dictionary, a thesaurus is another indispensable writing tool. A thesaurus gives you a list of synonyms, words that have the same (or very close to the same) meaning as another word. It also lists antonyms, words with the opposite meaning of the word. A thesaurus will help you when you are looking for the perfect word with just the right meaning to convey your ideas. It will also help you learn more words and use the ones you already know more correctly.

Definition

precocious *adj*, *She's such a precocious little girl!*: uncommonly smart, mature, advanced, smart, bright, brilliant, gifted, quick, clever, apt.

Ant. slow, backward, stupid.

? Exercise 1

Choose the correct synonym.

a. lenient _____ (relaxed, callous)

b. abandon _____ (vacate, deceive)

c. berate _____ (criticize, encourage)

d. experienced _____ (callow, matured)

e. spiteful _____ (malevolent, mellow)

f. tame _____ (subdued, wild)

g. tasty _____ (savory, bland)

h. banal _____ (common, interesting)

i. contradict _____ (deny, revolt)

j. vain _____ (boastful, simple)

Using Proper Connotations

A denotation is the dictionary definition of a word. A connotation, on the other hand, is the emotional or cultural meaning attached to a word. The connotation of a word can be positive, negative, or neutral. Keep in mind the connotative meaning when choosing a word. Using a thesaurus can be difficult sometimes if one doesn't know the connotations of a word because you risk using a word in the wrong way. If you aren't sure whether you are using a word with the right connotation, look up the word in sentences on the internet and see how its used in context. You can also ask your instructor or a tutor but if you are not sure about the connotation of a word, do a little research to figure it out.

The three following words (scrawny, skinny, and lean) all describe someone who weighs less than average, but they all have different connotations.

Scrawny

- **Denotation:** Exceptionally thin and slight or meager in body or size.
- **Word used in a sentence:** Although he was a premature baby and a **scrawny** child, Martin has developed into a strong man.
- **Connotation:** (Negative) In this sentence the word *scrawny* may have a negative connotation in the readers' minds. They might find it to mean a weakness or a personal flaw; however, the word fits into the sentence appropriately.

Skinny

- **Denotation:** Lacking sufficient flesh or meat, very thin or narrow.
- **Word used in a sentence: Skinny** jeans have become very fashionable in the past couple of years.
- **Connotation:** (Neutral) Based on cultural and personal impressions of what it means to be skinny, the reader may have positive or negative connotations of the word *skinny*.

Lean

- **Denotation:** Lacking or deficient in flesh; containing little or no fat.
- **Word used in a sentence:** My brother has a **lean** figure whereas I have a more muscular build.
- **Connotation:** (Neutral) In this sentence, *lean* has a neutral connotation. It does not call to mind an overly skinny person like the word *scrawny*, nor does imply the positive cultural impressions of the word *skinny*. It is merely a neutral descriptive word.

Notice that all the words have a very similar denotation; however, the connotations of each word differ. This video explains it more.



Video 8.4.1

Word Choice. **Authored by:** Prof Myhen. **License:** *All Rights Reserved.* **License Terms:** Standard YouTube License.

Exercise 2

In each of the following word sets, you will find words with similar denotations. Identify the words' connotations as positive, negative, or neutral by writing the word in the appropriate box. Copy the chart onto your own piece of paper.

1. curious, nosy, interested
2. lazy, relaxed, slow
3. courageous, foolhardy, assured
4. new, newfangled, modern
5. mansion, shack, residence
6. spinster, unmarried woman, career woman
7. giggle, laugh, cackle
8. boring, routine, prosaic
9. noted, notorious, famous
10. assertive, confident, pushy

Positive	Negative	Neutral

Avoiding Slang

Hey guys, let' learn about slang and other cool stuff like that! It will be awesome, trust me. This section is off the hook!

What do you notice about the previous paragraph? You might notice that the language sounds informal, or casual, like someone might talk with a friend or family member, but with the purpose of this chapter, that seems odd, doesn't it? The paragraph also uses a lot of slang. Slang is a type of language that is informal and playful. It often changes over time. The slang of the past is different than the slang of today, but some slang has carried over into the present. Slang also varies by region and culture. There are literally thousands of slang words and expressions. The following table explains just a few of the common ones.

Slang Expressions	
Slang Word or Phrase	***Meaning***
check it out, check this out	look at, watch, examine
chocoholic, workaholic, shopaholic	a person who loves, or is addicted to chocolate, work, or shopping
stuff	things
have some tea	gossip
crack up	to laugh uncontrollably
veg, kick it	relax and do nothing
dude, man	person, man
cool, hip, bad	good, fashionable
gross, nasty	disgusting
pig out	overeat
screw up	make a bad mistake
awesome	great, terrific
the shit	the best

Words are the basis of how a reader or listener judges you, the writer and speaker. When you write an academic paper or speak in a business interview, you want to be sure to choose your words carefully. In our casual, everyday talk, we often use a lot of "ums,"

"likes," "yeahs," and so on. This everyday language is not appropriate for formal contexts, such as academic papers and business interviews. You should switch between different ways of speaking and writing depending on whether the context if formal or informal. Ultimately, this is part of the message that is a result of the rhetorical context in which you are writing or speaking (see "The Art of Rhetoric").

Slang describes informal words that are considered nonstandard English. Slang often changes with passing fads and may be used by or familiar to only a specific group of people. Most people use slang when they speak and in personal correspondences, such as e-mails, text messages, and instant messages. Slang is appropriate between friends in an informal context but should be avoided in formal academic writing. It is also not appropriate to use profanity in academic writing, unless -- of course -- you are quoting a profane word from an assigned reading. However, when writing expository writing, another word will almost always fulfill the meaning and emphasis that a profane word may provide in other contexts.

✔ Writing at Work 8.4.1

Frequent exposure to media and popular culture desensitizes many of us to slang. In certain situations, using slang at work may not be problematic, but keep in mind that words can have a powerful effect. Slang in professional e-mails or during meetings may convey the wrong message or even mistakenly offend someone.

? Exercise 3

Edit the following paragraph by replacing the slang words and phrases with more formal language. Rewrite the paragraph on your own sheet of paper.

I felt like such an airhead when I got up to give my speech. As I walked toward the podium, I banged my knee on a chair. Man, I felt like such a klutz. On top of that, I kept saying “like” and “um,” and I could not stop fidgeting. I was so stressed out about being up there. I feel like I’ve been practicing this speech 24/7, and I still bombed. It was ten minutes of me going off about how we sometimes have to do things we don’t enjoy doing. Wow, did I ever prove my point. My speech was so bad I’m surprised that people didn’t boo. My teacher said not to sweat it, though. Everyone gets nervous his or her first time speaking in public, and she said, with time, I would become a whiz at this speech giving stuff. I wonder if I have the guts to do it again.

Collaboration

Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

? Exercise 4

Edit the business email by replacing any slang words with more formal language.

Dear Ms. O'Connor:

I am writing to follow up on my interview from last week. First of all, it was awesome to meet you. You are a really cool lady. I believe I would be a pro at all the stuff you mentioned that would be required of me in this job. I am not a workaholic, but I do work hard and "take care of business." Haha. Please contact e if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

M. Ernest Anderson

Avoiding Clichés

Clichés are descriptive expressions that have lost their effectiveness because they are overused. Writing that uses clichés often suffers from a lack of originality and insight. Avoiding clichés in formal writing will help you write in original and fresh ways.

- **Clichéd:** Whenever my brother and I get into an argument, he always says something that makes my **blood boil**.
- **Plain:** Whenever my brother and I get into an argument, he always says something that makes me really angry.
- **Original:** Whenever my brother and I get into an argument, he always says something that makes me want to go to the gym and punch the bag for a few hours.

Tip

Think about all the cliché phrases that you hear in popular music or in everyday conversation. What would happen if these clichés were transformed into something unique?

Exercise 5

On your own sheet of paper, revise the following sentences by replacing the clichés with fresh, original descriptions.

1. She is writing a memoir in which she will air her family's dirty laundry.
2. Fran had an ax to grind with Benny, and she planned to confront him that night at the party.
3. Mr. Muller was at his wit's end with the rowdy class of seventh graders.
4. The bottom line is that Greg was fired because he missed too many days of work.
5. Sometimes it is hard to make ends meet with just one paycheck.
6. My brain is fried from pulling an all-nighter.
7. Maria left the dishes in the sink all week to give Jeff a taste of his own medicine.
8. While they were at the carnival Janice exclaimed, "Time sure does fly when you are having fun!"
9. Jeremy became tongue-tied after the interviewer asked him where he saw himself in five years.
10. Jordan was dressed to the nines that night.

Idioms

Idioms are expressions that have a meaning different from the dictionary definition of the individual words in the expression. Because English contains many idioms, newer English speakers have difficulties making logical sense of idioms and idiomatic expressions. The more you are exposed to English, however, the more idioms you will come to understand. Until then, memorizing the more common idioms may be of some help.

Idioms	
Idiom	***Definition***
A blessing in disguise	A good thing you do not recognize as "good" at first
A piece of cake	Easy to do
Better late than never	It is better to do something late than not at all
Get over it	Recover from something (a perceived insult)
I have no idea	I don't know
Not a chance	It will definitely not happen
On pins and needles	Very nervous about something that is or may be happening
On top of the world	Feeling great
Pulling your leg	Making a joke by tricking you
The sky is the limit	The possibilities are endless

What if you come across an idiom you do not understand? Context clues that can help you. Context clues are words or phrases around the unknown word or phrase that may help you decipher the meaning.

1. **Definition or explanation clue.** An idiom ay be explained immediately after its use.

- **Sentence:** I felt like I was sitting on *pins and needles*, **I was so nervous.**

2. **Restatement or synonym clues.** An idiom may be simplified or restated.

- **Sentence:** The young girl felt as though she had been *sent to the dog house* when her mother **punished her** for fighting in school.

3. **Contrast or antonym clues.** An idiom may be clarified by a contrasting phrase or antonym that is near it.

- **Sentence:** Chynna thought the 5k race would be a *piece of cake*, **but it turned out to be very difficult.**

Pay attention tot he signal word *but*, which tells the reader that an opposite thought or concept is occuring.

Using Specific Words

Specific words and images make your writing more interesting to read. Whenever possible, avoid overly general words in your writing; instead, try to replace general language with particular nouns, verbs, and modifiers that convey details and that bring yours words to life. Add words that provide color, texture, sound, and even smell to your writing.

- **General:** My new puppy is cute.
- **Specific:** My new puppy is a ball of white fuzz with the biggest black eyes I have ever seen.

- **General:** My teacher told us that plagiarism is bad.
- **Specific:** My teacher, Ms. Atwater, explained how plagiarism is illegal and unethical.

? Exercise 6

Revise the following sentences by replacing the overly general words with more precise and attractive language. Write the new sentences on your own sheet of paper.

1. Reilly got into her car and drove off.
2. I would like to travel to outer space because it would be amazing.
3. Jane came home after a bad day at the office.
4. I thought Milo’s essay was fascinating.
5. The dog walked up the street.
6. The coal miners were tired after a long day.
7. The tropical fish are pretty.
8. I sweat a lot after running.
9. The goalie blocked the shot.
10. I enjoyed my Mexican meal.

Choose Strong, Descriptive Verbs

When used as main verbs, the following words are weak and almost meaningless: have, do, make, went/gone, and the "to be" verbs. Some of these verbs are just fine as linking verbs, but not as main verbs. Choose a more descriptive verb to replace these weak, almost meaningless verbs. This video will explain.



Video **8.4.1**

Strong Verbs. **Authored by:** Curriculum Pathways. **License:** *All Rights Reserved.* **License Terms:** Standard YouTube License.

Exercise 7

In this exercise, replace the weak verbs with stronger, more descriptive verbs. You may need to replace more than one weak verb in a sentence.

1. Bethany's mother made her do her homework before Bethany could go out to play.
2. Michael went to play video games with his buddy, Pat, at Pat's house.
3. Chris and Sam went to prom and then hung out with friends afterward. They didn't get home until 3 a.m.!
4. Donna was doing her best, but it was sometimes hard to keep up and balance work and school.
5. The three-year-old was being childish when throwing her sibling's toy across the rooom.

Exercise 8

Rewrite the following personal essay by replacing the slang, clichés, and overly general language with stronger, more precise language.

My biggest regret happened in high school. I had always felt like a fish out of water, so during my sophomore year I was determined to fit in with the cool people. Man, was that an uphill battle. I don't even know why I tried, but hindsight is 20/20 I guess. The first thing I did was change the way I dressed. I went from wearing clothes I was comfortable in to wearing stuff that was so not me. Then I started wearing a ton of makeup, and my brother was all like, "What happened to your face?" Not only did my looks change, my personality changed a lot too. I started to act all stuck up and bossy with my friends, and they didn't know how to respond to this person that used to be me. Luckily, this phase didn't last more than a couple of months. I decided it was more fun to be me than to try to be someone else. I guess you can't fit a square peg in a round hole after all.

Collaboration

Compare your changes with a classmate.

Exercise 9

Review a piece of writing that you have completed for school. Circle any sentences with slang, clichés, or overly general words and rewrite them using stronger language.

Synonyms

Synonyms are words that have the same, or almost the same, meaning as another word. You can say an "easy task" or a "simple task" because *easy* and *simple* are synonyms. You can say Hong Kong is a "large city" or a "metropolis" because *city* and *metropolis* are synonyms.

However, it is important to remember that not all pairs of words in the English language are so easily interchangeable. The slight but important differences in meaning between synonyms can make a big difference in your writing. For example, the words *boring*

and *insipid* may have similar meanings, but the subtle differences between the two will affect the message your writing conveys. The word *insipid* evokes a scholarly and perhaps more pretentious message than *boring*.

The English language is full of pairs of words that have subtle distinctions between them. All writers, professionals and beginners alike, face the challenge of choosing the most appropriate synonym to best convey their ideas. When you pay particular attention to synonyms in your writing, it comes across to your reader. The sentences become much more clear and rich in meaning.

Writing at Work

Any writing you do at work involves a careful choice of words. For example, if you are writing an e-mail to your employer regarding your earnings, you can use the word *pay*, *salary*, or hourly *wage*. There are also other synonyms to choose from. Just keep in mind that the word you choose will have an effect on the reader, so you want to choose wisely to get the desired effect.

Exercise 10

On your own sheet of paper, write a sentence with each of the following words that illustrates the specific meaning of each synonym.

1. leave, abandon
2. mad, insane
3. outside, exterior
4. poor, destitute
5. quiet, peaceful
6. riot, revolt
7. rude, impolite
8. talk, conversation
9. hug, embrace
10. home, residence

Collaboration

Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

Antonyms

Antonyms are words that have the opposite meaning of a given word. The study of antonyms will not only help you choose the most appropriate word as you write; it will also sharpen your overall sense of language. Table 4.3 “Common Antonyms” lists common words and their antonyms.

Table 4.3 - Common Antonyms

Word	Antonym		Word	Antonym
absence	presence		frequent	seldom
accept	refuse		harmful	harmless
accurate	inaccurate		horizontal	vertical
advantage	disadvantage		imitation	genuine
ancient	modern		inhabited	uninhabited
abundant	scarce		inferior	superior
artificial	natural		intentional	accidental
attractive	repulsive		justice	injustice
borrow	lend		knowledge	ignorance
bravery	cowardice		landlord	tenant
create	destroy, demolish		likely	unlikely
bold	timid, meek		minority	majority
capable	incapable		miser	spendthrift
combine	separate		obedient	disobedient
conceal	reveal		optimist	pessimist
common	rare		permanent	temporary
decrease	increase		plentiful	scarce
definite	indefinite		private	public
despair	hope		prudent	imprudent
discourage	encourage		qualified	unqualified
employer	employee		satisfactory	unsatisfactory
expand	contract		tame	wild
forget	remember		vacant	occupied

Tip

Learning antonyms is an effective way to increase your vocabulary. Memorizing words in combination with or in relation to other words often helps us retain them.

Exercise 11

Correct the following sentences by replacing the underlined words with an antonym. Write the antonym on your own sheet of paper.

1. The pilot who landed the plane was a coward because no one was injured.
2. Even though the botany lecture was two hours long, Gerard found it incredibly dull.
3. My mother says it is impolite to say thank you like you really mean it.
4. Although I have learned a lot of information through textbooks, it is life experience that has given me ignorance.
5. When our instructor said the final paper was compulsory, it was music to my ears!

6. My only virtues are coffee, video games, and really loud music.
7. Elvin was so bold when he walked in the classroom that he sat in the back row and did not participate.
8. Maria thinks elephants who live in freedom have a sad look in their eyes.
9. The teacher filled her students' minds with gloomy thoughts about their futures.
10. The guest attended to every one of our needs.

Contributors

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8.5: Editing Focus- Verb Tense Consistency

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Apply various editing strategies to a draft in progress.
- Implement consistent use of verbs in a draft in progress.

Auditory Learning Style Icon

When you edit, you make changes at the sentence level: phrasing, grammar, mechanics, and wording. Read your paper aloud to check for needed editing. Alternately, you could have your device read the paper to you if it has that feature. As you read or listen, if you notice that something does not sound quite right, your draft probably needs editing at that point. Additionally, if your electronic draft shows blue underlining, check whether you should accept the changes suggested by your software. Once you have thoroughly reviewed each sentence in your draft, read aloud or listen to the entire piece again to see how it flows, making any additional needed changes as you go along.

Englihs Varieties and Verbs

Lanaguage Lens Icon

This section focuses on English verb tense consistency when editing. Every English speaker converses in one or more forms of the language. In the past, people have referred to these forms as *dialects*. Today, linguists more commonly call them *English varieties*. Every **English variety** uses verbs, as do most languages. Verbs are the words that express the action in a sentence. Their most distinguishing feature is that they change according to tense—that is, they take on different forms to express action that happened in the past, happens in the present, or will happen in the future.

As you edit your profile, you will need to match the English variety you use to the expectations of your audience. If your instructor is your only reader, you will probably need to use an English variety appropriate for an academic setting. If the instructor has asked you to write a profile to appeal to another audience, think about how the English variety you choose might connect better with that audience.

In every English variety, the form of the verb changes to indicate whether something is happening currently or has happened already. These changes that indicate time differences are called **verb tenses**. If an action or description occurs now or occurs regularly, in the present time, writers use the **present tense**. Conversely, if the action occurred in the past and no longer occurs, writers use the **past tense**.

Present tense: She walks to class.
Past tense: She walked to class yesterday.

In simple sentences such as these, choosing a verb tense is fairly straightforward. The author decides when to place the event in time and chooses the corresponding verb form. Although people easily use different verb tenses every day, getting them right in writing can be tricky at times. Writers may accidentally change from past to present tense within a text—or even within the same sentence—for no particular reason. Consider these examples:

Sentence 1: I lost a glove on my walk, but I find it later.
Sentence 2: I lost a glove on my walk, but I found it later.

In Sentence 1, the verb *lost* places the action in the past; the present-tense verb *find* is not consistent with that pattern. The revision in Sentence 2 places all of the action in the same time frame: the past. Because changing the tense for no reason can confuse the audience, be sure to use the same verb tense throughout, whether events happen in the past or they happen in the present.

However, you *do* need to change tenses to indicate a difference in time, and such differences occur often. This situation is why choosing verb tenses in writing can sometimes pose challenges for writers. If you are using the present tense in writing but you

want to tell about something that happened in the past, you need to change tenses to make that time difference clear. Look at these sentences:

Sentence 1: The artist **uses** bright colors in her paintings. She **says** that when she **is** a child, these colors **attract** her.
Sentence 2: The artist **uses** bright colors in her paintings. She **says** that when she **was** a child, these colors **attracted** her.

The writer is discussing the artist in the present tense, and the artist is speaking in the present tense. However, she is telling about her childhood, which took place in the past. Therefore, she and the writer use both past and present tense to make the time distinction clear. To put all events in the present tense would not make sense in such cases. Look at the verb tense consistency revisions Houston Byrd made to his essay in Focusing on the Angle of Your Subject. When he tells about his trip to the store, describes it, and refers to his interview with the owner, he generally uses—or has revised to use—the past tense, whereas most of the essay is written in the present tense.

Proofreading

Another type of editing is proofreading. When you proofread, you check for small details, such as typing mistakes, that need fixing. If your instructor has asked you to follow a given style guide, such as MLA or APA, make sure your draft is formatted according to those guidelines. If any words are underlined in red on your electronic document (indicating a misspelling), address those issues as you complete your draft. Lastly, read each sentence individually, starting at the bottom of the draft, to make sure your spelling and punctuation meet the requirements for the genre and audience.

You may feel that you are not yet a strong enough writer to edit or proofread on your own. If so, take advantage of your instructor's office hours or your college's writing center for support in developing your work.

Practice with Verb Tense Consistency

Depending on your writing context, you may be asked to write mainly in either the past or the present tense. For example, MLA style asks writers to refer to textual materials in the present tense, even though they have already been written.

With a peer partner, practice choosing the most effective verb forms in the following sentences. Complete the exercise twice—once for a text written mainly in the present tense, and once again for a text written mainly in past tense. Because events happen at different times, you may have a combination of tenses.

1. Carla D. Hayden (writes, wrote) _____ about John Lewis's courageous stance against injustice when he (led, leads) the Selma protests.
2. People throughout the country (admire, admired) _____ John Lewis and (mourn, mourned) _____ his death.
3. In 1995, Hayden (receives, received) _____ the Librarian of the Year Award, and in 2016, she (is, was) _____ listed by Fortune magazine as one of the world's 50 greatest leaders.

To check your draft for verb tense issues, read your profile aloud to a peer partner. If you notice that some verbs are in the past tense and some are in the present, make them all one consistent tense throughout the text—*unless* they indicate a change in time, which they often do. Making your verb tenses consistent will help clarify your ideas for readers.

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8.6: Sentence Focus

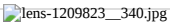


Figure: Image from Pixabay

Sentence Focus

Sentence focus means that the grammatical subject of your sentence is the same as the semantic subject. In other words, the meaning (semantics) subject matches the grammar. Sentences that aren't focused can be confusing because it's not clear who is doing what, and they tend to be overly wordy. If you need a refresher about how to identify the subject(s) and verb(s) in a sentence, see: "Verbs" and "Sentence Structure."

Here is an example of an overly wordy, unfocused sentence:

- In Smith's writing, there are many indications of their misunderstanding of natural selection.

A more focused version of this sentence, which says the same thing could read:

- Smith's argument indicates their misunderstanding of natural selection.

Notice: The focused sentence has eight words instead of thirteen, but the revision hasn't eliminated any meaning! The prepositional phrase didn't add anything to the point, but we need to keep (and begin with) the subject, Smith's argument. Therefore, we can omit "in" and "an." "There are" can be removed because we aren't talking about existence here.

You can avoid writing unfocused sentences by using active voice, using concrete subjects, using strong verbs, and keeping your subjects toward the beginning of the sentence and before the verb. Avoiding "there is/there are" can help keep sentences focused (unless you are writing about the existence of something). This is also true of "it is."

Use Active Voice

Use active voice when writing. However, passive voice can be acceptable when you want to keep the focus on what was done and not who did it. However, this should not be at the expense of clarity. In science writing, passive voice is generally expected in the methods section of research papers and in lab reports because the focus is on what's being done, not who is doing it. In other sections of research papers and most writing, however, use active voice if possible.

Passive voice occurs when the writer places the grammatical object in the subject position in a sentence. Therefore, the actual subject of the sentence is in the object position (at the end) or missing. In passive voice, the verb will be in past participle ("to be" + "ed" verb) form. Looking for this verb form is one of the easiest ways to tell if a sentence is in passive voice. In the following example, the subject (if there is one) is in bold and the past participle verb is underlined.

Examples: The frog *was dissected* by the **student**.

A solution *was added* to the beaker. (By whom?)

To identify passive voice, look for verbs that use a form of the "to be" ("was", "is" "being,") and a past tense verb (ends in "ed") after it. Then ask yourself whether this is an acceptable use of the passive.

Tip: The difference between past perfect tense and a past participle is that the subject is at the end of the sentence or nonexistent with a past participle. The subject will still be before the verb with the past perfect tense.

Writing at Work

At work, we commonly must ask people to do things, or we might need to make a recommendation. Sometimes, we may feel as though our tone is too direct if we use the active voice. In some work situations, the passive voice may seem more polite, and it may be acceptable to use the passive voice in some cases. However, even at work, most writing should be in active voice. Active voice implies responsibility and transparency; conversely, if passive voice is used when it isn't needed, it can appear that you are trying to hide something. Such situations have been captured by the phrase "mistakes were made," implying that no one takes responsibility for those mistakes and that the writer or speaker is dishonest.

A direct tone and active voice is also valued in American business life. Business cultures in other parts of the world may differ in their expectations about this, so if you plan to work for companies outside of the U.S. or for international companies within the U.S., research the acceptable style for making requests at your workplace.

? Exercise 1

Identify which sentences are in passive voice in the following sentences. The first couple of sentences have clues. The rest do not.

1. Measurements **were performed** on the wood timbers by a construction worker.
2. They **were satisfied** with the outcome of the discussion.
3. Removal of the mitochondria was achieved by the scientist.
4. Two samples were obtained from each brain.
5. Our results showed that the dogs were protected by the vaccine.

? Exercise 2

In each of the following sentences and on a separate piece of paper, a) decide if the sentence is active or passive; b) decide whether the use of the passive is acceptable and why or why not; and c) rewrite the sentence in active voice if the passive voice is not acceptable.

1. Marijuana caused an increase in apetite and a reduction in pain.
2. Ozone continued to be depleted because of aerosol spray use.
3. A mistake was made.
4. Mouse testing proceeded for the Phase B trials.
5. Group and individual activities were participated in by the class.
6. Documents should be submitted online by July 10.

Collaboration

Compare what you did with a classmate. If your answers or changes don't agree, bring it up in class.

Avoid "There Is/There Are" and "It Is" Most of the Time

“There is” is not necessary unless you are writing about the existence of something. “There is” tends to cloud writing because it shoves the real subject of the sentence farther down into the sentence. Choose the actual topic as the subject of your sentence and eliminate “there is.” You may need to change the verb and possibly a relative pronoun as well because of the changes in sentence structure that "there is" creates. Begin your core clause with the subject you are writing about. In the example sentences, below, the core sentence is in brackets. In the unfocused examples, the grammatical subject is in bold and the semantic (meaning) subject is in red. In the focused sentences, since the grammatical and semantic subjects are one in the same, they are just bold.

Unfocused sentence: In Malaysia, [**there are** large numbers of women in computer science], which is not perceived as a "masculine" field.

Focused sentence: In Malaysia, [**large numbers of women are** in computer science], which is not perceived as a "masculine" field.

“It is” can be written better most of the time; the phrase tends to be empty filler.

Unfocused sentence: It is with the utmost care that [I craft my sentences].

Focused sentenced: [**I craft** my sentences] with the utmost care.

? Exercise 3 8.6.1

In the following sentences, decide if "there is," "there are," or "it is" are talking about existence or giving extra emphasis to something. If not, rewrite the sentence.

1. There are three measures, and they all point to the idea that we need to be concerned about climate change.
2. It is with great pleasure that I introduce our guest speaker!

3. It is a lovely day.

4. There is a god.

5. After going to see the band play, there were some shady characters outside, so I decided to hang around awhile inside.

The subject and an object of a preposition cannot be the same word

The subject of a sentence cannot also be the object of a prepositional phrase. This problem commonly occurs when students introduce sources in their writing. In the following incorrect examples, the subject of the sentence (in brackets) appears in an introductory prepositional phrase (in blue). The corrected examples follow. Notice that in most cases, the introductory prepositional phrase disappears. (For more explanation of a prepositional phrase and subjects, see "Prepositional Phrases" and "Word Order and Sentence Structure").

Incorrect: Therefore, with [the lack of qualified teachers] will only cause unqualified students in the future.

Correct: Therefore, [the lack] of qualified teachers will only cause unqualified students in the future.

Incorrect: According to [Romeo, laments] "Parting is such sweet sorrow."

Correct: [Romeo laments], "Parting is such sweet sorrow."

Correct: According to popular culture, [Romeo's statement, "Parting is such sweet sorry," is] still a popular line.

Notice that the last example still begins wit a prepositional phrase, but the object of the preposition, "popular culture" is different from the subject of the sentence, "Romeo's statement."

Tip: Do not double your subject by saying the subject and a pronoun that stands for the subject right after it.

Incorrect: Emily Dickinson, she wrote a lot of poems, most of which were not read until after she died.

Correct: Emily Dickinson wrote a lot of poems, most of which were not read until after she died.

? Exercise 4

For this exercise, rewrite any sentence in which the subject is doubled up or the subject also appears as the object of the preposition in a prepositional phrase.

1. By "dogginess" means the qualities of following directions and providing love.

2. According to Brandeis, she states that "the prevalence of male tress in the landscape contributes to peoples' allergy problems."

3. In the article claims that gun violence can be reduced if gun responsibility becomes part of the training.

4. According to Jones, said that whether someone will become violent in a given situation depends on a combination of nature and nurture.

5. In doing this demonstrates her self-centeredness.

6. My tortoiseshell cat, she responds to music by moving her tail at different tempos.

? Exercise 5

Fix the sentence focus in the following sentences using the strategies practices on this page. Ask yourself: Who or what does what (to whom or what)? Then, use concrete subjects and active verbs.

1. Also, there is a need for more current curricula, and also a need for more teachers.

2. If the education system is funded equally and provided with proper materials might just fix the gap.

3. Although the interplay among economic factors is important, it is often the availability of affordable childcare that determines whether a parent returns to the work force.

4. The boiling water is drained in the colander, the pasta shook dry, and the sauce drizzled on it.

5. People argue about whether there are ghosts.

6. Before my dog was washed, we went to the beach.

7. By disentangling words will create a more concise sentence.

8. After having her bath, there was a dog park she wanted to go to.

9. Sniffing everything, my dog she dawdles while she walks.

10. It is taking us forever to go a few blocks because there are fire hydrants to sniff and barking dogs to respond to, and at the end is pooped out.

Contributors

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8.7: Coordination and Subordination

Writers use three major methods of joining their ideas together in one sentence: coordination and subordination. Learning use coordination and subordination well is foundational to creating cohesion (or a smooth flow) in your writing, as well as to express how your ideas relate to each other logically.

Definitions

Coordination: Joining two related ideas of equal importance

Subordination: Joining two related ideas of unequal importance

Connecting sentences with coordinate or subordinate clauses creates more coherent paragraphs, and in turn, produces more effective writing. In this section, you will read excerpts from an essay by Noemi, who drafted an essay about wine production, as she revises her writing for coordination and subordination. Read this excerpt from Noemi's essay.

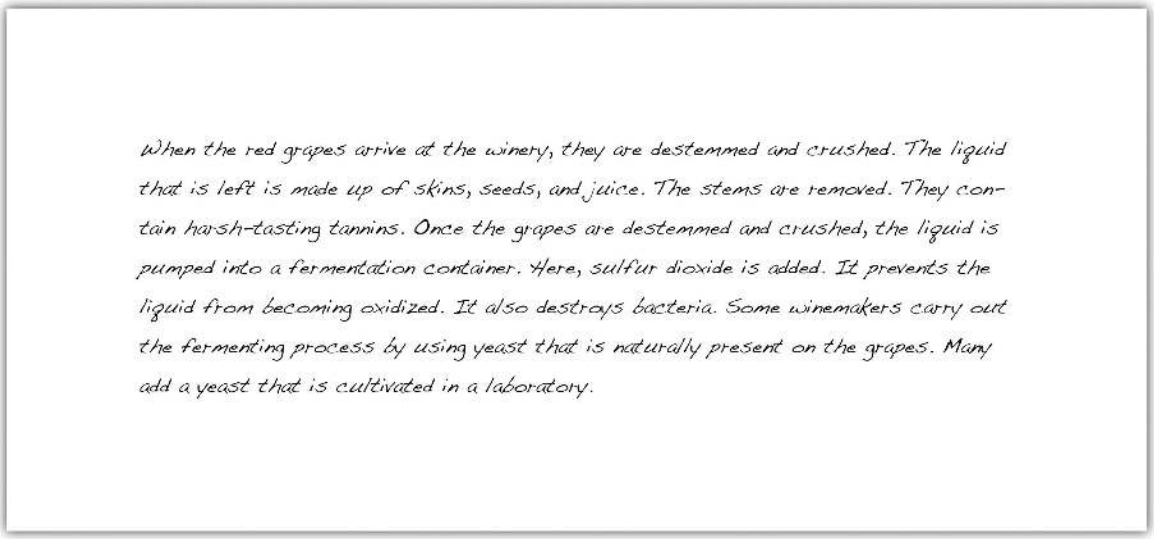

When the red grapes arrive at the winery, they are destemmed and crushed. The liquid that is left is made up of skins, seeds, and juice. The stems are removed. They contain harsh-tasting tannins. Once the grapes are destemmed and crushed, the liquid is pumped into a fermentation container. Here, sulfur dioxide is added. It prevents the liquid from becoming oxidized. It also destroys bacteria. Some winemakers carry out the fermenting process by using yeast that is naturally present on the grapes. Many add a yeast that is cultivated in a laboratory.

Figure: Noemi's first draft feels a little choppy and disconnected because we don't know if some ideas are more important than others or how the ideas relate to each other logically. To begin her revision process, she started looking at coordinating ideas of equal importance.

Coordination

Coordination joins two independent clauses that contain related ideas of equal importance.

Original sentences: I spent my entire paycheck last week. I am staying home this weekend.

In their current form, these sentences contain two separate ideas that may or may not be related. Am I staying home this week *because* I spent my paycheck, or is there another reason for my lack of enthusiasm to leave the house? To indicate a relationship between the two ideas, we can use the coordinating conjunction *so*:

Revised sentence: I spent my entire paycheck last week, **so** I am staying home this weekend.

The revised sentence illustrates that the two ideas are connected. Notice that the sentence retains two independent clauses (*I spent my entire paycheck*; *I am staying home this weekend*) because each can stand alone as a complete idea.

Coordinating Conjunctions

A coordinating conjunction is a word that joins two independent clauses. The coordinating conjunctions are *for*, *and*, *nor*, *but*, *or*, *yet*, and *so*. These can be memorized by the acronym FANBOYS. Note that a comma precedes the coordinating conjunction when joining two clauses but not when joining a phrase (such as in this sentence).

The following table explains the logic that each coordinating conjunction represents.

Function/Logic	Coordinating Conjunction	Example
cause	for	I had to bring my car to the body shop, for I had run into a pole.
addition	and	I strive to find balance in my life and my best friend tries to find balance also.
choice/alternative (negative)	nor	I have never been to Europe, nor have I been to Australia.
contrast	but	She had packed all her bags for vacation, but the flight was late.
choice/alternative	or	Next summer, I can either take a longer RV trip, or I can travel for a shorter period of time and take a train somewhere.
contrast	yet	I had tied a scarf around my luggage to find it at the baggage carousel, yet I couldn't find my bag when I disembarked the plane.
effect	so	I had packed almost everything in there, so I felt distraught.

The next table gives an example for how you might join two clauses with each type of coordinating conjunction.

Independent Clause	Coordinating Conjunction	Independent Clause	Revised Sentence
I will not be attending the dance.	for (indicates a reason or cause)	I have no one to go with.	I will not be attending the dance, for I have no one to go with.
I plan to stay home.	and (adds another ideas)	I will complete an essay for class.	I plan to stay home, and I will complete an essay for class.
Jessie isn’t going to be at the dance.	nor (indicates a negative)	Tom won’t be there either.	Jessie isn’t going to be at the dance, nor will Tom be there*.
The fundraisers are hoping for a record-breaking attendance.	but (indicates a contrast)	I don’t think many people are going.	The fundraisers are hoping for a record-breaking attendance, but I don’t think many people are going.
I might go to the next fundraising event.	or (offers an alternative)	I might donate some money to the cause.	I might go to the next fundraising event, or I might donate some money to the cause.
My parents are worried that I am antisocial.	yet (indicates contrast)	I have many friends at school.	My parents are worried that I am antisocial, yet I have many friends at school.
Buying a new dress is expensive.	so (indicates a result)	By staying home I will save money.	Buying a new dress is expensive, so by staying home I will save money.

* When using nor, you must change the sentence structure of the second clause you are joining. Notice that when joining the following two clauses with "nor," the subject and the linking verb in the second clause are switched around and the negative "not" is removed because the negative is conveyed through "nor."

Original: I **did not go** shopping this weekend. **I did not watch** any sports on TV.

Combined: I **did not go** shopping this weekend, *nor* **did I watch** any sports on TV.



Video **8.7.1**

The Coordinating Conjunctions Song (FANBOYS). **Provided by:** Anchor Creative. **License:** *All Rights Reserved.* **License Terms:** Standard YouTube License.

? Exercise 1

Join the following sentence pairs with the coordinating conjunction that you feel reflects the logic that holds the two ideas together.

1. Ray likes EDM. Kelvin likes rap.
2. The book has been on the bestseller list for months it's one of the most boring novels I have ever read.
3. In an earthquake, buildings sway back and forth, many rattle and groan.
4. My living room is very small, I should not buy any more furniture.
5. Dedicated ecologists do not kill wildlife they shoot with cameras instead of guns.
6. Jane is my best friend, she is always there for me when I need her.
7. She is not only an excellent student, she is also and outstanding athlete.
8. John and Mike enjoyed the movies they wished the seats had been more cozy.
9. The TV wasn't working, I walked over to a friend's house to watch the game.
10. The telephone was ringing, someone was knocking at the front door as well.
11. I like action movies, he likes comedies.
12. I missed the 8 am bus, I slept through my alarm.
13. Something was obviously wrong with the meatloaf, it was glowing in the dark.
14. Harry was a good musician he could never keep a steady job in a band.
15. Mark is not very interested in sports, he does however, like to water ski.
16. I was happy with my new apartment it was in a good location and the rent was low.

? Exercise 2

Fix the coordinating conjunction punctuation where needed in the following sentences. Remember that coordinating conjunctions that join two complete ideas (clauses) must have a comma before them. Coordinating conjunctions that join a phrase (part of a sentence) to another sentence structure do not need a comma before them.

1. He was amazed by the selection of items he could find when shopping online yet he had a hard time picturing how clothes would look on him.
2. Beth was horrified, but fascinated by the effects of consumer culture on people.
3. He was fearful of COVID-19 but he still went out and protested as he felt it was more important.
4. Pandemics are more likely to happen because of global warming, and increasing pressure on wild animals.
5. Change can happen when people of all races, and creeds stop treating each other in ways they wouldn't treat themselves.

Conjunctive Adverbs

Another method of joining two independent clauses with related and equal ideas is to use a conjunctive adverb and a semicolon.A conjunctive adverb is a linking word that demonstrates a relationship between two clauses. The punctuation of a conjunctive adverb varies depending upon where in the sentence the adverb appears. Once joined, the following sentences show cause and effect.

Original sentences: Bridget wants to take part in the next Olympics. She trains every day.

Since these sentences contain two equal and related ideas, they may be joined using a conjunctive adverb. Now, read the revised sentence:

Revised sentence: Bridget wants to take part in the next Olympics; therefore, she trains every day.

The revised sentence explains the relationship between Bridget's desire to take part in the next Olympics and her daily training. Notice that the conjunctive adverb comes after a semicolon that separates the two clauses and is followed by a comma.

Review the following chart of some common conjunctive adverbs with examples of how they are used:

Function	Conjunctive Adverb	Example
Addition	also, furthermore, moreover, similarly, likewise	Alicia was late for class and stuck in traffic; furthermore, her shoe heel had broken and she had forgotten her lunch.
Contrast	instead, however, otherwise	Most people do not walk to work; instead, they drive or take the train.
Emphasis	namely, certainly, indeed	The Siberian tiger is a rare creature; indeed, there are fewer than five hundred left in the wild.
Cause and Effect	accordingly, as a result, consequently, hence, thus, therefore	I missed my train this morning; consequently, I was late for my meeting.
Time	finally, next, subsequently, then, after	Tim crossed the barrier, jumped over the wall, and pushed through the hole in the fence; finally, he made it to the station.
Condition	otherwise	The hotel room will hopefully be ready when I arrive; otherwise, I will have to leave my luggage in the car.
Choice/Alternative	alternatively, on the other hand, conversely	I can continue with my current job and try to make it a better situation; alternatively, I can quit and try to find a new position.

Take a look at Noemi's essay on wine production and identify some areas in which he might use coordination.

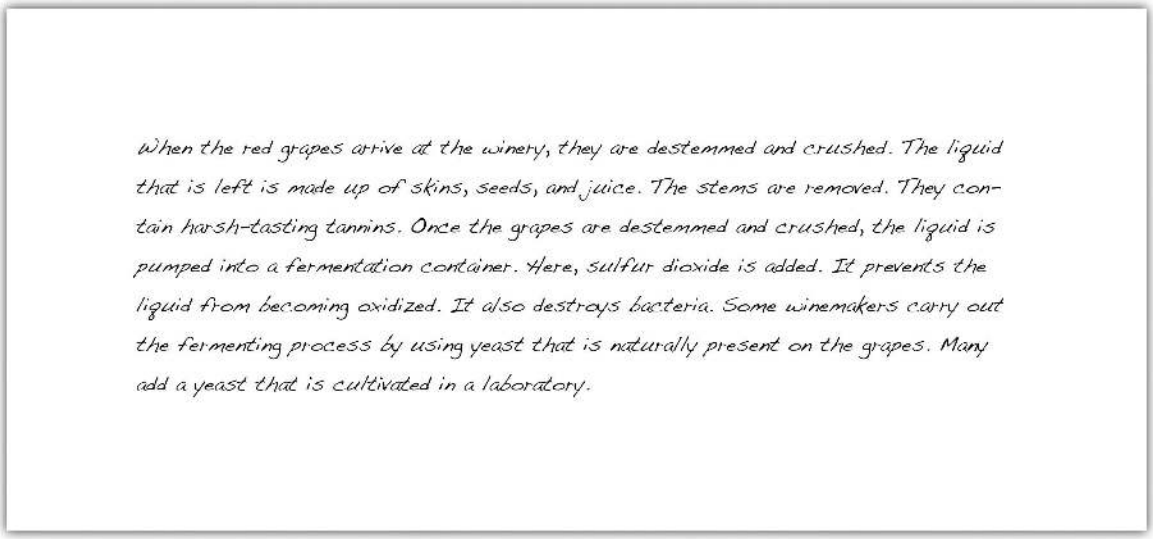


Figure: Now look at Noemi's revised essay. Did you coordinate the same sentences? You may find that your answers are different because there are usually several ways to join two independent clauses.

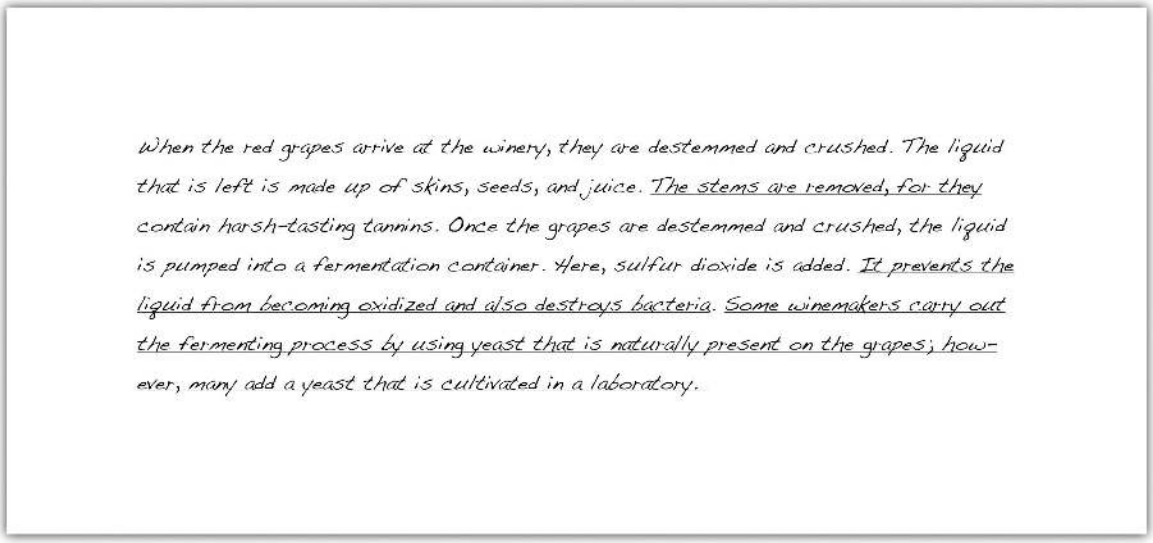


Figure: Tip: Punctuating Transitional Adverbs

Transitional adverbs can be tricky to punctuate. If the transitional adverb is used between the two clauses, place a semi-colon before the transitional adverb and a comma after, such as in the following sentence:

- They were looking forward to going home for the semester break; however, they had to finish finals first.

If the transitional adverb appears in the middle of the second clause of the sentence (it should never appear in the first), it should be punctuated with commas on both sides, as in the following sentence.

- They were looking forward to going home for the semester break. They, however, had to finish finals first.

Finally, if the transitional adverb appears at the end of the second clause, it should be punctuated with a comma before and a period after (the end of the sentence).

- They were looking forward to going home for the semester break. They had to finish finals first, however.

? Exercise 3

Combine each sentence pair into a single sentence using a conjunctive adverb. Then copy the combined sentence onto your own sheet of paper.

1. Pets are not allowed in Mr. Taylor's building. He owns several cats and a parrot.

2. New legislation prevents drivers from sending or reading text messages while driving. Many people continue to use their phones illegally.
3. The coroner concluded that the young man had taken a lethal concoction of drugs. By the time his relatives found him, nothing could be done.
4. Amphibians are vertebrates that live on land and in the water. Flatworms are invertebrates that live only in water.
5. Ashley carefully fed and watered her tomato plants all summer. The tomatoes grew juicy and ripe.
6. When he lost his car key, Simon attempted to open the door with a wire hanger, a credit card, and a paper clip. He called the manufacturer for advice.

Collaboration

Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

Writing at Work

When writing an essay or a report, it is important that you do not use excessive coordination. Workplace documents should be clear and concise, so only join two clauses that are logically connected and can work together to make one main point. If you repeat the same coordinating conjunction several times in a sentence, you are probably including too many ideas. This may make it difficult for readers to pick out the most important information in each sentence.

Subordination

Subordination joins two sentences with related ideas by merging them into a main clause (a complete sentence) and a dependent clause (a construction that relies on the main clause to complete its meaning). Unlike coordination, which allows a writer to give equal weight to the two ideas that are being combined, subordination enables a writer to emphasize one idea over the other. Take a look at the following sentences:

Original sentences: Tracy stopped to help the injured man. She would be late for work.

To illustrate that these two ideas are related, we can rewrite them as a single sentence using the subordinating conjunction *even though*.

Revised sentence: Even though Tracy would be late for work, she stopped to help the injured man.

In the revised version, we now have an independent clause (*she stopped to help the injured man*) that stands as a complete sentence and a dependent clause (*even though Tracy would be late for work*) that is subordinate to the main clause. Notice that the revised sentence emphasizes the fact that Tracy stopped to help the injured man, rather than the fact she would be late for work. We could also write the sentence this way:

Revised sentence: Tracy stopped to help the injured man even though she would be late for work.

The meaning remains the same in both sentences, with the subordinating conjunction *even though* introducing the dependent clause.

Tip: Subordination Punctuation

To punctuate sentences correctly, look at the position of the main clause and the subordinate clause. If a subordinate clause precedes the main clause, use a comma between the two clauses. If the subordinate clause follows the main clause, no punctuation is needed.



Video 8.7.1

The Subordinating Conjunctions Song. **Provided by:** Anchor Creative. **License:** *All Rights Reserved.* **License Terms:** Standard YouTube License.

Subordinating Conjunctions

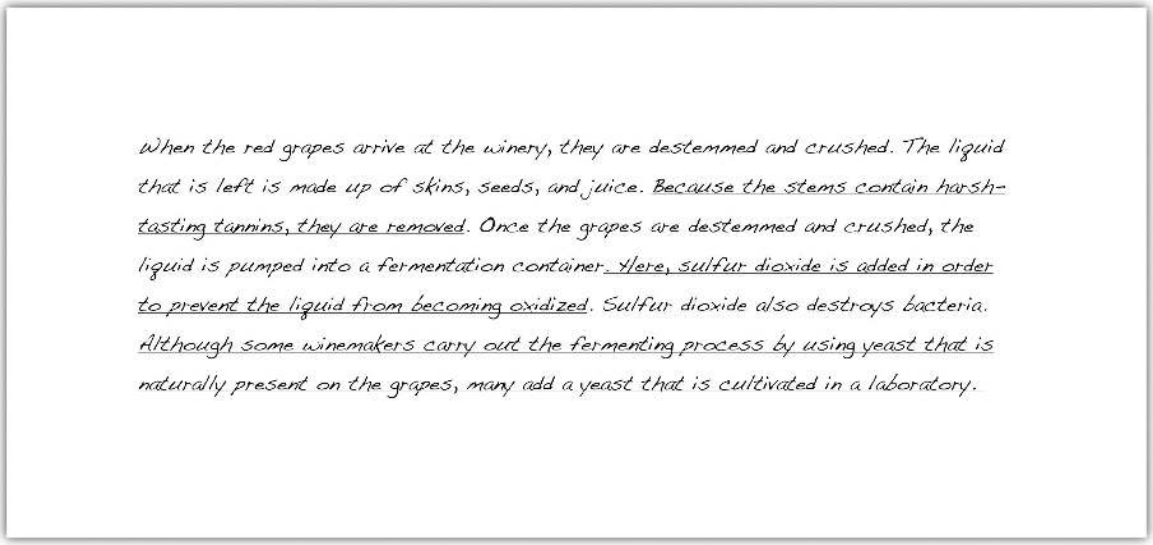
A subordinating conjunction is a word that joins a subordinate (dependent) clause to a main (independent) clause. Review the following chart of some common subordinating conjunctions and examples of how they are used:

Function	Subordinating Conjunction	Example
Concession	although, while, though, whereas, even though	Sarah completed her report even though she had to stay late to get it done.
Condition	if, unless, until	Until we know what is causing the problem, we will not be able to fix it.
Manner	as if, as, though	Everyone in the conference room stopped talking at once, as though they had been stunned into silence.
Place	where, wherever	Rita is in San Jose where she has several important client meetings.
Cause	because, since, so that, in order that	Because the air conditioning was turned up so high, everyone in the office wore sweaters.
Time	after, before, while, once, when	After the meeting had finished, we all went to lunch.

Take a look at the excerpt from Noemi’s essay and identify some areas in which she might use subordination.

When the red grapes arrive at the winery, they are destemmed and crushed. The liquid that is left is made up of skins, seeds, and juice. The stems are removed. They contain harsh-tasting tannins. Once the grapes are destemmed and crushed, the liquid is pumped into a fermentation container. Here, sulfur dioxide is added. It prevents the liquid from becoming oxidized. It also destroys bacteria. Some winemakers carry out the fermenting process by using yeast that is naturally present on the grapes. Many add a yeast that is cultivated in a laboratory.

Figure: Now look at Noemi's revised essay and compare your answers. You will probably notice that there are many different ways to subordinate sentences.



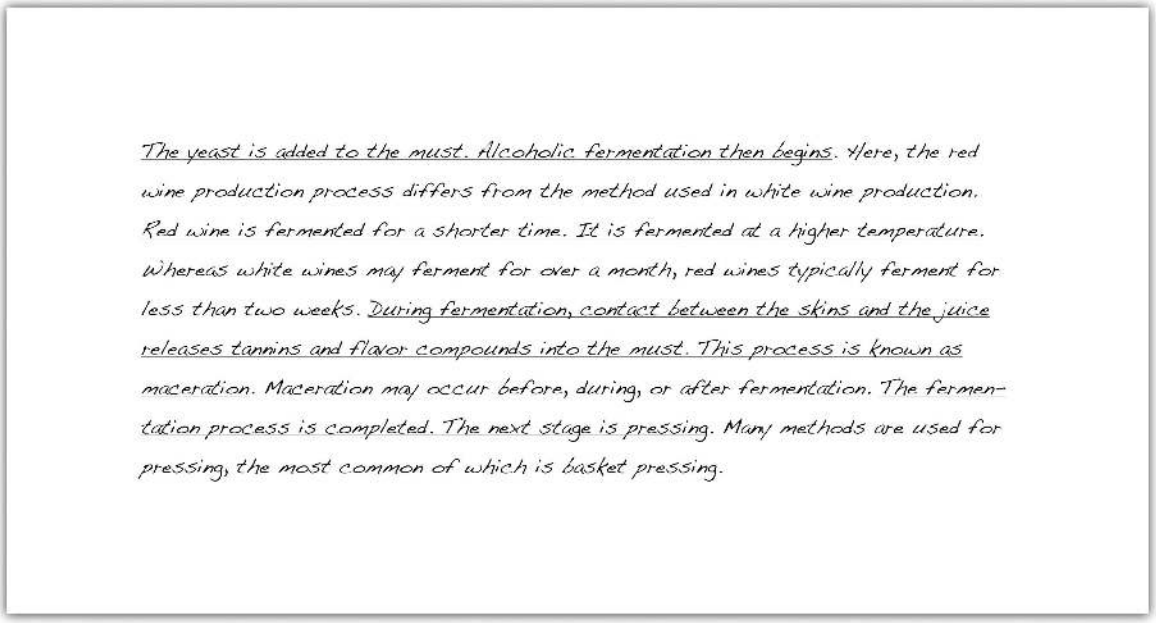
? Exercise 4

Combine each sentence pair into a single sentence using a subordinating conjunction and then copy the combined sentence onto your own sheet of paper. Check your revised sentences for correct punctuation.

1. Jake is going to Mexico. There are beautiful beaches there.
2. A snowstorm disrupted traffic all over the East Coast. There will be long delivery delays this week.
3. My neighbor had his television volume turned up too high. I banged on his door and asked him to keep the noise down.
4. Jessica prepared the potato salad and the sautéed vegetables. Jordan marinated the chicken.
5. Romeo poisons himself. Juliet awakes to find Romeo dead and stabs herself with a dagger.

? Exercise 5

Copy the paragraph from Joshua's essay onto your own sheet of paper. Then edit using the techniques you have learned in this section. Join the underlined sentences using coordination or subordination. Check your revised sentences for punctuation.



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8.8: Appositives, Adjective Clauses, Verbals

Appositives

An appositive is a word or group of words that describes or renames a noun or pronoun. Incorporating appositives into your writing is a useful way of combining sentences that are too short and choppy. Take a look at the following example:

- The lineman sacked the quarter back. The lineman was burly at 6 foot 5 and 275 pounds.
- The lineman, a burly man at 6 foot 5 and 275 pounds, sacked the quarterback.

To combine two sentences using an appositive, drop the subject and verb from the sentence that renames the noun and turn it into a phrase. Note that in the previous example, the appositive is positioned immediately after the noun it describes. An appositive must come directly before or after the noun to which it refers.

Appositive after Noun:	**Appositive before Noun:**
Scott, a poorly trained athlete, was not expected to win the race.	A poorly trained athlete, Scott was not expected to win the race.

Unlike adjective clauses and participial phrases, which may be restrictive or nonrestrictive, appositives are always nonrestrictive, and thus they are always set off by commas. A comma is placed both before and after the appositive. This video explains about appositives a little more.

Appositives -- 2 Minute Teacher. **Provided by:** Cody Walker. **License:** *All Rights Reserved*. **License Terms:** Standard YouTube License.



Video **8.8.1**

? Exercise 1

Rewrite the following sentence pairs as one sentence using any of the techniques you have learned in this section:

- Baby sharks are called pups. Pups can be born in one of three ways
- The Pacific Ocean is the world's largest ocean. It extends from the Arctic in the north to the Southern Ocean in the south.
- Michael Phelps won eight gold medals in the 2008 Olympics. He is a champion swimmer.
- Ashley introduced her colleague Dan to her husband, Jim. She speculated that the two of them would have a lot in common.
- Cacao is harvested by hand. It is then sold to chocolate-processing companies at the Coffee, Sugar, and Cocoa Exchange.

Adjective Clauses (also known as Relative Clauses)

Here is a brief review of adjective clauses and relative pronouns.

An **adjective clause** is used to **describe** a **noun**:

The car, **which was red**, belonged to Young-Hee.

A **relative pronoun** is usually used to **introduce** an **adjective clause**:

Young-Hee, **who** is a Korean student, lives in Victoria.

For more information about relative clauses (adjective clauses) please see Section 11.12.

The main relative pronouns are:

Pronoun	Use	Example
Who	used for **humans** in the **subject** position	Hans, **who** is an architect, lives in Berlin.
Whom	used for **humans** in the **object** position	Marike, **whom** Hans knows well, is an interior decorator.
Which	used for **things** and **animals** in the **subject** or **object** position	Marike has a dog **which** follows her everywhere.
That	used for **humans**, **animals** and **things**, in the **subject** or **object** position (but see below)	Marike is decorating a house **that** Hans designed.
Whose	used for **humans**, **animals** and **things** in the **subject** or **object** position to show possession	Marike, **whose** dog follows her everywhere, is an animal lover.

There are two main kinds of adjective clause:

1. Non-defining clauses

Non-defining clauses give **extra information** about the noun, but they are not essential:

The desk in the corner, **which is covered in books**, is mine.

Explanation: We don't need this information in order to understand the sentence. “The desk in the corner is mine” is a good sentence on its own — we still know which desk is referred to. Note that non-defining clauses are usually separated by commas, and “**that**” is not usually used in this kind of context.

2. Defining clauses

Defining clauses give **essential information** about the noun:

The package **that arrived this morning** is on the desk.

Explanation: We need this information in order to understand the sentence. Without the relative clause, we don't know which package is being referred to. Note that “**that**” is often used in defining relative clauses, and they are not separated by commas.

When you are sure that you understand the lesson, you can continue with the exercises here.

Verbals/ Gerunds

Here is a brief review of gerunds and how to form them.

Gerunds are **nouns formed from verbs**.

walking, talking, thinking, listening

Gerunds are **formed by adding ING to verbs**.

think + ing = thinking

Spelling Rules

There are a few spelling rules that you need to know in order to form gerunds correctly. The spelling of a gerund depends on the **vowels** (a, e, i, o, u) and **consonants** (b, c, d, f, etc.) at the end of the verb.

Rule	Example
If there is **more than one consonant**, just **add ING**	thi**nk** + ing = think**ing**
If there is **more than one vowel**, just **add ING**	b**ea**t + ing = beat**ing**
If there is **one vowel** and **one consonant**, and the **syllable is stressed**, **double the consonant and add ING**	h**it** + t + ing = hitt**ing**
If there are **one or more consonants** and **E**, **remove the E and add ING**	ta**ke** + ing = tak**ing**
In **most other cases**, just **add ING**	study + ing = study**ing** see + ing = see**ing**

When you are sure that you understand the lesson, you can continue with the exercises here.

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8.9: Active vs. Passive Voice

Active and Passive Voice

Voice is a nebulous term in writing. It can refer to the general "feel" of the writing, or it can be used in a more technical sense. In this section, we will focus on the latter sense as we discuss active and passive voice.

You've probably heard of the passive voice—perhaps in a comment from an English teacher or in the grammar checker of a word processor. In both of these instances, you were (likely) guided away from the passive voice. Why is this the case? Why is the passive voice so hated? After all, it's been used twice on this page already (three times now). When the passive voice is used to frequently, it can make your writing seem flat and drab. However, there are some instances where the passive voice is a better choice than the active.

So just what is the difference between these two voices? In the simplest terms, an active voice sentence is written in the form of "A does B." (For example, "Carmen sings the song.") A passive voice sentence is written in the form of "B is done by A." (For example, "The song is sung by Carmen.") Both constructions are grammatically sound and correct.

Let's look at a couple more examples of the passive voice:

- I've been hit! (*or*, I have been hit!)
- Jasper was thrown from the car when it was struck from behind.

You may have noticed something unique about the previous two sentences: the subject of the sentence is not the person (or thing) performing the action. The passive voice "hides" who does the action. Despite these sentences being completely grammatically sound, we don't know who hit "me" or what struck the car.

The passive is created using the verb *to be* (e.g., the song **is** sung; it **was** struck from behind). Remember that *to be* conjugates irregularly. Its forms include *am*, *are*, *is*, *was*, *were*, and *will be*, which we learned about earlier in the course.

Remember, *to be* also has more complex forms like *had been*, *is being*, and *was being.*

- Mirella **is being** pulled away from everything she loves.
- Pietro **had been** pushed; I knew it.
- Unfortunately, my car **was being** towed away by the time I got to it.

Because *to be* has other uses than just creating the passive voice, we need to be careful when we identify passive sentences. It's easy to mistake a sentence like "She was falling." or "He is short." for a passive sentence. However, in "She was falling," *was* simply indicates that the sentence takes place in the past. In "He is short," *is* is a linking verb. If there is no "real" action taking place, *is* is simply acting as a linking verb.

There are two key features that will help you identify a passive sentence:

- Something is happening (the sentence has a verb that is not a linking verb).
- The subject of the sentence is not doing that thing.



Video **8.9.1**

Active vs Passive Voice in Your Writing. **Provided by:** GCFLearnFree.org. **License:** *All Rights Reserved.* **License Terms:** Standard YouTube License.

Usage

As you read at the two sentences below, think about the how the different voice may affect the meaning or implications of the sentence:

- **Passive voice:** The rate of evaporation is controlled by the size of an opening.
- **Active voice:** The size of an opening controls the rate of evaporation.

The passive choice slightly emphasizes "the rate of evaporation," while the active choice emphasizes "the size of an opening." Simple. So why all the fuss? Because passive constructions can produce grammatically tangled sentences such as this:

Groundwater flow is influenced by zones of fracture concentration, as can be recognized by the two model simulations (see Figures 1 and 2), by which one can see . . .

The sentence is becoming a burden for the reader, and probably for the writer too. As often happens, the passive voice here has smothered potential verbs and kicked off a runaway train of prepositions. But the reader's task gets much easier in the revised version below:

Two model simulations (Figures 1 and 2) illustrate how zones of fracture concentration influence groundwater flow. These simulations show . . .

To revise the above, all I did was look for the two buried things (simulations and zones) in the original version that could actually *do* something, and I made the sentence clearly about these two nouns by placing them in front of active verbs. This is the general principle to follow as you compose in the active voice: Place concrete nouns that can perform work in front of active verbs.

? Exercise 1

Are the following sentences in the active or passive voice?

1. Jayden drank more sodas than anyone else at the party.
2. The samples were prepared in a clean room before being sent out for further examination.
3. Karen was dancing with Joshua when she suddenly realized she needed to leave.
4. Carlos was a very serious scientist with unique interests.
5. When I returned to my room, my luggage had been stolen.

Show Answer

Answer

This sentence uses the active voice. **Jayden** does the action (**drank**) to the object (**more sodas**). If this sentence were written in the passive it would read "More sodas were drunk by Jayden than by anyone else at the party." This sentence uses the passive voice. The action (**prepared**) was done to the subject of the sentence (**samples**). If this sentence were written in the active it would be something like this: "[Actor] prepared the samples in a clean room before sending them out for further examination." Since we do not know who prepared the samples, the active sentence is incomplete. This sentence uses the active voice. In this case *was* indicates that the sentence happened in the past; it does not indicate the passive voice in this instance. This sentence uses the active voice. In this case *was* is acting as a linking verb. It links **Carlos** with the phrase *very serious scientist*. The introductory phrase to the sentence (When I returned to my room) is in the active voice. The second phrase (my luggage had been stolen) uses the passive voice.

Revising Weak Passive-Voice Sentences

As we've mentioned, the passive voice can be a shifty operator—it can cover up its source, that is, who's doing the acting, as this example shows:

- **Passive:** The papers **will be graded** according to the criteria stated in the syllabus.
  - *Graded by whom though?*
- **Active: The teacher** will grade the papers according to the criteria stated in the syllabus.

It's this ability to cover the actor or agent of the sentence that makes the passive voice a favorite of people in authority—policemen, city officials, and, yes, teachers. At any rate, you can see how the passive voice can cause wordiness, indirectness, and comprehension problems.

Passive	Question	Active
Your figures **have been reanalyzed** in order to determine the coefficient of error. The results **will be announced** when the situation is judged appropriate.	Who analyzes, and who will announce?	**We** have reanalyzed your figures in order to determine the range of error. **We** will announce the results when the time is right.
With the price of housing at such inflated levels, those loans **cannot be paid** off in any shorter period of time.	Who can't pay the loans off?	With the price of housing at such inflated levels, **homeowners** cannot pay off those loans in any shorter period of time.
After the arm of the hand-held stapler **is pushed** down, the blade from the magazine **is raised by** the top-leaf spring, and the magazine and base.	Who pushes it down, and who or what raises it?	After **you** push down on the arm of the hand-held stapler, **the top-leaf spring** raises the blade from the magazine, and the magazine and base move apart.
However, market share **is being lost by** 5.25-inch diskettes as is shown in the graph in Figure 2.	Who or what is losing market share, who or what shows it?	However, **5.25-inch diskettes** are losing market share as the graph in **Figure 2** shows.
For many years, federal regulations concerning the use of wire-tapping **have been ignored**. Only recently **have** tighter restrictions **been imposed** on the circumstances that warrant it.	Who has ignored the regulations, and who is now imposing them?	For many years, **government officials** have ignored federal regulations concerning the use of wire-tapping. Only recently has **the federal government** imposed tighter restrictions on the circumstances that warrant it.

? Exercise 2

Convert these passive voice sentences into the active voice. Why is the active voice a better choice for each of these sentences?

1. The process, which was essential for the experiment's success, was completed by Enzo.
2. The cake that I worked on all day long is being eaten by Justin.
3. After the pattern has been applied to the fabric, work on the embroidery can be started.

Answer

Enzo completed the process, which was essential for the experiment's success.

- In the passive sentence, the *which*-clause makes the subject of the sentence excessively long. By converting the sentence to the active voice, the clause is moved to the predicate, which makes the sentence easier to understand.

Justin is eating the cake that I worked on all day long.

- The active voice works better in this sentence for the same reasons as sentence one. It is also likely that you would want to put emphasis on Justin in this sentence. After all, he's doing something that is (most likely) inconsiderate.

After you apply the pattern to the fabric, you can start working on the embroidery.

- This sentence is likely found in a set of instructions, which are usually written directly to the reader. Addressing "you" and avoiding the passive voice will make the instructions feel more natural and accessible.

Don't get the idea that the passive voice is always wrong and should never be used. It is a good writing technique when we don't want to be bothered with an obvious or too-often-repeated subject and when we need to rearrange words in a sentence for emphasis. The next page will focus more on how and why to use the passive voice.

Using the Passive Voice

There are several different situations where the passive voice is more useful than the active voice.

- When you don't know who did the action: *The paper had been moved.*
  - The active voice would be something like this: "Someone had moved the paper." While this sentence is technically fine, the passive voice sentence has a more subtle element of mystery, which can be especially helpful in creating a mood in fiction.
- When you want to hide who did the action: *The window had been broken.*
  - The sentence is either hiding who broke the window or they do not know. Again, the sentence can be reformed to say "Someone had broken the window," but using the word *someone* clearly indicates that someone (though we may not know who) is at fault here. Using the passive puts the focus on the window rather than on the person who broke it, as he or she is completely left out of the sentence.
- When you want to emphasize the person or thing the action was done to: *Caroline was hurt when Kent broke up with her.*
  - We automatically focus on the subject of the sentence. If the sentence were to say "Kent hurt Caroline when he broke up with her," then our focus would be drawn to Kent rather than Caroline.
- A subject that can't actually *do* anything: *Caroline was hurt when she fell into the trees.*
  - While the trees hurt Caroline, they didn't actually do anything. Thus, it makes more sense to have Caroline as the subject rather than saying "The trees hurt Caroline when she fell into them."

Note: It's often against convention in scholarly writing to use *I*. While this may seem like a forced rule, it also stems from the fact that scholars want to emphasize the science or research as opposed to the author of the paper. This often results in the passive voice being the best choice. This is not the case in other formal settings, such as in resumes and in cover letters.

? Exercise 3

Consider the following instances. In each case, determine why the writers might want to use active or passive voice. Write an example sentence based on their circumstances.

1. Antonella made an error in her calculations that ruined an experiment. This error ended up costing both time and materials. She has to write a report to her boss. What might she say about the experiment?
2. Isabel is writing a supernatural thriller. Her main character, Liam, notices that his keys aren't where he left them. How might Isabel word this realization?
3. Thiago is writing a cover letter to apply for a new job. He is listing out tasks that he does at his current job. How would he want to word these items?

Answer

Antonella would likely want to write in the passive voice. Even if her boss knows she made the error, writing in the passive will draw attention away from that fact. She might say something like this:

- An error was made that ended up costing time and resources. The experiment will have to be repeated with new materials.

Isabel could use either the passive or the active. It depends on the emphasis she wants. The passive voice subtly hints at a mysterious actor. The active voice blatantly states it:

- Liam's keys had been moved when he wasn't looking.
- Something—or someone—had moved Liam's keys when he wasn't looking.

Thiago would want to use the active voice. Since he's apply for a job, he would want to emphasize the fact that he is accomplishing the tasks: the fact that he's doing them is more important than the simple fact that the things were done. He might write something like the following:

- I currently work as a teaching assistant for a linguistics professor. I organize her mail, flagging important items so she knows what needs immediate attention; I aid her in her research, finding interesting articles and studies; and I often help her students when her attention is needed elsewhere.

Using the Passive

Now that we know there are some instances where passive voice is the best choice, how do we use the passive voice to it fullest? The answer lies in writing direct sentences—in passive voice—that have simple subjects and verbs. Compare the two sentences below:

- Photomicrographs were taken to facilitate easy comparison of the samples.
- Easy comparison of the samples was facilitated by the taking of photomicrographs.

Both sentences are written in the passive voice, but for most ears the first sentence is more direct and understandable, and therefore preferable. Depending on the context, it does a clearer job of telling us what was done and why it was done. Especially if this sentence appears in the "Experimental" section of a report (and thus readers already know that the authors of the report took the photomicrographs), the first sentence neatly represents what the authors actually did—took photomicrographs—and why they did it—to facilitate easy comparison.

? Exercise 4

Read the following sentences. Are they using the passive effectively? If there are any errors, rewrite the sentences accordingly.

1. The machine needs to be reset at 10:23, 11:12, and 11:56 every night.
2. The final steps, which need to be finished before the sun sets over the mountains, are going to be completed by Kajuana.
3. The difficult task of measuring minute fluctuations in weight was made easier by the use of a new digital scale.

Answer

Yes. In this case, it doesn't matter who accomplishes the action; it simply needs to be done. If this sentence appears in an academic article, the passive may be even more appropriate, as that style often demands the actor be left out of the sentence. No. This would be better in the active voice. There are a lot of different parts to the sentence, and by converting the sentence to the active voice, they come in a more logical order that is easier to understand:

- Kajuana is going to complete the final steps, which need to be finished before the sun sets over the mountains.

No. This passive construction is very convoluted. An active sentence would serve well here:

- A new digital scale made it easier to measure minute fluctuations in weight.

As we mentioned in **Participles**, the passive voice can also be used following relative pronouns like *that* and *which*.

- I moved into the house **that was built** for me.
- Adrián's dog loves the treats **that are given** to him.
- Brihanna has an album **that was signed** by the Beastie Boys.

In each of these sentences, it is grammatically sound to omit (or *elide*) the pronoun and *to be*. Elision is used with a lot of different constructions in English; we use it shorten sentences when things are understood. However, we can only use elision in certain situations, so be careful when removing words! You may find these elided sentences more natural:

- I moved into the house **built** for me.
- Adrián's dog loves the treats **given** to him.
- Brihanna has an album **signed** by the Beastie Boys

Additional Practice Exercises

? Exercise 5

Convert these passive voice sentences into the active voice:

1. Alana's toes were crushed by the garage door.
2. The passive voice has likely been heard of by you.
3. Rebeca's favorite spot in the lecture hall had been taken by the time she got to class.
4. When the passive voice is overused, you often end up with flat writing.

Answer

The garage door crushed Alana's toes. You've likely heard of the passive voice. Because there's a descriptive phrase, there are a few options when revising this sentence:

- Someone had taken Rebeca's favorite spot in the lecture hall by the time she got to class.
- By the time Rebeca got to class, someone had taken her favorite spot in the lecture hall.

When you overuse the passive voice, you often end up with flat writing.

? Exercise 6

Read the following sentences. Are they using the passive effectively? Or should they be rewritten as active sentences?

- Maren was hit by several branches as she slid down the hill.
- A lot of discussion about whether technology is hurting or helping our ability to communicate has been inspired by this increase in technology.
- Listeners are encouraged by the lyrics to cast aside their fear and be themselves.

Answer

Yes, this sentence uses the passive effectively. Since the subject of this sentence—*several branches*—can't actually do anything, it's best to put the emphasis on *Maren*, the person the actions were done to. This sentence does not use the passive well. The passive voice has made the sentence a lot more complicated then it needs to be. The active would read something like this:

- This increase of technology has inspired a lot of discussion about whether technology is hurting or helping our ability to communicate.

Either voice could be appropriate here. If you want to focus on the listeners, the passive voice is correct. If you want to focus on the lyrics, the sentence should be changed to the active voice.

- **Passive:** Listeners are encouraged by the lyrics to cast aside their fear and be themselves.
- **Active:** The lyrics encourage listeners to cast aside their fear and be themselves

Contributors and Attributions

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8.10: Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers

Modifier Mistakes

A modifier is a word, phrase, or clause that clarifies or describes another word, phrase, or clause. Sometimes writers use modifiers incorrectly, leading to strange and unintentionally humorous sentences. The two common types of modifier errors are called misplaced modifiers and dangling modifiers. If either of these errors occurs, readers can no longer read smoothly. Instead, they become stumped trying to figure out *what* the writer meant to say. A writer's goal must always be to communicate clearly and to avoid distracting the reader with strange sentences or awkward sentence constructions. The good news is that these errors can be easily fixed.

Misplaced Modifiers

A misplaced modifier is a modifier that is placed too far from the word or words it modifies. Misplaced modifiers make the sentence awkward and sometimes unintentionally humorous.

Incorrect: She wore a bicycle helmet on her head *that was too large*.

Correct: She wore a bicycle helmet *that was too large* on her head.

- Notice in the incorrect sentence it sounds as if her head was too large! Of course, the writer is referring to the helmet, not to the person's head. The corrected version of the sentence clarifies the writer's meaning.

Look at the following two examples:

Incorrect: They bought a kitten for my brother *they call Shadow*.

Correct: They bought a kitten *they call Shadow* for my brother.

- In the incorrect sentence, it seems that the brother's name is *Shadow*. That's because the modifier is too far from the word it modifies, which is *kitten*.

Incorrect: The patient was referred to the physician *with stomach pains*.

Correct: The patient *with stomach pains* was referred to the physician.

- The incorrect sentence reads as if it is the physician who has stomach pains! What the writer means is that the patient has stomach pains.

TIP: SIMPLE MODIFIERS

Simple modifiers, such as *only*, *almost*, *just nearly*, and *barely* often get used incorrectly because writers often stick them in the wrong place.

Confusing: Tyler *almost* found fifty cents under the sofa cushions.

Repaired: Tyler found *almost* fifty cents under the sofa cushions.

- How do you *almost* find something? Either you find it or you do not. The repaired sentence is much clearer

? Exercise 1

On a separate sheet of paper, rewrite the following sentences to correct the misplaced modifiers.

1. The young lady was walking the dog on the telephone.
2. I heard that there was a robbery on the evening news.
3. Uncle Louie bought a running stroller for the baby that he called "Speed Racer."
4. Rolling down the mountain, the explorer stopped the boulder with his powerful foot.
5. We are looking for a babysitter for our precious six-year-old who doesn't drink or smoke and owns a car.
6. The teacher served cookies to the children wrapped in aluminum foil.
7. The mysterious woman walked toward the car holding an umbrella.
8. We returned the wine to the waiter that was sour.
9. Charlie spotted a stray puppy driving home from work.

10. I ate nothing but a cold bowl of noodles for dinner

Dangling Modifiers



Video **8.10.1**

Grammar: Dangling Modifiers. **Provided by:** OWL Purdue. **License:** *All Rights Reserved.* **License Terms:** Standard YouTube License.

A dangling modifier is a word, phrase, or clause that describes something that has been left out of the sentence. When there is nothing that the word, phrase, or clause can modify, the modifier is said to dangle.

Incorrect: *Riding in the sports car*, the world whizzed by rapidly.

Correct: As Jane was *riding in the sports car*, the world whizzed by rapidly.

- In the incorrect sentence, *riding in the sports car* is dangling. The reader is left wondering who is riding in the sports car. The writer must tell the reader!

Incorrect: *Walking home at night*, the trees looked like spooky aliens.

Correct: As Jonas was *walking home at night*, the trees looked like spooky aliens.

Correct: The trees looked like spooky aliens as Jonas was *walking home at night*.

- In the incorrect sentence *walking home at night* is dangling. Who is walking home at night? Jonas. Note that there are two different ways the dangling modifier can be corrected.

Incorrect: To win the spelling bee, Luis and Gerard should join our team.

Correct: If we want to win the spelling bee this year, Luis and Gerard should join our team.

- In the incorrect sentence, *to win the spelling bee* is dangling. Who wants to win the spelling bee? We do!

TIP: Identifying Dangling Modifiers

The following three steps will help you quickly spot a dangling modifier:

1. Look for an *-ing* modifier at the beginning of your sentence or another modifying phrase:

   Painting for three hours at night, the kitchen was finally finished by Maggie. (*Painting* is the *-ing* modifier.)

2. Underline the first noun that follows it:

   Painting for three hours at night, the kitchen was finally finished by Maggie.

3. Make sure the modifier and noun go together logically. If they do not, it is very likely you have a dangling modifier.

   After identifying the dangling modifier, rewrite the sentence.

Painting for three hours at night, Maggie finally finished the kitchen.

Exercise 2

Rewrite the following the sentences onto your own sheet of paper to correct the dangling modifiers.

1. Bent over backward, the posture was very challenging.
2. Making discoveries about new creatures, this is an interesting time to be a biologist.
3. Walking in the dark, the picture fell off the wall.
4. Playing a guitar in the bedroom, the cat was seen under the bed.
5. Packing for a trip, a cockroach scurried down the hallway.
6. While looking in the mirror, the towel swayed in the breeze.
7. While driving to the veterinarian's office, the dog nervously whined.
8. The priceless painting drew large crowds when walking into the museum.
9. Piled up next to the bookshelf, I chose a romance novel.
10. Chewing furiously, the gum fell out of my mouth

Writing at Work 8.10.1

Modifying phrases, especially verbal phrases (most of the modifiers in the above exercise are verbal phrases because they describe an action), are used often in business writing. In business writing, writers need to describe two actions or processes that occur at the same time. Because much business writing is also abstract, such situations are rife for dangling modifiers to occur. Be alert for dangling or misplaced modifiers in these situations!

Exercise 3

Rewrite the following paragraph correcting all the misplaced and dangling modifiers.

I bought a fresh loaf of bread for my sandwich shopping in the grocery store. Wanting to make a delicious sandwich, the mayonnaise was thickly spread. Placing the cold cuts on the bread, the lettuce was placed on top. I cut the sandwich in half with a knife turning on the radio. Biting into the sandwich, my favorite song blared loudly in my ears. Humming and chewing, my sandwich went down smoothly. Smiling, my sandwich will be made again, but next time I will add cheese.

Collaboration

Share your results with a classmate.

Exercise 4

See how creative and humorous you can get by writing ten sentences with misplaced and dangling modifiers. This is a deceptively simple task, but rise to the challenge. Your writing will be stronger for it. Exchange papers with a classmate, and rewrite your classmate's sentences to correct any misplaced modifiers.

Contributors and Attributions

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8.11: Sentence Variety

Have you ever ordered a dish in a restaurant and been not happy with its taste even though it contained most of your favorite ingredients? Just as a meal might lack the finishing touches needed to spice it up, so too might a paragraph contain all the basic components but still lack the stylistic finesse required to engage a reader. Sometimes writers have a tendency to reuse the same sentence pattern throughout their writing. Like any repetitive task, reading text that contains too many sentences with the same length and structure can become monotonous and boring. Experienced writers mix it up by using an assortment of sentence patterns, rhythms, and lengths.

In this chapter, you will follow a student named Noemi who has written a draft of an essay but needs to refine her writing. This section discusses how to introduce sentence variety into writing, how to open sentences using a variety of techniques, and how to use different types of sentence structure when connecting ideas. You can use these techniques when revising a paper to bring life and rhythm to your work. They will also make reading your work more enjoyable.



Video **8.11.1**

Sentence Variety Lesson. **Provided by:** VirtualTeacherGirl. **License:** *All Rights Reserved.* **License Terms:** Standard YouTube License.

Incorporating Sentence Variety

Experienced writers incorporate sentence variety into their writing by varying sentence style and structure. Using a mixture of different sentence structures reduces repetition and adds emphasis to important points in the text. Read the following example:

> During my time in office, I have achieved several goals. I have helped increase funding for local schools. I have reduced crime rates in the neighborhood. I have encouraged young people to get involved in their community. My competitor argues that she is the better choice in the upcoming election. I argue that it is ridiculous to fix something that isn't broken. If you reelect me this year, I promise to continue to serve this community.

In this extract from an election campaign, the writer uses short, simple sentences of a similar length and style. Writers often mistakenly believe that this technique makes the text clearer for the reader, but the result is a choppy, unsophisticated paragraph that does not grab the audience's attention. Now read the revised paragraph with sentence variety:

> During my time in office, I have helped increase funding for local schools, reduced crime rates in the neighborhood, and encouraged young people to get involved in their community. Why fix what isn't broken? If you reelect me this year, I will continue to achieve great things for this community. Don't take a chance on an unknown contender; vote for the proven success.

Notice how introducing a short rhetorical question among the longer sentences in the paragraph is an effective means of keeping the reader's attention. In the revised version, the writer combines the choppy sentences at the beginning into one longer sentence, which adds rhythm and interest to the paragraph.

>

Tip

Effective writers often implement the "rule of three," which is basically the idea that things that contain three elements are more memorable and more satisfying to readers than any other number. Try to use a series of three when providing examples, grouping adjectives, or generating a list.

Exercise 1

Combine each set of simple sentences into a compound or a complex sentence. Write the combined sentence on your own sheet of paper.

1. Shakespeare's writing is still relevant today. He wrote about timeless themes. These themes include love, hate, jealousy, death, and destiny.

2. Prewriting is a vital stage of the writing process. Prewriting helps you organize your ideas. Types of of prewriting include outlining, brainstorming, and idea mapping.

3. Walking out in nature can be a very relaxing activity. By nature, I mean the ocean, the woods, mountains, or even a neighborhood with a lot of trees.

4. Reading is like travelling in the mind. A reader can feel like they've gone to Turkey, Nepal, and Belize all in one evening.

5. Vaping can be a dangerous habit, especially if vaping THC. Vitamin E oil is sometimes added to vaping cartriges. Hundres of young people have had permanent lung damage from vaping THC.

Collaboration

Please share with a classmate and compare your answers. Remember, there are many ways to combine sentences, but if you have questions, ask them in class.

Writing at Work

At some point in your career, you will probably find you need to write a cover letter or statement of interest for a job. Writers of cover letters usually find that their initial draft has too much "I" in it, and it sounds a little self-centered, perhaps. While you must use "I" in a cover letter/statement of interest because it is about **you,** varying your sentence structure will allow you to say a lot about yourself without sounding like you are overusing "I."

Using Sentence Variety at the Beginning of Sentences

Read the following sentences and consider what they all have in common:

- John and Amanda will be analyzing this week’s financial report.
- The car screeched to a halt just a few inches away from the young boy.
- Students rarely come to the exam adequately prepared.

If you are having trouble figuring out why these sentences are similar, try underlining the subject in each. You will notice that the subject is positioned at the beginning of each sentence—*John and Amanda*, *the car*, *students*. Since the subject-verb-object pattern is the simplest sentence structure, many writers tend to overuse this technique, which can result in repetitive paragraphs with little sentence variety.

Noemi wrote an essay about the 2008 government bailout. Read this excerpt from Noemi’s essay:

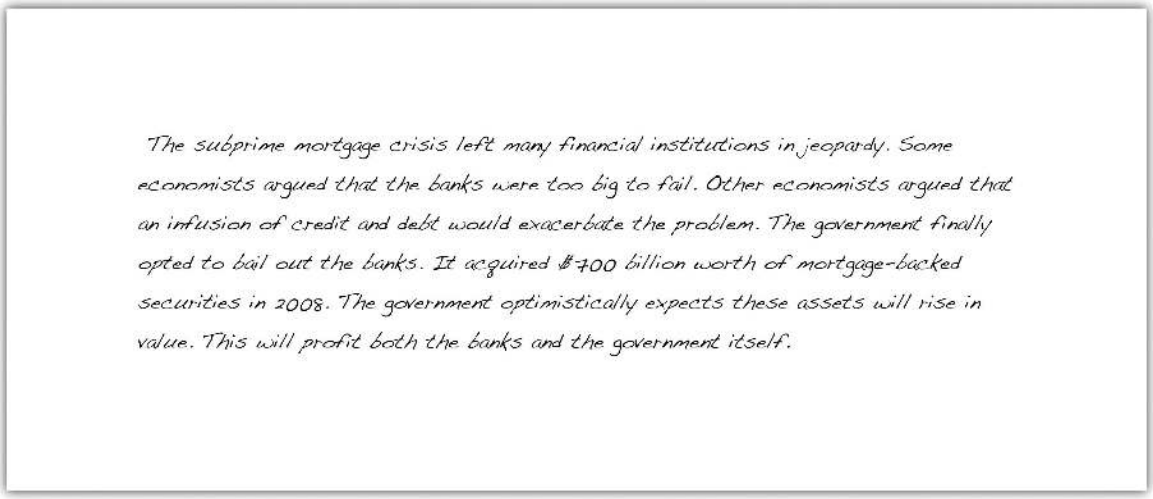


Figure: This section examines several ways to introduce sentence variety at the beginning of sentences, using Noemi's essay as an example.

Starting a Sentence with an Adverb

One technique you can use so as to avoid beginning a sentence with the subject is to use an adverb. An adverb is a word that describes a verb, adjective, or other adverb and often ends in *–ly*. Examples of adverbs include *quickly*, *softly*, *quietly*, *angrily*, and *timidly*. Notice the difference between the following sentences:

- She slowly turned the corner and peered into the murky basement.
- Slowly, she turned the corner and peered into the murky basement.

In the second sentence, the adverb *slowly* is placed at the beginning of the sentence. If you read the two sentences aloud, you will notice that moving the adverb changes the rhythm of the sentence and slightly alters its meaning. The second sentence emphasizes how the subject moves—slowly—creating a buildup of tension. This technique is effective for fiction writing.

Note that an adverb used at the beginning of a sentence is usually followed by a comma. A comma indicates that the reader should pause briefly, which creates a useful dramatic effect. Read the following sentences aloud and consider the effect of pausing after the adverb:

- Cautiously, he unlocked the kennel and waited for the dog's reaction.
- Solemnly, the policeman approached the mayor and placed him under arrest.
- Suddenly, he slammed the door shut and sprinted across the street.

In an academic essay, moving an adverb to the beginning of a sentence serves to vary the rhythm of a paragraph and increase sentence variety.

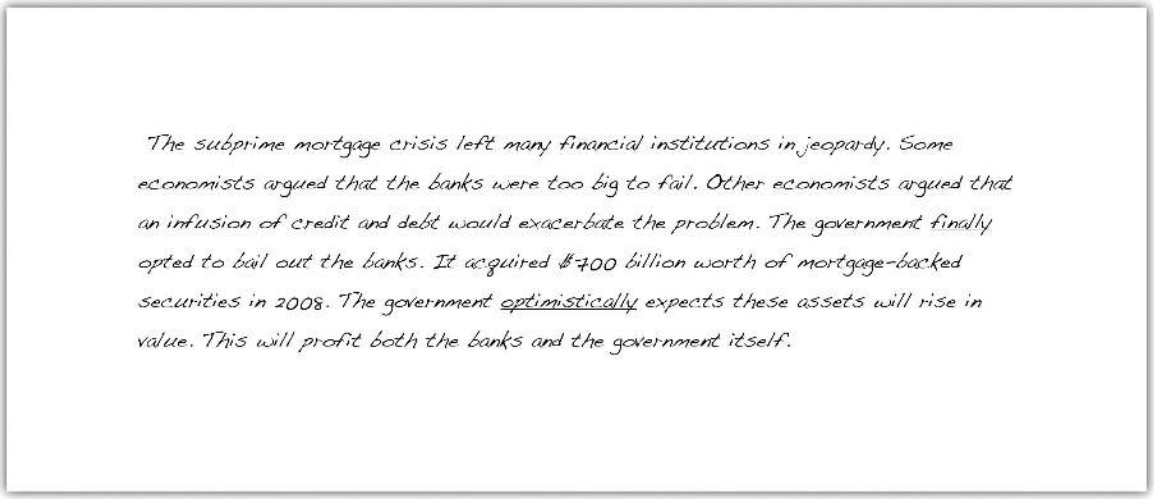


Figure: Noemi has used two adverbs in her essay that could be moved to the beginning of their respective sentences. Notice how the following revised version creates a more varied paragraph:

The subprime mortgage crisis left many financial institutions in jeopardy. Some economists argued that the banks were too big to fail. Other economists argued that an infusion of credit and debt would exacerbate the problem. Finally, the government opted to bail out the banks. It acquired $700 billion worth of mortgage-backed securities in 2008. Optimistically, the government expects these assets will rise in value. This will profit both the banks and the government itself.

? Exercise 2

On your own sheet of paper, rewrite the following sentences by moving the adverbs to the beginning.

1. The red truck sped furiously past the camper van, blaring its horn.
2. Jeff snatched at the bread hungrily, polishing off three slices in under a minute.
3. The firefighters bravely tackled the blaze, but they were beaten back by flames.
4. Mayor Danielson privately acknowledged that the budget was excessive and that further discussion was needed.
5. The dancer lithely glided across the stage before she began the pas-de-deux.



Figure:

Starting a Sentence with a Prepositional Phrase

A prepositional phrase is a group of words that behaves as an adjective or an adverb, modifying a noun or a verb. Prepositional phrases contain a preposition (a word that specifies place, direction, or time) and an object of the preposition (a noun phrase or pronoun that follows the preposition).

Common Prepositions

above	beneath	into	till
across	beside	like	toward
against	between	near	under
after	beyond	off	underneath
among	by	on	until
around	despite	over	up
at	except	past	with
before	for	since	without
behind	from	through	
below	inside	throughout	

Read the following sentence:

- The child opened his birthday present **with excitement**.

In this sentence, the prepositional phrase is *underneath the table.* The preposition *underneath* relates to the object that follows the preposition—*the table*. Adjectives may be placed between the preposition and the object in a prepositional phrase.

- The child opened his birthday present **with extreme excitement**.

Some prepositional phrases can be moved to the beginning of a sentence in order to create variety in a piece of writing. Look at the following revised sentence:

- **With excitement,** the child opened his birthday present.

Notice that when the prepositional phrase is moved to the beginning of the sentence, the emphasis shifts from the subject—the child—to the manner in which the child is opening the present. Words that are placed at the beginning or end of a sentence generally receive the greatest emphasis. Take a look at the following examples. The prepositional phrase is bold in each:

- The bandaged man waited **in the doctor's office**.
- **In the doctor's office**, the bandaged man waited.
- My train leaves the station **at 6:45 a.m**.
- **At 6:45 a.m.**, my train leaves the station.
- The teenagers exchanged drugs and money **under the railway bridge**.
- **Under the railway bridge**, the teenagers exchanged drugs and money.

Prepositional phrases are useful in any type of writing. Take another look at Noemi's essay on the government bailout.

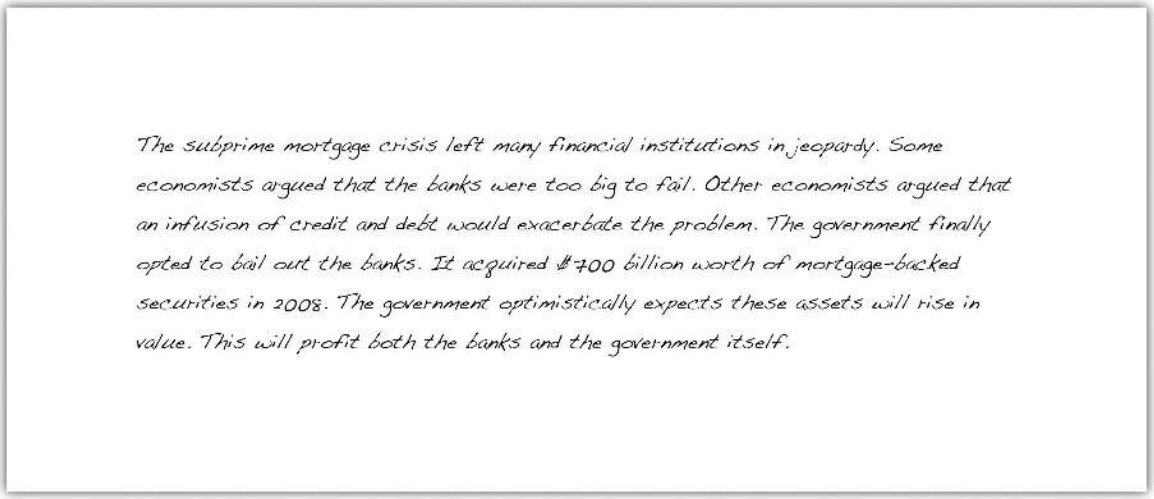
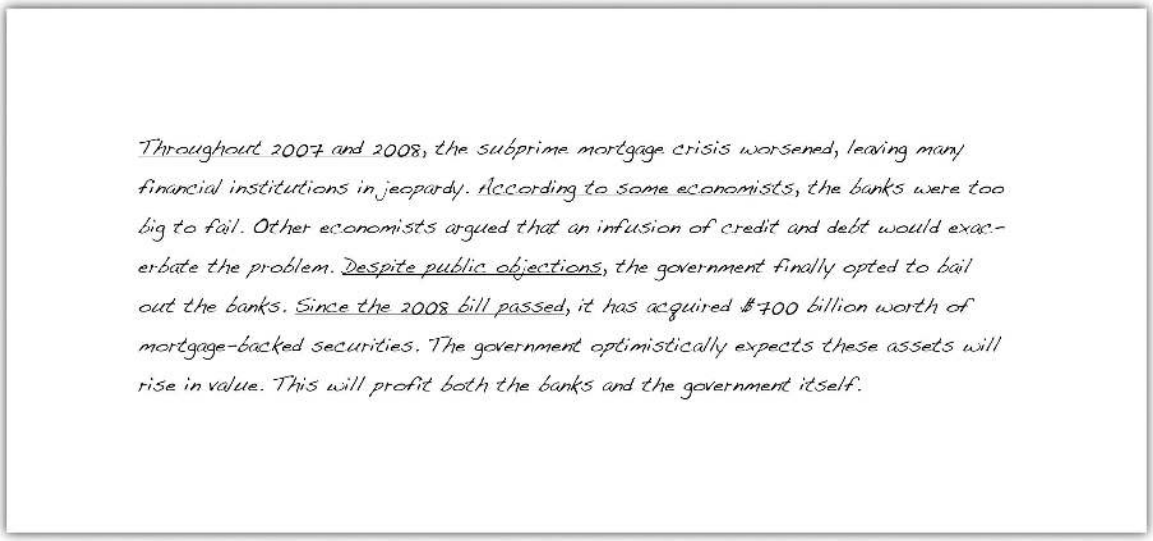


Figure: Now read the revised version.



The underlined words are all prepositional phrases. Notice how they add additional information to the text and provide a sense of flow to the essay, making it less choppy and more pleasurable to read.

Unmovable Prepositional Phrases

Not all prepositional phrases can be placed at the beginning of a sentence. Read the following sentence:

- I would like a chocolate sundae **without whipped cream**.

In this sentence, *without whipped cream* is the prepositional phrase. Because it describes the chocolate sundae, it cannot be moved to the beginning of the sentence. “Without whipped cream I would like a chocolate sundae” does not make as much (if any) sense. It dangles because it is not right next to what it describes. Just like a verbal phrase or any modifying phrase, a prepositional phrase needs to be placed right next to what it describes. To determine whether a prepositional phrase can be moved, we must determine the meaning of the sentence.

Overuse of Prepositional Phrases

Experienced writers often include more than one prepositional phrase in a sentence; however, it is important not to overload your writing. Using too many modifiers in a paragraph may create an unintentionally comical effect as the following example shows:

> The treasure lay buried under the old oak tree, behind the crumbling fifteenth-century wall, near the schoolyard, where children played merrily during their lunch hour, unaware of the riches that remained hidden beneath their feet.

A sentence is not necessarily effective just because it is long and complex. If your sentence appears cluttered with prepositional phrases, divide it into two shorter sentences. The previous sentence is far more effective when written as two simpler sentences:

> The treasure lay buried under the old oak tree, behind the crumbling fifteenth-century wall. In the nearby schoolyard, children played merrily during their lunch hour, unaware of the riches that remained hidden beneath their feet.

In addition, writers can sometimes transform prepositional phrases into adjectives when the prepositional phrase originally described a noun.

Sentence with too many prepositional phrases (in bold): Oftentimes, the governor revises the California budget **in May** when the revenue numbers **from taxes** are in, but that only leaves two months **until the end of the fiscal year** to change spending.

Sentence with some prepositional phrases (in bold) turned into adjectives (in blue): Oftentimes, the governor revises the California budget **in May** when the tax revenue numbers are in, but that only leaves the the final two months **of the fiscal year** to change spending.

? Exercise 3

On a separate piece of paper, move prepositional phrases around in the following paragraph to add variety or add some to appropriate places in the text.

Suburban economic development largely depends on three factors: proximity to a major economic center, transportation access, and the education level of the local workforce. The most successful suburban economic centers are located at the crossroads of two major interstates and have public and private transportation options available. It may be in the best interest of suburban areas within 30 miles of an urban area and looking to expand economically to invest in public transportation (light rail and/or bus) despite their need for subsidies. Economic analysis may show that a combination of local, state, and federal subsidies will make such investment feasible given the amount of projected growth. Even if the full amount of growth does not materialize, the greater ease with which local residents can commute to urban centers may allow for population growth and more moderate economic expansion of the suburban area and allow it to develop into a smaller hub with its own sphere of influence.

Collaboration

Compare what you did with a classmate.

✔ Writing at Work

The overuse of prepositional phrases often occurs when our thoughts are jumbled and we are unsure how concepts or ideas relate to one another. If you are preparing a report or a proposal, take the time to organize your thoughts in an outline before writing a rough draft. Read the draft aloud, either to yourself or to a colleague, and identify areas that are rambling or unclear. If you notice that a particular part of your report contains several sentences over twenty words (or the equivalent of two lines), you should double check that particular section to make certain that it is coherent and does not contain unnecessary prepositional phrases. Reading aloud sometimes helps detect unclear and wordy sentences. You can also ask a colleague to paraphrase your main points to ensure that the meaning is clear.

Starting a Sentence by Inverting Subject and Verb



Figure: Unsplash

As we noted earlier, most writers follow the subject-verb-object sentence structure. In an inverted sentence, the order is reversed so that the subject follows the verb. Read the following sentence pairs:

1. A truck was parked in the driveway.
2. Parked in the driveway was a truck.

1. A copy of the file is attached.
2. Attached is a copy of the file.

Notice how the second sentence in each pair places more emphasis on the subject—*a truck* in the first example and *the file* in the second. This technique is useful for drawing the reader's attention to your primary area of focus. We can apply this method to an academic essay. Take another look at Naoei's paragraph.

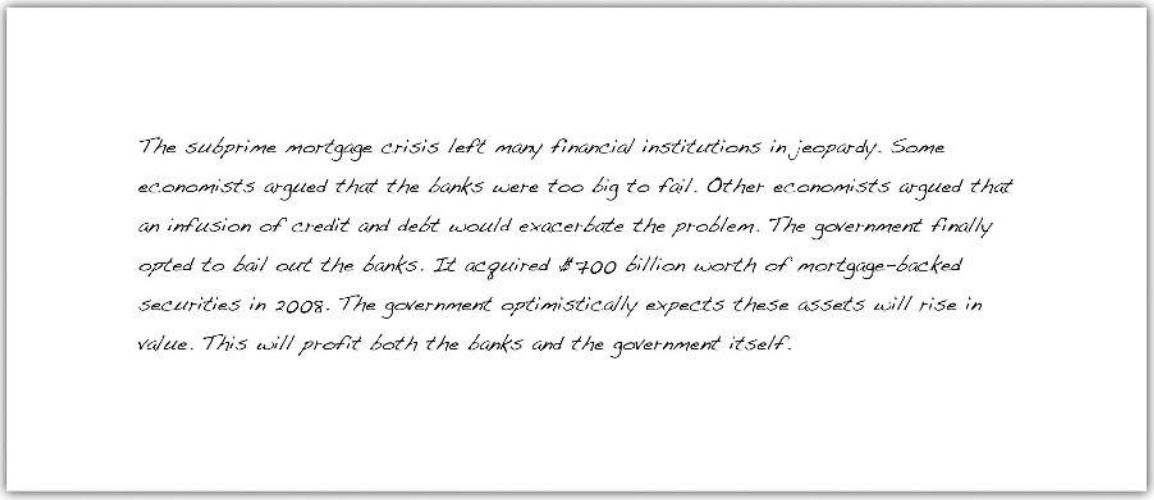


Figure: To emphasize the subject in certain sentences, Noemi can invert the traditional sentence structure. Read her revised paragraph:

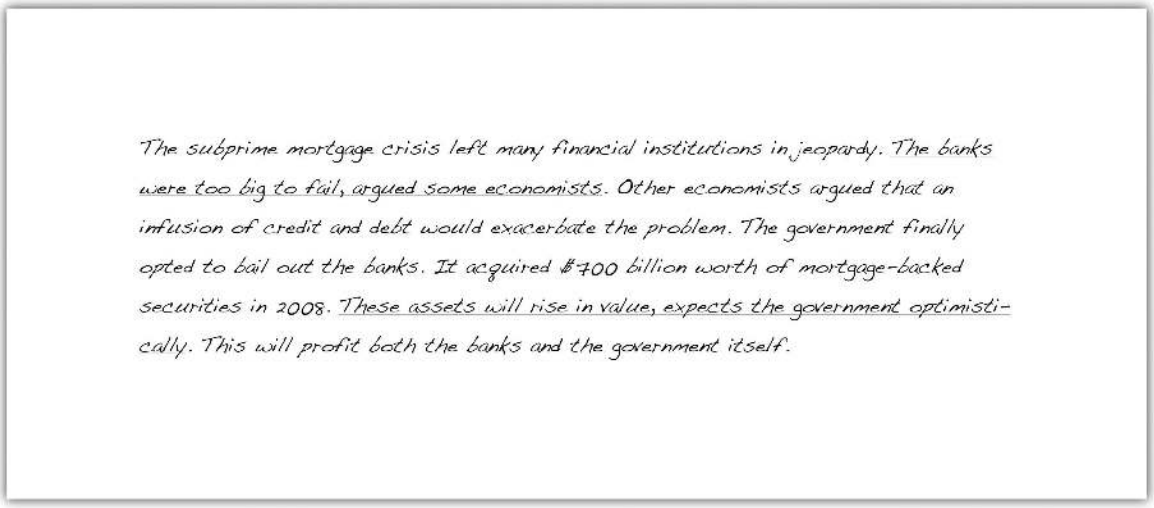


Figure:).

? Exercise 4

On your own sheet of paper, rewrite the following sentences as inverted sentences.

1. Teresa will never attempt to run another marathon.
2. A detailed job description is enclosed with this letter.
3. Bathroom facilities are across the hall to the left of the water cooler.
4. The well-dressed stranger stumbled through the doorway.
5. My colleagues remain unconvinced about the proposed merger.

Connecting Ideas to Increase Sentence Variety



Figure:

Reviewing and rewriting the beginning of sentences is a good way of introducing sentence variety into your writing. Another useful technique is to connect two sentences using a modifier, a relative clause, or an appositive. This section examines how to connect ideas across several sentences in order to increase sentence variety and improve writing.

Joining Ideas Using an *–ing* Modifier

Sometimes it is possible to combine two sentences by converting one of them into a modifier using the *–ing* verb form—*singing*, *dancing*, *swimming*. A modifier is a word or phrase that qualifies the meaning of another element in the sentence (see "Modifiers" section of this chapter). Read the following example:

Original sentences: Steve checked the computer system. He discovered a virus.

Revised sentence: Checking the computer system, Steve discovered a virus.

To connect two sentences using an *–ing* modifier, add *–ing* to one of the verbs in the sentences (*checking*) and delete the one of the subjects (*He*). Use a comma to separate the modifier from the subject of the sentence. It is important to make sure that the main

idea in your revised sentence is contained in the main clause, not in the modifier. In this example, the main idea is that Steve discovered a virus, not that he checked the computer system.

In the following example, an *–ing* modifier indicates that two actions are occurring at the same time:

1. Noticing the police car, she shifted gears and slowed down.

   This means that she slowed down at the same time she noticed the police car.

2. Barking loudly, the dog ran across the driveway.

   This means that the dog barked as it ran across the driveway.

You can add an *–ing* modifier to the beginning or the end of a sentence, depending on which fits best.

Beginning: Conducting a survey among her friends, Amanda found that few were happy in their jobs.

End: Maria filed the final report, **meeting her deadline**.

Tip:

A common mistake when combining sentences using the *–ing* verb form is to misplace the modifier so that it is not logically connected to the rest of the sentence. This creates a dangling modifier. For more about how to avoid this, see the "Modifiers" page earlier in this chapter.

Joining Ideas Using an *–ed* Modifier

Some sentences can be combined using an *–ed* verb form—*stopped*, *finished*, *played*. To use this method, one of the sentences must contain a form of *be* as a helping verb in addition to the *–ed* verb form. Take a look at the following example:

- **Original sentences:** The Jones family was delayed by a traffic jam. They arrived several hours after the party started.
- **Revised sentence:** Delayed by a traffic jam, the Jones family arrived several hours after the party started.

In the original version, *was* acts as a helping verb—it has no meaning by itself, but it serves a grammatical function by placing the main verb (*delayed*) in the perfect tense.

To connect two sentences using an *–ed* modifier, drop the helping verb (*was*) and the subject (*the Jones family*) from the sentence with an *–ed* verb form. This forms a modifying phrase (*delayed by a traffic jam*) that can be added to the beginning or end of the other sentence according to which fits best. As with the *–ing* modifier, be careful to place the word that the phrase modifies immediately next to what it modifies in order to avoid a dangling modifier.

Using *–ing* or *–ed* modifiers can help streamline your writing by drawing obvious connections between two sentences. Take a look at how Noemi might use modifiers in her paragraph.

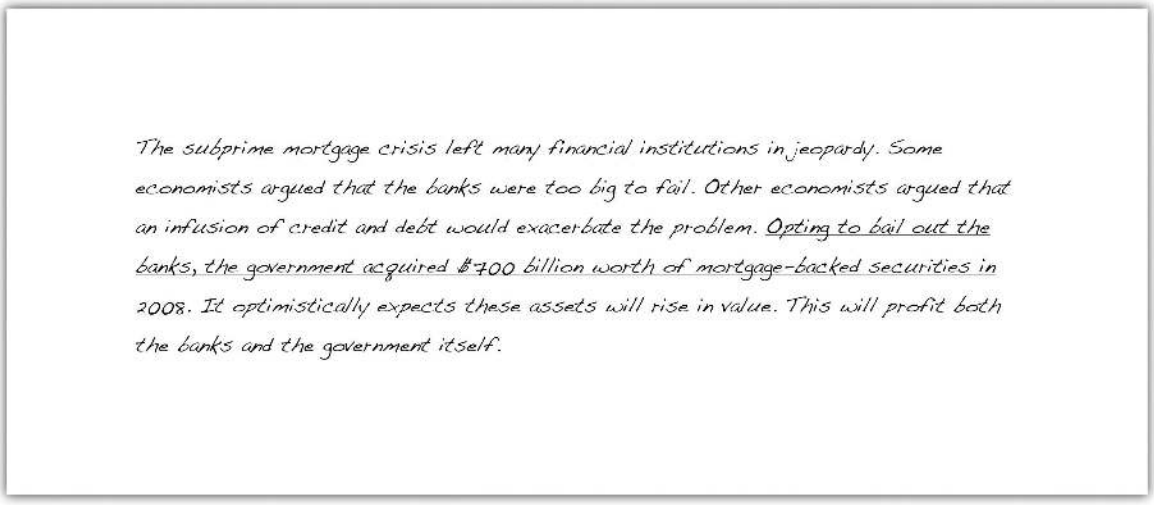


Figure: to draw a connection between the government's decision to bail out the banks and the result of that decision—the acquisition of the mortgage-backed securities.

? Exercise 5

Combine the following sentences so that you have a core clause and a modifying phrase beginning with -ed.

1. Xiana was floored by winning the grand prize. She didn't know what to say.
2. Danielle was sad that her cat passed away. She consoled herself remembering the time that he had ruined her computer.
3. They were shocked at the comedian's punch line. They didn't think it was funny at all.
4. He had mellowed out after the argument. He realized that going to the beach relaxed him.
5. The football was fumbled at the goal line. The football squirted around between players on the opposing teams.

Joining Ideas Using a Relative Clause

Another technique that writers use to combine sentences is to join them using a relative clause. A relative clause is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb and describes a noun. Relative clauses function as adjectives by answering questions such as *which one?* or *what kind?* Relative clauses begin with a relative pronoun, such as *who*, *which*, *where*, *why*, or *when*. Read the following examples:

- **Original sentences:** The managing director is visiting the company next week. He lives in Seattle.
- **Revised sentence:** The managing director, who lives in Seattle, is visiting the company next week.

To connect two sentences using a relative clause, substitute the subject of one of the sentences (*he*) for a relative pronoun (*who*). This gives you a relative clause (*who lives in Seattle*) that can be placed next to the noun it describes (*the managing director*). Make sure to keep the sentence you want to emphasize as the main clause. For example, reversing the main clause and subordinate clause in the preceding sentence emphasizes where the managing director lives, not the fact that he is visiting the company.

- **Revised sentence:** The managing director, who is visiting the company next week, lives in Seattle.

Relative clauses are a useful way of providing additional, nonessential information in a sentence. Take a look at how Noemi might incorporate relative clauses into her essay.



The subprime mortgage crisis, which had been steadily building throughout 2007 and 2008, left many financial institutions in jeopardy. Some economists, who favored the bailout, argued that the banks were too big to fail. Other economists, who opposed the bailout, argued that an infusion of credit and debt would exacerbate the problem. The government finally opted to bail out the banks. It acquired $700 billion worth of mortgage-backed securities in 2008. The government optimistically expects these assets will rise in value. This will profit both the banks and the government itself.

Figure: Notice how the underlined relative clauses can be removed from Naomi's essay without changing the meaning of the sentence.

Tip

To check the punctuation of relative clauses, assess whether or not the clause can be taken out of the sentence without changing its meaning. If the relative clause is not essential to the meaning of the sentence, it should be placed in commas. If the relative clause is essential to the meaning of the sentence, it does not require commas around it.

? Exercise 6

Join the following sentences by creating relative clauses.

1. Uncle Bob is a sailor. He has been everywhere.
2. Aunt Edna paints portraits. You met her last year.
3. My new car broke down on the bridge. The car cost a bundle.
4. Save the seat for me. The seat is closest to the front.
5. We had a lovely hotel in Ixtapa. We honeymooned there.
6. Joe's cat was mistaken for a rat. Its tail is hairless.

Joining Ideas Using an Appositive

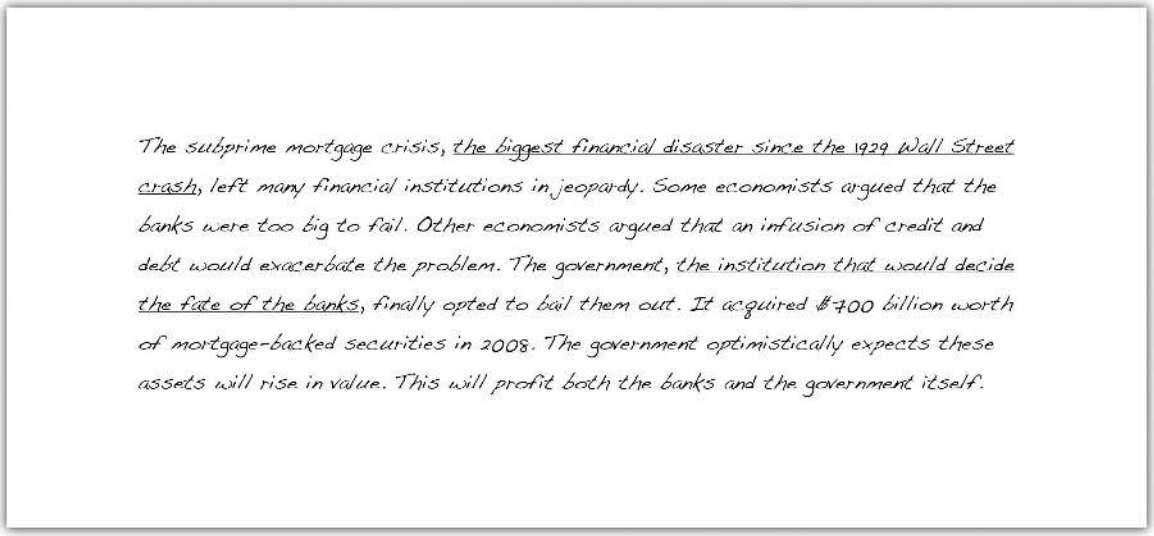
A noun phrase appositive is a word or group of words that describes or renames a noun or pronoun. Incorporating appositives into your writing is a useful way of combining sentences that are too short and choppy. Take a look at the following example:

- **Original sentences:** Greta Thunberg is a 16-year-old environmental activist. She is from Sweden.
- **Revised sentence:** Greta Thunberg, a 16-year-old environmental activist, is from Sweden.

In the revised sentence, *"a 16-year-old environmental activist"* is an appositive because it renames Greta Thunberg. To combine two sentences using an appositive, drop the subject and verb from the sentence that renames the noun and turn it into a phrase. Note that in the previous example, the appositive is positioned immediately after the noun it describes. An appositive may be placed anywhere in a sentence, but it must come directly before or after the noun to which it refers:

- **Appositive after noun:** No one expected that Scott, a poorly trained athlete, would win the race.
- **Appositive before noun:** A poorly trained athlete, Scott was not expected to win the race.

Unlike relative clauses, appositives are always punctuated by a comma or a set of commas. Take a look at the way Noemi uses appositives to include additional facts in her essay.



The subprime mortgage crisis, the biggest financial disaster since the 1929 Wall Street crash, left many financial institutions in jeopardy. Some economists argued that the banks were too big to fail. Other economists argued that an infusion of credit and debt would exacerbate the problem. The government, the institution that would decide the fate of the banks, finally opted to bail them out. It acquired $700 billion worth of mortgage-backed securities in 2008. The government optimistically expects these assets will rise in value. This will profit both the banks and the government itself.

? Exercise 7

On your own sheet of paper, rewrite the following sentence pairs as one sentence using the techniques you have learned in this section.

1. Baby sharks are called pups. Pups can be born in one of three ways.
2. The Pacific Ocean is the world's largest ocean. It extends from the Arctic in the north to the Southern Ocean in the south.
3. Michael Phelps won eight gold medals in the 2008 Olympics. He is a champion swimmer.
4. Ashley introduced her colleague Dan to her husband, Jim. She speculated that the two of them would have a lot in common.

5. Cacao is harvested by hand. It is then sold to chocolate-processing companies at the Coffee, Sugar, and Cocoa Exchange.

Collaboration

Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

? Exercise 8

Children's stories are deliberately written in short, simple sentences to avoid confusion. Most sentences are constructed using the standard subject-verb-object format. Choose a children's story that is suitable for eight- to ten-year-olds. Rewrite a chapter of the story so that it appeals to a slightly older age group, by editing for sentence variety. Experiment with the techniques you learned on this page, including the three different ways to vary sentence structure at the beginning of a sentence and the three different ways to connect ideas between sentences. Compare the revised chapter with the original version and consider how sentence variety can be used to target a particular audience.

✔ Writing at Work

In addition to varying sentence structure, consider varying the types of sentences you are using in a report or other workplace document. Most sentences are declarative, but a carefully placed question, exclamation, or command can pique colleagues' interest, even if the subject material is fairly dry. Imagine that you are writing a budget analysis. Beginning your report with a rhetorical question, such as "Where is our money going?" or "How can we increase sales?" encourages people to continue reading to find out the answers. Although they should be used sparingly in academic and professional writing, questions or commands are effective rhetorical devices.

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8.12: Relative Clauses

A *clause* is a group of related words that has a subject and a verb. A *relative clause* provides additional information about a noun, pronoun, or an entire clause that is already in the sentence, by telling which one, what kind of, how many, or more about the nature of something.



Video **8.12.1**

RELATIVE CLAUSES in 4 Steps. **Authored by:** Insights to English. Standard YouTube License.

Rules for Using Relative Clauses

Relative clauses use a relative pronoun to refer to a pronoun or noun that appears earlier in the sentence. They are sometimes also referred to as adjective clauses although that is a broader category of modifier, of which relative clauses are a part. Relative pronouns can only be used to refer to something earlier in that same sentence. To avoid confusion, a relative clause almost always appears immediately following the noun, pronoun, or clause it modifies. It must refer to something earlier in the same sentence. Sentences cannot begin with relative pronouns, which begin relative clauses.

Rule 1:

Relative clauses should begin with a relative pronoun that refers to the correct type of noun (see table).

Use the Correct Word

Relative Pronoun	Refers To	Replaces	Examples
who	people	I, we, you, he, she, they (as subjects of the sentence)	Uncle Jeff, who is a sailor, has been everywhere. (Uncle Jeff is a sailor. He has been everywhere.)
whom	people	me, us, you, her, him, them (as objects of verbs or prepositions)	Aunt Edna, whom you met last year, paints portraits. (Aunt Edna paints portraits. You met her last year.)
whose	possessives	mine, our, your, his, her, their, its	Joe's cat, whose tail is hairless, was mistaken for a rat. (Joe's cat was mistaken for a rat. Its tail was hairless.)
which	things	it, they, them	My new car, which cost a bundle, broke down on the bridge. (My new car broke down on the bridge. It cost a bundle.)
that	people or things	I, we, you, he, she, it, they, me, us, him, her, them	Sarah wants to buy the sofa that is in the window of the department store. (Sarah wants to buy the sofa. It is in the window of the department store.) Save the seat that is closest to the front for me. (Save the seat for me. It is closest to the front.)
when	time	then	Last week, when we were shopping, I bought lunch. (Last week, I bought lunch. We were shopping then.)
where	place	there	We had a lovely hotel in Ixtapa, where we honeymooned. (We had a lovely hotel in Ixtapa. We honeymooned there.)

Rule 2:

A relative clause can begin or end with a preposition, but not both.

Correct: She wore an outfit for which she received many compliments.

Sort of okay: She wore an outfit that she received many compliments on.

Incorrect: She wore an outfit on which she received many compliments on.

Rule 3:

If a preposition is in the sentence when it's taken apart, then there should be a preposition in the relative clause.

Taken apart:

She wore a dress.

She received many compliments for it.

Together:

She wore an outfit for which she received many compliments.

Relative Clauses and Comma Usage

Whether a comma is needed before the relative pronoun depends on whether the relative clause is **restrictive** or **nonrestrictive.**

A **restrictive** reference means that the thing or person the pronoun refers to is part of a group.

A **nonrestrictive** reference means that the thing or people the pronoun refers to is all of a group.

Rule 4:

When the situation is restrictive, do not use a comma before the relative pronoun.

For instance:

- The place **where** they were from was very hot and dry. (It's one of many places.)
- The people **who** were late had taken mass transit. (Not all of the people were late.)
- The tools **that** were stolen were in an unlocked box. (Some of the tools were stolen)

Rule 5:

"That" is always restrictive.

Rule 6:

When the situation is nonrestrictive, use a comma before the relative pronoun.

For instance:

- South America**, where** they are from, has many different cultures. (This implies that they are all from South America.)
- The people**, who** were late, had taken mass transit. (This implies all the people were late.)
- The tools**, which** were stolen, were in an unlocked box. (All of the tools were stolen.)

Rule 7:

"Which" is always nonrestrictive.

? Exercise 1

For each of these sentence sets:

- *First fill in the blank on line **a** with a personal pronoun that makes it a complete sentence.*
- *Then, fill in the blank on line **b** with the relative pronoun that makes it a relative clause.*
- Refer to the above table listing personal and relative pronouns if you need to.

Compare your answers with a classmate.

Example:

a Poodles are smart dogs. They make great companions.

b Poodles, which make great companions, are smart dogs.

1. a The man got a ticket. _____ parked his car next to mine.

b The man _____ parked his car next to mine got a ticket.

2. a Dr. Thompson enjoys baseball. _____ teaches geology.

b Dr. Thompson, _____ teaches geology, enjoys baseball.

3. a This book is available in our library. I ordered _____.

b This book, _____ I ordered, is available in our library.

4. a The partner also earned an A. You worked with _____.

b This partner with _____ you worked also earned an A.

5. a He moved to Arizona. The climate was drier _____.

b He moved to Arizona, _____ the climate was drier.

6. a The little girl played ball. _____ braids were tucked in her cap.

b The little girl, _____ braids were tucked in her cap, played ball.

7. a I tattled to _____.

b To _____ did you tattle?

? Exercise 2

Combine the following sentence sets to create one sentence with a relative clause. Ensure the punctuation is correct. 1. My cell phone battery is starting to die. My cell phone shuts down at 15%. 2. The Democratic presidential debate was aired on Tuesday night. Saturday Night Live parodies the presidential debates. 3. I am going to Phoenix this summer. It is very hot in Phoenix. 4. Rachel and Rochelle watch horror movies. Horror movies terrify and thrill them. 5. Violence seems to be everywhere on the media. Media violence makes people feel more in danger than they actually are. 6. The children were playing baseball in the street. Some of the children scattered when the window shattered.

? Exercise 3

Find two sentences in your own writing that have relative clauses. Write them down. If they are incorrect, fix them following the original. If they are correct, just write down the originals.

Alternatively, find two places in your writing where you name something at the end of the sentence and repeat that name at the beginning of the next sentence. This is a good place to combine your sentences using a relative clause.

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8.13: Key Takeaways

- Use parentheses, dashes, and hyphens in your writing to help with style and voice -- but use them sparingly.
- In order to write accurately, it is important for writers to be aware of commonly confused words.
- Choosing the proper words leaves a positive impression on your readers and is important for your credibility at work.
- Connotations of words may be positive, neutral, or negative.
- Slang, clichés, and overly general words should be avoided in academic writing.
- Strong sentence focus reduces wordiness and creates clearer and more concise sentences.
- Coordination joins sentences with related and equal ideas whereas subordination joins sentences with related but unequal ideas.
- Sentences can be coordinated using either a coordinating conjunction and a comma or a conjunctive adverb and a semicolon.
- Subordinate sentences are characterized by the use of a subordinate conjunction.
- Misplaced and dangling modifiers make sentences difficult to understand and, thus, distract the reader.
- Sentence variety reduces repetition in a piece of writing and adds emphasis to important points in the text.
- Sentence variety can be introduced to the beginning of sentences by starting a sentence with an adverb, starting a sentence with a prepositional phrase, or by inverting the subject and verb.
- Combine ideas, using modifiers, relative clauses, or appositives, to achieve sentence variety.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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SECTION OVERVIEW

9.1: Grammar, and Punctuation

9.1.1: Syntax (Part 1)

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9.1.1: Syntax (Part 1)

Components of a Sentence

A complete sentence consists of a subject and a predicate. The subject is the word or group of words that names the person, place, thing, or idea that the sentence is about, and the predicate consists of the verb and any words that are necessary to complete its meaning. Both subject and predicate are necessary for the sentence to express a complete thought. In a way, every sentence can be compared to a story. Like a story, a sentence must be about someone or something, and that person or thing must have something said about it. In grammatical terms, a complete sentence is an independent clause, which is a group of words that contains a subject and a predicate and can stand on its own as a complete thought.

Example 9.1.1.1:

I could not play in the basketball game.

In this sentence the subject is *I*, and the rest of the sentence is the predicate. Now consider this clause:

Example 9.1.1.2:

Because I sprained my ankle

Here also the subject is *I*, and there is a predicate, *sprained my ankle*, but this clause is dependent (or subordinate), which means that in order to express its meaning completely it must be joined to an independent clause, as follows:

Example 9.1.1.3:

Because I sprained my ankle, I could not play in the basketball game.

As this example illustrates, a dependent (or subordinate) clause cannot stand on its own. It must be joined to an independent clause to make its meaning clear. All complete sentences must contain at least one independent clause.

Compound Subjects

A sentence may have more than one person, place, thing, or idea as the subject. When this occurs, the sentence has a compound subject.

Example 9.1.1.4:

The **students and teachers** left the building when the fire alarm sounded.

In this example, the phrase *students and teachers* is a compound subject.

Prepositional Phrases

A phrase is a group of words that cannot function as a clause because it lacks either a subject, a predicate, or both. A prepositional phrase is a modifying unit that indicates a relationship of some kind (often a relationship of space or time) between the object of the preposition and another word.

Example 9.1.1.5:

The book was found underneath the couch.

In this example, *underneath the couch* is a prepositional phrase. The object of the preposition is couch, and the preposition *underneath* indicates the relationship between the subject of the sentence (book) and the couch.

Common prepositions include *in*, *on*, *of*, *under*, *near*, *by*, *with*, and *about*.

Participial Phrases

Just as prepositional phrases are built on prepositions, participial phrases are built on either the past or present participle of a verb. They are used as modifiers and usually describe nouns. The participles commonly used in English are the present participle (the –ing form of verbs) and the past participle (the –ed form of regular verbs). Thus, *walking* and *walked* are the present and past participles of the verb to *walk*. A participial phrase consists of the verb participle and any modifiers that go with it.

Example 9.1.1.6:

walking over rocky ground.

In this example, *walking* is the participle and *over rocky ground* (a prepositional phrase) completes the participial phrase.

Since many participial phrases contain the participle of an action verb, students sometimes confuse a participial phrase with the main verb of a sentence. Look closely, though, and you will see that the action word in a participial phrase is never a complete verb. It is usually only a past or present participle that lacks the helping verb it would need to form a predicate.

Example 9.1.1.7:

A young man staring at his cell phone bumped into me.

The subject of this sentence is *A young man*, and there may seem to be two predicates, *staring at his cell phone* and *bumped into me*. One of these, however, is only a participial phrase. How can you tell which one? If you remove the first of these two phrases, you get *A young man bumped into me*. This is clearly a complete sentence with a verb, *bumped*, in the past tense. However, if you remove the second phrase, you get *A young man staring at his cell phone*. Is this a complete sentence? Compare it with this:

Example 9.1.1.8:

A young man **was** staring at his cell phone.

Only when we add was do we have a complete sentence. Why? Because *staring* cannot function as a verb without the helping verb *was* or *is*. So in our original sentence *staring at his cell phone* is a participial phrase used to describe the young man, and the predicate is *bumped into me*.

Exercise 1

Read the following sentences. Underline the subjects, and circle the prepositional phrases:

1. The gym is open until nine o'clock tonight.
2. We went to the store to get some ice.
3. The student with the most extra credit will win a homework pass.
4. Maya and Tia found an abandoned cat by the side of the road.
5. The driver of that pickup truck skidded on the ice.
6. Anita won the race with time to spare.
7. The people who work for that company were surprised about the merger.
8. Working in haste means that you are more likely to make mistakes.
9. The soundtrack has over sixty songs in languages from around the world.
10. His latest invention does not work, but it has inspired the rest of us.

Sentence Patterns

Most English sentences, no matter how long or complicated, make use of the following five basic sentence patterns:

Subject–Verb

Example 9.1.1.9:

The hammer fell.

The verb [fell] in this type of sentence is *intransitive*, meaning that it does not require a direct object, as the transitive verbs do in patterns 4 and 5. Also, not being a linking verb (see patterns 2 and 3), it does not require a complement. It is possible, then, for a sentence using this pattern to be comprised of only a subject and a verb, as in this example. However, modifiers can always be added, making the sentence longer. Consider this example:

Example 9.1.1.10:

The hammer fell with great force.

In this example with *great force* is a prepositional phrase added to describe (or modify) how the hammer fell. But because this prepositional phrase is extra material that is not essential to the sentence's structure (the sentence is grammatically complete without it), this longer version is still an example of the basic Subject-Verb sentence pattern.

Subject–Linking Verb–Noun

Example 9.1.1.11:

The professor is an economist.

This pattern is distinguished by its use of a linking verb. The most common linking verb in English is *to be*, which is conjugated as *is* in this example. In this pattern, the linking verb is used to re-name the subject by linking it to another noun, as in this example where the professor is said to be an economist. This re-naming noun is known as the complement of the linking verb.

Subject–Linking Verb–Adjective

Example 9.1.1.12:

The athlete is tall.

As in pattern 2, this pattern uses a linking verb (*is*) to connect the subject with a complement, but here the complement is an adjective (*tall*) that describes the subject.

Subject–Verb–Direct Object

Example 9.1.1.13:

The pitcher threw the ball.

The verb in this pattern is transitive: it requires that the action be performed on something or someone. In other words, something or someone receives the action of the verb (*threw*, in this example), and that thing or person is the direct object (the ball, in this example).

Subject–Verb–Indirect Object–Direct Object

Example 9.1.1.14:

The lobbyists gave the Congressmen money.

In this pattern, the transitive verb takes both a direct object and an indirect object. In this example, the direct object is *money* (because money is the thing that was given) and the indirect object is *Congressmen*. The indirect object identifies to whom (or

which) or for whom (or which) the action is done. The indirect object is usually a noun or pronoun, and in this pattern it comes before the direct object. Usually a sentence using this pattern can be re-written in a form that places the indirect object in a prepositional phrase that comes after the direct object, thus: *The lobbyists gave money to the Congressmen*. Here the indirect object, the *Congressmen*, becomes the object of the preposition *to*.

Compound Sentences: Joining Clauses with Coordination

A compound sentence consists of two independent clauses joined by coordination. Coordination connects the two clauses in a way that emphasizes both clauses equally. Consider these two sentences:

Original sentences: I spent my entire paycheck last week. I am staying home this weekend.

In their current form, these sentences contain two separate ideas that may or may not be related. Am I staying home this week because I spent my paycheck, or is there another reason for my lack of enthusiasm to leave the house? To indicate a relationship between the two ideas, we can use the coordinating conjunction *so*:

Revised sentence: I spent my entire paycheck last week, so I am staying home this weekend.

The revised sentence illustrates that the two ideas are connected. Notice that the sentence retains two independent clauses (*I spent my entire paycheck; I am staying home this weekend*) because each can stand alone as a complete idea.

Coordinating Conjunctions

A coordinating conjunction is a word that joins two independent clauses. The most common coordinating conjunctions *are for, and, nor, but, or, yet*, and *so*. Note that a comma precedes the coordinating conjunction when it joins two independent clauses.

Independent Clause	Coordinating Conjunction	Independent Clause	Revised Sentence
I will not be attending the dance.	for (indicates a reason or cause)	I have no one to go with.	I will not be attending the dance, for I have no one to go with.
Posters announcing the dance are everywhere.	and (joins two ideas)	Teachers have talked about it in class.	Posters announcing the dance are everywhere, and teachers have talked about it in class.
Jessie isn't going to be at the dance.	nor (indicates a negative)	Tom won't be there either.	Jessie isn't going to be at the dance, nor will Tom be there.
The fundraisers are hoping for a record-breaking attendance.	but, yet (both words indicate a contrast; *but* is more commonly used)	I don't think many people are going.	The fundraisers are hoping for a record-breaking attendance, but I don't think many people are going. OR The fundraisers are hoping for a record-breaking attendance, yet I don't think many people are going.
I might go to the next fundraising event.	or (offers an alternative)	I might donate some money to the cause.	I might go to the next fundraising event, or I might donate some money to the cause.
Buying a new dress is expensive.	so (indicates a result)	By staying home I will save money.	Buying a new dress is expensive, so by staying home I will save money.

tip

To help you remember the seven coordinating conjunctions, think of the acronym **FANBOYS: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so**. Remember that when you use a coordinating conjunction to connect independent clauses, a comma should precede the conjunction. (Exception: the comma is sometimes left out when the clauses are short and closely related. Example: John drove and I gave directions.)

Conjunctive Adverbs

Another method of joining two independent clauses with related and equal ideas is to use a conjunctive adverb and a semicolon. Like coordinating conjunctions, conjunctive adverbs can join independent clauses and indicate a particular relationship between them, but conjunctive adverbs create a stronger break between the clauses than coordinating conjunction do. Read the following sentences:

Original sentences: Bridget wants to take part in the next Olympics. She trains every day.

Since these sentences contain two equal and related ideas, they may be joined using a conjunctive adverb. Now, read the revised sentence:

Revised sentence: Bridget wants to take part in the next Olympics; therefore, she trains every day.

The revised sentence explains the relationship between Bridget's desire to take part in the next Olympics and her daily training. Notice that the conjunctive adverb comes after a semicolon that separates the two clauses and is followed by a comma.

The table below lists common conjunctive adverbs and demonstrates their function.

Function	Conjunctive Adverb	Example
Addition	also, furthermore, moreover, besides	Alicia was late for class and stuck in traffic; furthermore, her shoe heel had broken and she had forgotten her lunch.
Comparison	similarly, likewise	Recycling aluminum cans is beneficial to the environment; similarly, reusing plastic bags and switching off lights reduces waste.
Contrast	instead, however, conversely	Most people do not walk to work; instead, they drive or take the train.
Emphasis	namely, certainly, indeed	The Siberian tiger is a rare creature; indeed, there are fewer than five hundred left in the wild.
Cause and Effect	accordingly, consequently, hence, thus	I missed my train this morning; consequently, I was late for my meeting.
Time	finally, next, subsequently, then	Tim crossed the barrier, jumped over the wall, and pushed through the hole in the fence; finally, he made it to the station.

? Exercise 2

Combine each sentence pair into a single sentence using either a coordinating conjunction or a conjunctive adverb:

1. Pets are not allowed in Mr. Taylor's building. He owns several cats and a parrot.
2. New legislation prevents drivers from sending or reading text messages while driving. Many people continue to use their phones illegally.
3. The coroner concluded that the young man had taken a lethal concoction of drugs. By the time his relatives found him, nothing could be done.
4. . Amphibians are vertebrates that live on land and in the water. Flatworms are invertebrates that live only in water.

5. Ashley carefully fed and watered her tomato plants all summer. The tomatoes grew juicy and ripe.
6. When he lost his car key, Simon attempted to open the door with a wire hanger, a credit card, and a paper clip. He called the manufacturer for advice.

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9.1.2: Syntax (Part 2)

Complex Sentences: Joining Clauses with Subordination

Subordination joins two sentences with related ideas by combining them into an independent clause (a complete sentence) and a dependent clause (a construction that relies on the independent clause, also called the main clause, to complete its meaning). While coordination allows a writer to give equal weight to the two ideas that are being combined, subordination enables a writer to emphasize one idea over the other. Take a look at the following sentences:

Original sentences: Tracy stopped to help the injured man. She would be late for work.

To illustrate that these two ideas are related, we can rewrite them as a single sentence using the subordinating conjunction *even though*.

Revised sentence: Even though Tracy would be late for work, she stopped to help the injured man.

In the revised version, we now have an independent clause (*she stopped to help the injured man*) that stands as a complete sentence, and a dependent clause (*even though Tracy would be late for work*) that is subordinate to the main clause. Notice that the revised sentence emphasizes the fact that Tracy stopped to help the injured man, rather than the fact that she would be late for work. We could also write the sentence this way:

Revised sentence: Tracy stopped to help the injured man even though she would be late for work.

The meaning remains the same in both sentences, with the subordinating conjunction *even though* introducing the dependent clause.

tip

To punctuate sentences correctly, look at the position of the main clause and the subordinate clause. If a subordinate clause precedes the main clause, use a comma. If the subordinate clause follows the main clause, no punctuation is required. Exception: subordinate clauses that begin with conjunctions that indicate concession (see table below) are sometimes preceded by a comma, even when they follow the main clause.

Subordinating Conjunctions and Adverb

Clauses A subordinating conjunction is a word that joins a subordinate (dependent) clause to a main (independent) clause. Since the resulting subordinate clause modifies the verb in the main clause, the subordinate unit is called an adverb clause.

Function	Subordinating Conjunction	Example
Concession	although, while, though, whereas, even though	Sarah completed her report even though she had to stay late to get it done.
Condition	if, unless, until	Until we know what is causing the problem, we will not be able to fix it.
Manner (used to make a comparison)	as if, as though	The students in the conference room stopped talking at once, as though they had been stunned into silence.
Place	where, wherever	Where the trail split, our guide stopped, unsure of which route to take.
Reason	because, since, so that, in order that	Because the air conditioning was turned up so high, everyone in the office wore sweaters.
Time	after, before, while, once, when, as, as soon as	After the meeting had finished, we all went to lunch.

Exercise 3

Combine each sentence pair into a single sentence using a subordinating conjunction:

1. A snow storm disrupted traffic all over the east coast. There will be long delivery delays this week.
2. My neighbor had his television volume turned up too high. I banged on his door and asked him to keep the noise down.
3. Jessica prepared the potato salad and the sautéed vegetables. Ashley marinated the chicken.
4. Romeo poisons himself. Juliet awakes to find Romeo dead and stabs herself with a dagger.

Key Takeaways

- Coordination and subordination join two sentences with related ideas.
- Coordination joins sentences with related and equal ideas, whereas subordination joins sentences with related but unequal ideas.
- Sentences can be coordinated using either a coordinating conjunction and a comma or a conjunctive adverb and a semicolon.
- Subordinate adverb clauses are made by the use of a subordinating conjunction.
- In a sentence with an adverb clause, a comma is generally used to separate the main clause from the dependent clause if the dependent clause is placed at the beginning of the sentence.

Relative Pronouns and Adjective Clauses

While an adverb clause modifies the verb in an independent clause, an adjective clause modifies a noun. The modified noun may function in the sentence in any number of ways. It may be a subject, complement, direct object, or the object of a preposition.

Consider the following:

Original Sentences: Jill and her friends camped near a silver mine. The mine had been abandoned for fifty years.

The second sentence modifies or tells about the silver mine, which is the object of a preposition (*near*) in the first sentence. We can turn the second sentence into a subordinate adjective clause and attach it to the first sentence.

Combined Sentences: Jill and her friends camped near a silver mine **that had been abandoned for fifty years.**

The adjective clause is highlighted in yellow. *That* replaces the original subject of the second sentence (*The mine*) to form a subordinate adjective clause, and the clause is then attached to the first sentence, which becomes the main clause. The relative pronoun in this example is *that*. Like subordinating conjunctions, relative pronouns are used to make a clause dependent (or subordinate). But unlike subordinating conjunctions, relative pronouns take the place of another word, just as other pronouns do. And unlike adverb clauses, which can be located either before or after a main clause, an adjective clause must be located immediately after the noun that it modifies. If this rule is not followed, the adjective clause becomes a misplaced modifier (see Misplaced Modifiers). The following words can all function as relative pronouns: *who, whom, whose, which, that, when, where*.

Restrictive and Nonrestrictive Adjective Clauses

An adjective clause is restrictive if it is essential for identifying (restricting) the noun that it modifies. A nonrestrictive clause may be important to the sentence, but it is not essential for identifying the noun. This distinction is important because nonrestrictive clauses must be set off from the main clause with commas. Consider these examples:

- My brother Frank, **who ran cross country in high school**, beat everybody in the foot race.
- A young man **who ran cross country in high school** beat everybody in the foot race.

Both these sentences contain the same adjective clause (*who ran cross country in high school*), but in the first example the clause modifies a subject identified with a proper noun (*Frank*) and the designation *my brother*. Consequently, the adjective clause is not essential to the identification of the subject. It is nonrestrictive and set off with two commas, one before the clause and one after it.

In the second example, the subject is simply “A young man.” Consequently, the adjective clause is necessary to the identification of who this particular young man is. The clause is restrictive and is not set off with commas (see comma use).

The table below illustrates relative pronouns and how they function to create adjective clauses.

Function of Relative Pronoun	Relative Pronoun	Example (with adjective clause highlighted)
Takes the place of a noun referring to people.	who	My roommate, **who is from Brazil**, is majoring in physics
Takes the place of a direct object referring to people.	whom	The band hired Slim Swayze, **whom the lead singer had known in Ogden**, to play the harmonica. Notes: *Whom* is generally used only in formal writing. *Who* is often used in its place in colloquial English. When *whom* is used in a restrictive clause, it may be deleted from the sentence. Example: The band leader hired a musician **whom he had known in Ogden** to play the harmonica.
Takes the place of a noun referring to things. Generally used in nonrestrictive clauses.	which	*The Old Man and the Sea*, **which I read last year**, tells the story of a fisherman in the Gulf of Mexico.
Takes the place of a noun referring to people or things. Used only in restrictive clauses.	that	The tourist blundered down a street **that seemed to lead nowhere**. Note: When that is used to replace a direct object, it may be deleted from the sentence. Example: The tacos **that I ate** were delicious.
Creates a clause that modifies a particular time.	when	Audrey and I recalled the time **when we played together on the volleyball team**.
Creates a clause that modifies a particular place	where	Joe spent spring break in North Carolina, **where his cousins live**.
Indicates a condition of ownership between the modified noun and the subject of the adjective clause.	whose	An elderly woman **whose car had been stolen** sat on a bench in the police station.

? Exercise 4

Use coordination and/or subordination to combine each set of simple sentences into a single sentence.

1. 1. Heroin is an extremely addictive drug. Thousands of heroin addicts die each year.
2. Shakespeare's writing is still relevant today. He wrote about timeless themes. These themes include love, hate, jealousy, death, and destiny.
3. Gay marriage was first legal in the U.S in the six states of Iowa, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. Other states followed their example.
4. Prewriting is a vital stage of the writing process. Prewriting helps you organize your ideas. Types of prewriting include outlining, brainstorming, and idea mapping.
5. Mitch Bancroft is a famous writer. He also serves as a governor on the local school board. Mitch's two children attend the school.

Common Errors: Fragments and Run-ons

Fragments

A fragment occurs when a group of words that does not form a complete sentence is punctuated as though it is a complete sentence. Here are three common types of fragments and ways to correct them:

The fragment may lack a predicate because the verb is incomplete:

Fragment: The runners staggering in the 100-degree heat.

Complete sentence: The runners **were** staggering in the 100-degree heat.

> Note
>
> The present participle *staggering* is not a complete verb without the helping verb were. See Progressive Verb Tenses.

The fragment may be a dependent (subordinate) clause that needs to be attached to an independent clause:

Fragment: Unless she could earn the money for tuition.

Complete sentence: Unless she could earn the money for tuition, she would have to drop out of school.

> Note
>
> The fragment here is an adverb clause and does not express a complete thought unless it is attached to an independent clause. See Complex Sentences.

Fragment: Which was the best thing to do.

Complete sentence: My sister decided to sell the house, which was the best thing to do.

> Note
>
> The fragment here is an adjective clause and does not express a complete thought unless it is attached to an independent clause. See Complex Sentences.

The fragment may be a subject with modifiers that needs a linking verb.

Fragment: Doubt and mistrust everywhere, fogging the minds of managers and workers alike.

Complete Sentence: Doubt and mistrust **were** everywhere, fogging the minds of managers and workers alike.

> Note
>
> Were supplies the needed linking verb in this sentence (see Sentence Patterns). Fogging may seem like a verb, but it is only part of a participial phrase and cannot be a complete verb without a helping verb. See Components of a Sentence.

Run-on Sentences

Sentences with two or more independent clauses that have been incorrectly combined are known as run-on sentences. A run-on sentence may be either a fused sentence or a comma splice.

Fused sentence: A family of foxes lived under our shed young foxes played all over the yard.

Notice that there are two sentences here, one about a family of foxes, which ends with the word *shed*, and another about the young foxes. These two sentences are simply run together without any punctuation, coordination, or subordination, creating a fused sentence.

Comma splice: We looked outside, the kids were hopping on the trampoline.

Here the break between the two sentences is marked with only a comma. Since a comma is not a legitimate way to connect independent clauses, this creates a comma splice.

Correcting Run-ons with Punctuation

One way to correct run-on sentences is to correct the punctuation. For example, adding a period will correct the run-on by creating two separate sentences. Using a semicolon between the two complete sentences will also correct the error. A semicolon allows you

to keep the two closely related ideas together in one sentence. When you punctuate with a semicolon, make sure that both parts of the sentence are independent clauses.

Run-on (fused sentence): The accident closed both lanes of traffic we waited an hour for the wreckage to be cleared.

Corrected sentence: The accident closed both lanes of traffic; we waited an hour for the wreckage to be cleared.

When you use a semicolon to separate two independent clauses, you may wish to add a conjunctive adverb to show the connection between the two thoughts. After the semicolon, add the conjunctive adverb and follow it with a comma (see Compound Sentences).

Run-on (comma splice): The project was put on hold, we didn't have time to slow down, so we kept working.

Corrected sentence: The project was put on hold; however, we didn't have time to slow down, so we kept working.

Coordinating conjunctions (remember FANBOYS) and subordination, discussed in the sections on Compound Sentences and Complex Sentences, can also be used to fix run-ons.

? Exercise 5

Use what you have learned so far to identify common sentence errors. Label each sentence as a fragment (**F**), a run-on sentence (**R**), or a correct, complete sentence (**C**) in the space before each. Write corrected sentences on the lines below fragments and run-ons.

_____ Being absent hurts a student's grade, he or she should be in class every day.

_____

_____ Having been interested in science most of her life, she did well in Biology 101.

_____

_____ Hurry with your breakfast, you will miss the bus.

_____

_____ Several students had the right answer; however, most of them failed the exam.

_____

_____ Several girls expressed concerns about course selections, therefore, changes were made.

_____

_____ Jim practiced the violin daily, he wanted to excel in music.

_____

_____ The child loved his mother, but he did not want to obey her.

_____

_____ I had a severe case of the flu last year.

_____

_____ And had spent the first three days of my illness in bed.

_____

_____ Because I was sick of my bed and decided I'd lie on the sofa and watch television.

_____

_____ Only getting up to take care of the necessities of life.

_____

_____ Then I must have fallen asleep.

_____

_____ When I was suddenly conscious again.

_____

_____ The wind howled outside, the house was damp and chilly, and my fever soared.

_____

_____ Then somewhere in the blackness ahead of me, I saw a spot of light.

_____

_____ What has happened to the economy, many Americans want the answer to this question.

_____

_____ He was late for his appointment, then he forgot to bring his briefcase with him.

_____

_____ Voting is a privilege, this privilege should not be taken for granted.

_____

_____ Be ready for any emergency, plan ahead.

_____

_____ Because I was sure that I had died.

_____

_____ A friend is always willing to help, friendship is invaluable.

_____

_____ Although he was sick, James came to class.

_____

_____ Running a temperature between 102 and 107.

_____

_____ We were excited about the game, and we won.

_____

_____ Be careful with your answer, your grade could be affected.

_____

Key Takeaways

- A sentence is complete when it contains both a subject and verb (predicate). A complete sentence makes sense on its own.
- Every sentence must have a subject, which usually appears at the beginning of the sentence. A subject may be a noun (a person, place, or thing) or a pronoun.
- A compound subject contains more than one noun.
- A prepositional phrase describes, or modifies, another word in the sentence but cannot be the subject of a sentence.
- A verb is often an action word that indicates what the subject is doing. Verbs may be action verbs (transitive or intransitive), linking verbs, or helping verbs.
- Remembering the five basic sentence patterns is useful when correcting grammar errors.
- Fragments and run-on sentences are two common errors in sentence construction.
- Fragments can be corrected by adding a missing subject or verb or combining a dependent clause with an independent clause.
- Run-on sentences can be corrected by adding appropriate punctuation or using coordination or subordination.

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9.1.3: Syntax (Part 3)

Common Errors: Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers

Misplaced Modifiers

When a participial phrase, prepositional phrase, or other modifying unit is not placed next to the noun it describes, the resulting error is called a misplaced modifier. Consider these examples:

- **Incorrect**: Turning on the kitchen light, the woman surprised the thief in her nightgown.
  Correct: Turning on the kitchen light, the woman in her nightgown surprised the thief.
- **Incorrect**: They bought a kitten for my brother called Shadow.
  Correct: They bought a kitten called Shadow for my brother.
- **Incorrect**: The patient was referred to the physician with stomach pains.
  Correct: The patient with stomach pains was referred to the physician.

tip

Simple modifiers like only, almost, just, nearly, and barely often get used incorrectly because writers often put them in the wrong place.

Confusing: Tyler almost found fifty cents under the sofa cushions.

Repaired: Tyler found almost fifty cents under the sofa cushions.

How do you almost find something? Either you find it or you do not. The repaired sentence is much clearer.

Exercise 6

Rewrite the following sentences to correct the misplaced modifiers:

1. The young lady was walking the dog on the telephone.
2. I heard that there was a robbery on the evening news.
3. Uncle Louie bought a running stroller for the baby that he called “Speed Racer.”
4. Rolling down the mountain, the explorer stopped the boulder with his powerful foot.
5. We are looking for a babysitter for our precious six-year-old who doesn’t drink or smoke.
6. The teacher served cookies to the children wrapped in aluminum foil.
7. The mysterious woman walked toward the car holding an umbrella.
8. We returned the wine to the waiter that was sour.
9. Charlie spotted a stray puppy driving home from work.
10. I ate nothing but a cold bowl of noodles for dinner.

Dangling Modifiers

A dangling modifier (or simply a *dangler*) is a word, phrase, or clause that describes something that has been left out of the sentence. When there is nothing that the word, phrase, or clause can modify, then the modifier is said to dangle.

Incorrect: Riding in the sports car, the world whizzed by.

Correct: As Jane was riding in the sports car, the world whizzed by.

In the incorrect sentence, *riding in the sports car* is dangling. The reader is left wondering who is riding in the sports car. The writer must tell the reader.

Incorrect: Walking home at night, the trees looked like spooky aliens.

Correct: As Jonas was walking home at night, the trees looked like spooky aliens.

Correct: The trees looked like spooky aliens as Jonas was walking home at night.

In the incorrect sentence *walking home at night* is dangling. Who is walking home at night? Jonas. Note that there are two different ways the dangling modifier can be corrected.

Incorrect: To win the spelling bee, Luis and Gerard should join our team.

Correct: If we want to win the spelling bee, Luis and Gerard should join our team.

In the incorrect sentence, *to win the spelling bee* is dangling. *Who* wants to win the spelling bee? *We* do.

tip

Following these steps will help you correct a dangling modifier:

Look for a modifying phrase at the beginning of your sentence and underline the noun that immediately follows it. The example below opens with a participial phrase, highlighted in yellow:

Example: **Painting for three hours at night**, the kitchen was finally finished.

If the modifying phrase does not describe the underlined noun, then you have a dangler. In this example, the kitchen is the room that was painted, but who did the painting? A noun referring to that person should immediately follow the participial phrase:

Correction: Painting for three hours at night, **Maggie** finally finished the kitchen.

Since Maggie did the painting, her name follows the participial phrase.

Exercise 7

Rewrite the following the sentences to correct the dangling modifiers:

1. Bent over backward, the posture was very challenging.
2. Making discoveries about new creatures, this is an interesting time to be a biologist.
3. Walking in the dark, the picture fell off the wall.
4. Playing a guitar in the bedroom, the cat was seen under the bed.
5. Packing for a trip, a cockroach scurried down the hallway.
6. While looking in the mirror, the towel swayed in the breeze.
7. While driving to the veterinarian's office, the dog nervously whined.
8. The priceless painting drew large crowds when walking into the museum.
9. Piled up next to the bookshelf, I chose a romance novel.
10. Chewing furiously, the gum fell out of my mouth.

Exercise 9.1.3.8

Rewrite the following paragraph correcting all the misplaced and dangling modifiers:

I bought a fresh loaf of bread for my sandwich shopping in the grocery store. Wanting to make a delicious sandwich, the mayonnaise was thickly spread. Placing the cold cuts on the bread, the lettuce was placed on top. I cut the sandwich in half with a knife turning on the radio. Biting into the sandwich, my favorite song blared loudly in my ears. Humming and chewing, my sandwich went down smoothly. Smiling, my sandwich will be made again, but next time I will add cheese.

Key Takeaways

- Misplaced and dangling modifiers make sentences difficult to understand.
- Misplaced and dangling modifiers distract the reader.
- There are several effective ways to identify and correct misplaced and dangling modifiers.

Parallelism

Parallelism is the use of similar structure in related words, clauses, or phrases. It creates a sense of rhythm and balance within a sentence. As readers, we often correct faulty parallelism—a lack of parallel structure—intuitively because an unbalanced sentence sounds awkward and poorly constructed. Read the following sentences aloud:

Faulty parallelism: Kelly had to iron, do the washing, and shopping before her parents arrived.

Faulty parallelism: Driving a car requires coordination, patience, and to have good eyesight.

Faulty parallelism: Ali prefers jeans to wearing a suit.

All of these sentences contain faulty parallelism. Although they are factually correct, the construction is clunky and confusing. In the first example, three different verb forms are used. In the second and third examples, the writer begins each sentence by using a noun (coordination, jeans), but ends with a phrase (to have good eyesight, wearing a suit). Now read the same three sentences that have correct parallelism.

Correct parallelism: Kelly had to do the ironing, washing, and shopping before her parents arrived.

Correct parallelism: Driving a car requires coordination, patience, and good eyesight.

Correct parallelism: Ali prefers wearing jeans to wearing a suit.

When these sentences are written using parallel structure, they sound more aesthetically pleasing because they are balanced. Repetition of grammatical construction also minimizes the work the reader has to do to decode the sentence.

tip

A simple way to check for parallelism in your writing is to make sure you have paired nouns with nouns, verbs with verbs, prepositional phrases with prepositional phrases, and so on. Underline each element in a sentence and check that the corresponding element uses the same grammatical form.

Creating Parallelism Using Coordinating Conjunctions

When you connect two phrases or clauses using a coordinating conjunction *(for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*), make sure that the same grammatical structure is used on each side of the conjunction. Take a look at the following example:

Faulty parallelism: When I walk the dog, I like to listen to music and talking to friends on the phone.

Correct parallelism: When I walk the dog, I like listening to music and talking to friends on the phone.

The first sentence uses two different verb forms (to listen, talking). In the second sentence, the grammatical construction on each side of the coordinating conjunction (and) is the same, creating a parallel sentence.

The same technique should be used for joining items or lists in a series.

Faulty parallelism: This committee needs to decide whether the company should reduce its workforce, cut its benefits, or lowering workers' wages.

Correct parallelism: This committee needs to decide whether the company should reduce its workforce, cut its benefits, or lower workers' wages.

The first sentence contains two items that use the same verb construction (reduce, cut) and a third item that uses a different verb form (lowering). The second sentence uses the same verb construction in all three items, creating a parallel structure.

? Exercise 9

Revise each of the following sentences to create parallel structure using coordinating conjunctions:

1. Mr. Holloway enjoys reading and to play his guitar on weekends.
2. The doctor told Mrs. Franklin that she should either eat less or should exercise more.
3. Breaking out of the prison compound, the escapees moved carefully, quietly, and were quick on their feet.
4. Deal with a full inbox first thing in the morning, or by setting aside short periods of time in which to answer email queries.

Creating Parallelism Using Than or As

When you are making a comparison, the two items being compared should have a parallel structure. Comparing two items without using parallel structure can lead to confusion about what is being compared. Comparisons frequently use the words than or as, and the items on each side of these comparison words should be parallel. Take a look at the following example:

Faulty parallelism: Swimming in the ocean is more difficult than a pool.

Correct parallelism: Swimming in the ocean is more difficult than swimming in a pool.

In the first sentence, the elements before the comparison word (than) are not equal to the elements after the comparison word. It appears that the writer is comparing an action (swimming) with a noun (a pool). In the second sentence, the writer uses the same grammatical construction to create a parallel structure. This clarifies that an action is being compared with another action.

To correct some instances of faulty parallelism, it may be necessary to add or delete words in a sentence.

Faulty parallelism: A brisk walk is as beneficial to your health as going for a run.

Correct parallelism: Going for a brisk walk is as beneficial to your health as going for a run.

Correct parallelism: A brisk walk is as beneficial to your health as a run.

? Exercise 10

Revise each of the following sentences to create parallel structure using *than* or *as*:

1. I would rather work at a second job to pay for a new car than a loan.
2. How you look in the workplace is just as important as your behavior.
3. The firefighter spoke more of his childhood than he talked about his job.
4. Indian cuisine is far tastier than the food of Great Britain.
5. Jim’s opponent was as tall as Jim and he carried far more weight.

Creating Parallelism Using Correlative Conjunctions

A correlative conjunction is a paired conjunction that connects two equal parts of a sentence and shows the relationship between them. Common correlative conjunctions include the following:

either…or

not only…but also

neither…nor

whether…or

rather…than

both…and

Correlative conjunctions should follow the same grammatical structure to create a parallel sentence. Take a look at the following example:

Faulty parallelism: We can neither wait for something to happen nor can we take evasive action.

Correct parallelism: We can neither wait for something to happen nor take evasive action.

When using a correlative conjunction, the words, phrases, or clauses following each part should be parallel. In the first sentence, the construction of the second part of the sentence does not match the construction of the first part. In the second sentence, omitting needless words and matching verb constructions create a parallel structure. Sometimes, rearranging a sentence corrects faulty parallelism.

Faulty parallelism: It was both a long movie and poorly written.

Correct parallelism: The movie was both long and poorly written.

tip

To see examples of parallelism in use, read some of the great historical speeches by rhetoricians such as Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King Jr. Notice how they use parallel structures to emphasize important points and to create a smooth, easily understandable oration.

Exercise 11

Revise each of the following sentences to create parallel structure using correlative conjunctions:

1. The cyclist owns both a mountain bike and has a racing bike.
2. The movie not only contained lots of action, but also it offered an important lesson.
3. My current job is neither exciting nor is it meaningful.
4. Jason would rather listen to his father than be taking advice from me.
5. We are neither interested in buying a vacuum cleaner nor do we want to utilize your carpet cleaning service.

Key Takeaways

- Parallelism creates a sense of rhythm and balance in writing by using the same grammatical structure to express equal ideas.
- Faulty parallelism occurs when elements of a sentence are not balanced, causing the sentence to sound clunky and awkward.
- Parallelism may be created by connecting two clauses or making a list using coordinating conjunctions; by comparing two items using than or as; or by connecting two parts of a sentence using correlative conjunctions.

Appositives

An appositive is a word or group of words that describes or renames a noun or pronoun. Incorporating appositives into your writing is a useful way of combining sentences that are too short and choppy. Take a look at the following example:

Original sentences: Harland Sanders began serving food for hungry travelers in 1930. He is Colonel Sanders or “the Colonel.”

Revised sentence: Harland Sanders, “the Colonel,” began serving food for hungry travelers in 1930.

In the revised sentence, “the Colonel” is an appositive because it renames Harland Sanders. To combine two sentences using an appositive, drop the subject and verb from the sentence that renames the noun and turn it into a phrase. Note that in the previous example, the appositive is positioned immediately after the noun it describes. An appositive must come directly before or after the noun to which it refers.

Appositive after noun: Scott, a poorly trained athlete, was not expected to win the race.

Appositive before noun: A poorly trained athlete, Scott was not expected to win the race.

Unlike adjective clauses and participial phrases, which may be restrictive or nonrestrictive, appositives are always nonrestrictive, and thus they are always set off by commas. A comma is placed both before and after the appositive.

Exercise 12

Rewrite the following sentence pairs as one sentence using any of the techniques you have learned in this section:

1. Baby sharks are called pups. Pups can be born in one of three ways.
2. The Pacific Ocean is the world’s largest ocean. It extends from the Arctic in the north to the Southern Ocean in the south.
3. Michael Phelps won eight gold medals in the 2008 Olympics. He is a champion swimmer.
4. Ashley introduced her colleague Dan to her husband, Jim. She speculated that the two of them would have a lot in common.
5. Cacao is harvested by hand. It is then sold to chocolate-processing companies at the Coffee, Sugar, and Cocoa Exchange.

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9.1.4: Verbs (Part 1)

Verb Forms

You must always use a verb in every sentence you write. Verbs are parts of speech that indicate actions or states of being. The most basic sentence structure is a subject followed by a verb. Correct use of verb tenses and forms is very important in English. Verbs carry much of the main meaning of the sentence, and verb suffixes and auxiliaries indicate the time. Verbs are the powerhouses of our language.

There are two main types of verb errors. Try to distinguish between the two types. Verb Form is an error where the tense has been incorrectly formed. Verb Tense is an error where an incorrect tense has been chosen for the meaning. Although the grammar of verbs is very complex in English, every student can easily learn the basic grammar and be able to use verbs correctly.

English verbs have five forms:

Base	Past	Past Participle	Progressive/Continuous	3rd Person Singular
Regular WALK	WALKED	WALKED	WALKING	WALKS
Irregular EAT	ATE	EATEN	EATING	EATS

Some Verb Form Rules to Know	Examples
Infinitive = to + base form	to run, to hide, to show
Modal = modal + base form	can run, could hide, should show
Do Support = do, does, did + base form	did run, doesn't hide, did show
Progressive = "to be" + base + ing	am running, was hiding, are doing
Perfect = have, has, had + past participle	have run, has hidden, had shown
Passive = "to be" + past participle	is built, was written, are being done

Active Forms of the 12 English Tenses of the regular verb "WALK"

	PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE
SIMPLE	WALKED	WALK/S	WILL WALK
PROGRESSIVE	WAS /WERE WALKING	AM/IS/ARE WALKING	WILL BE WALKING
PERFECT	HAD WALKED	HAS/HAVE WALKED	WILL HAVE WALKED
PERFECT-PROGRESSIVE	HAD BEEN WALKING	HAD BEEN WALKING	WILL HAVE BEEN WALKING

Simple Verb Tenses

Verb tenses tell the reader when the action takes place. The action could be in the past, present, or future. These are called Time Frames.

Past	← Present →	Future
Yesterday I jumped.	Today I jump.	Tomorrow I will jump.

Simple present verbs are used in the following situations:

When the action takes place now

Example 9.1.4.1:

I drink the water greedily.

When the action is something that happens regularly

Example 9.1.4.2:

I always cross my fingers for good luck.

When describing things that are generally true.

Example 9.1.4.3:

College tuition is very costly.

When it is he, she, or it doing the present tense action, remember to add -s, or -es to the end of the verb or to change the y to -ies.

Simple past verbs are used when the action has already taken place and is now finished:

- I washed my uniform last night.
- I asked for more pie.
- I coughed loudly last night.

When the action is something done in the past, remember to add -d or -ed to the end of regular verbs, regardless of the subject.

Simple future verbs are used when the action has not yet taken place:

- I will work late tomorrow.
- I will kiss my boyfriend when I see him.
- I will erase the board after class.

Going to can also be added to the main verb to make it future tense:

- I am *going to* go to work tomorrow

Exercise 13

Complete the following sentences by adding the verb in the correct simple tense:

1. Please do not (erase, erased, will erase) what I have written on the board.
2. They (dance, danced, will dance) for hours after the party was over.
3. Harrison (wash, washed, will wash) his laundry after several weeks had passed.
4. Yesterday Mom (ask, asked, will ask) me about my plans for college.
5. I (bake, baked, will bake) several dozen cookies for tomorrow's bake sale.

tip

Remember, if you have a compound subject like Marie and Jennifer, think of the subject as they to determine the correct verb form.

EX: Marie and Jennifer (they) have a house on Bainbridge Island.

Similarly, single names can be thought of as he, she, or it.

EX: LeBron (he) has scored thirty points so far.

Perfect Verb Tenses

Up to this point, we have studied the three simple verb tenses—simple present, simple past, and simple future. Now we will add three more tenses, which are called perfect tenses. They are present perfect, past perfect, and future perfect. A past participle is often called the -ed form of a verb because it is formed by adding -d or -ed to the base form of regular verbs. Past participles can also end in -t or -en. Keep in mind, however, the past participle is also formed in various other ways for irregular verbs. The past participle can be used to form the present perfect tense.

Review the following basic formula for the present perfect tense:

Subject	+	has or have	+	past participle
I		have		helped

The present perfect tense has a connection with the past and the present.

Use the present perfect tense to describe a continuing situation and to describe an action that has just happened.

Example 9.1.4.4:

I have worked as a caretaker since June.

This sentence tells us that the subject has worked as a caretaker in the past and is still working as a caretaker in the present.

Example 9.1.4.5:

Dmitri has just received an award from the Dean of Students.

This sentence tells us that Dmitri has very recently received the award. The word just emphasizes that the action happened very recently.

Study the following basic formula for the past perfect tense:

Subject	+	had	+	past participle
I		had		listened

Example 9.1.4.6:

The bus had left by the time Theo arrived at the station.

Notice that both actions occurred entirely in the past, but one action occurred before the other. At some time in the past, Theo arrived (simple past tense) at the station, but at some time before that, the bus had left (past perfect).

Look at the following basic formula for the future perfect tense:

Subject	+	will have	+	past participle
I		will have		graduated

The future perfect tense describes an action that started in the past, continues through the present, and will occur in the future. Use the future perfect tense when you anticipate completing an event in the future, but you have not completed it yet.

Example 9.1.4.7:

You will have forgotten me after you move to London.

Notice that both actions occur in the future, but one action will occur before the other. At some time in the future, the subject (you) will move (future tense) to London, and at some time after that, the subject will have forgotten (future perfect tense) the speaker, me.

? Exercise 14

Complete the following sentences by using the correct perfect verb tense for the verb in parentheses:

1. I plan to start a compost bin because I _____ (to want) one for a long time now.
2. My brother told me he _____ (to argue) with his friend about politics.
3. By the time we reach the mountain top the sun _____ (to set).
4. Denise _____ (to walk) several miles in the past three hours.
5. His mother _____ (to offer) to pay him to work in her office.

Progressive Verb Tenses

Progressive verb tenses describe a continuing or unfinished action, such as I am going, I was going, or I will be going.

The present/progressive tense describes an action or state of being that takes place in the present and that continues to take place. To make verbs in the present progressive tense, combine these two parts:

Present tense form of to be	+	present participle
am/is/are		helping

You should use the present progressive tense to describe a planned activity, to describe an activity that is recurring right now, and to describe an activity that is in progress, although not actually occurring at the time of speaking:

✓ Example 9.1.4.8:

Preeti is starting school on Tuesday.

This sentence describes a planned activity.

✓ Example 9.1.4.9:

Janetta is getting her teeth cleaned right now.

This sentence describes an activity that is occurring right now.

✓ Example 9.1.4.10:

I am studying ballet at school.

This sentence describes an activity that is in progress but not actually occurring at the time of speaking.

The past progressive tense describes an action or state of being that took place in the past and that continues to take place in the past time. To make verbs in the past progressive tense, combine these two parts:

Past tense form of to be	+	present participle
was/were		helping

The future progressive tense describes an action or state of being that will take place in the future and that will continue to take place. The action will have started at that future moment, but it will not have finished at that moment. To make verbs in the future progressive tense, combine these parts.

Future tense form of to be	+	present participle
will be		helping

Use the future progressive tense to describe an activity that will be in progress in the future:

Example 9.1.4.11:

Samantha and I will be dancing in the school play next week.

Tomorrow Agnes will be reading two of her poems.

Exercise 15

Revise the following sentences, written in simple tenses, using the progressive tenses indicated in parentheses.

1. He prepared the food while I watched. (past progressive tense)
2. Jonathan will speak at the conference. (future progressive)
3. Josie traveled to Egypt last July. (past progressive tense)
4. My foot aches, so I know it will rain. (present progressive tense)
5. Micah will talk a lot when I see him. (future progressive) 6. I yawn a lot because I feel tired. (present progressive tense)

Perfect Progressive Verb Tenses

Similar to the present perfect tense, the present perfect progressive tense is used to indicate an action that was begun in the past and continues into the present. However, the present perfect progressive is used when you want to stress that the action is ongoing. To make verbs in the present perfect progressive tense, combine the following parts:

Present tense form of to have	+	been	+	present participle
has or have		been		helping

Example 9.1.4.12:

She has been talking for the last hour.

This sentence indicates that she started talking in the past and is continuing to talk in the present.

Example 9.1.4.13:

I have been feeling tired lately

This sentence indicates that I started feeling tired in the past, and I continue to feel tired in the present. Instead of indicating time, as in the first sentence, the second sentence uses the adverb *lately*. You can also use the adverb *recently* when using the present perfect progressive tense.

Similar to the past perfect tense, the past perfect progressive tense is used to indicate an action that was begun in the past and continued until another time in the past. The past perfect progressive does not continue into the present but stops at a designated moment in the past. To make verbs in the past perfect progressive tense, combine the following parts:

Past tense form of to have	+	been	+	present participle
had		been		helping

Example 9.1.4.14:

The employees had been talking until their boss arrived.

This sentence indicates that the employees were talking in the past and they stopped talking when their boss arrived, which also happened in the past.

Example 9.1.4.15:

I had been working all day.

This sentence implies that I was working in the past. The action does not continue into the future, and the sentence implies that the subject stopped working for unstated reasons.

The future perfect progressive tense is rarely used. It is used to indicate an action that will begin in the future and will continue until another time in the future. To make verbs in the future perfect progressive tense, combine the following parts:

Future tense form of to have	+	been	+	present participle
will have		been		helping

Example 9.1.4.16:

By the end of the meeting, I will have been hearing about mortgages and taxes for eight hours.

This sentence indicates that in the future I will hear about mortgages and taxes for eight hours, but it has not happened yet. It also indicates the action of hearing will continue until the end of the meeting, something that is also in the future.

Passive Verb Forms

The passive voice can be added to verbs, creating a difference in meaning and a difference in grammatical form from the active voice. In a clause with an active verb, the subject is “responsible” for the action described, as in this example:

Example 9.1.4.17:

Faculty members often forget to lock their office doors when they go to the workroom to print something.

Who did the forgetting? The answer is the faculty members – that is, the subject of the sentence. We know this because the verb is active. Look at the difference in the following example where the verb is passive:

Example 9.1.4.18:

Professor Mulden’s purse was stolen from her office last week when she went to the computer room and forgot to lock her door.

Who did the stealing? Certainly, not Professor Mulden! She was not responsible for the action; she only suffered the effects. We know this because the main verb is in a passive form. To make verbs in the passive, combine the following parts:

Passive of the simple present:

Subject	+	am, is, are	+	past participle
A vote		is		taken

Passive of the simple past:

Subject	+	was, were	+	past participle
A vote		was		taken

Passive of the simple future:

Subject	+	will be	+	past participle
A vote		will be		taken

Passive of the present perfect:

Subject	+	has, have + been	+	past participle
A vote		has been		taken

Passive with modal:

Subject	+	must, could, can + be	+	past participle
A vote		must be		taken

? Exercise 16

Identify the following underlined verbs in sentences as active (A) or passive (P).

1. The jury voted at the end of the trial.
2. Some jurors were told to leave at noon.
3. All the jurors were leaving the building when the reporters came in.
4. My sister Joan has been selected for jury two different times.
5. Were you given any information about that murder case?
6. Not every juror will be needed for the trial next week.

Gerunds and Infinitives

Gerunds

A gerund is a form of a verb that is used as a noun. All gerunds end in -ing. Since gerunds function as nouns, they occupy places in a sentence that a noun would, such as the subject, direct object, and object of a preposition. You can use a gerund in the following ways:

As a subject

✓ Example 9.1.4.19:

Traveling is Cynthia's favorite pastime.

As a direct object

✓ Example 9.1.4.20:

I enjoy jogging.

As an object of a proposition

Example 9.1.4.21:

The librarian scolded me for laughing.

Often verbs are followed by gerunds. Examine the following table for examples.

Table of Gerunds and Verbs

Gerund	Verb Followed by a Gerund
moving	Denise considered moving to Paris.
cleaning	I hate cleaning the bathroom.
winning	Nate imagines winning an Oscar one day.
worrying	Mom says she has stopped worrying.
taking	She admitted taking the pumpkin.

Infinitives

An infinitive is a form of a verb that includes the word to and acts as a noun, adjective, or adverb.

$$\text{to} + \text{verb} = \text{infinitive} \tag{9.1.4.1}$$

Examples of infinitives include to move, to sleep, to look, to throw, to read, and to sneeze.

Often verbs are followed by infinitives. Examine "Infinitives and Verbs" for examples.

Table of Infinitives and Verbs

Infinitive	Verb Followed by Infinitive
to help	Jessica offered to help her move.
to arrive	Mick expects to arrive early.
to win	Sunita wants to win the writing contest.
to close	He forgot to close the curtains.
to eat	She likes to eat late.

You may wonder which verbs can be followed by gerunds and which verbs can be followed by infinitives. With the following verbs, you can use either a gerund or an infinitive.

Table of Infinitives and Gerunds Verbs

Base Form of Verb	Sentences with Verbs Followed by Gerunds and Infinitives
begin	1. John began crying. 2. John began to cry.
hate	1. Marie hated talking on the phone. 2. Marie hated to talk on the phone.
forget	1. Wendell forgot paying the bills. 2. Wendell forgot to pay the bills.
like	1. I liked leaving messages. 2. I liked to leave messages.
continue	1. He continued listening to the news. 2. He continued to listen to the news.
start	1. I will start recycling immediately. 2. I will start to recycle immediately.
try	1. Mikhail will try climbing the tree. 2. Mikhail will try to climb the tree.
prefer	1. I prefer baking. 2. I prefer to bake.
love	1. Josh loves diving. 2. Josh loves to dive.

? Exercise 17

Complete the following sentences by choosing the correct infinitive or gerund:

1. I meant _____ (to kiss, kissing) my kids before they left for school.
2. The children hoped (to go, going) to a restaurant for dinner.
3. Do you intend _____ (to eat, eating) the entire pie?
4. Crystal postponed _____ (to get dressed, getting dressed) for the party.
5. When we finish _____ (to play, playing) this game, we will go home.

Key Takeaways

- Verb tenses tell the reader when the action takes place.
- Actions could be in the past, present, or future.
- There are six main verb tenses in English: simple present, simple past, simple future, present perfect, past perfect, and future perfect.
- Verbs in English can have active forms and passive forms.
- Verbs can be followed by either gerunds or infinitives.

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9.1.5: Run-On Sentences and Fragments

Run-on Sentences

A *run-on* sentence is a sentence with more than one clause and has not be properly punctuated. It also may include too much information for the reader to take in. One type of run-on that you've probably heard of is the *comma splice*, in which two independent clauses are joined by a comma without a coordinating conjunction (*and*, *or*, *but*, etc.).

Let's look at a few examples of run-on sentences:

- Often, choosing a topic for a paper is the hardest part it's a lot easier after that. (This sentence is missing punctuation.)
- Sometimes, books do not have the most complete information, it is a good idea then to look for articles in specialized periodicals. (This sentence doesn't have the right type of punctuation.)
- She loves skiing but he doesn't. (This sentence doesn't have the right type of punctuation.)

All three of these have two independent clauses. Each clause should be separated from another with a period, a semicolon, or a comma and a coordinating conjunction:

- Often, choosing a topic for a paper is the hardest part. It's a lot easier after that.
- Sometimes, books do not have the most complete information; it is a good idea then to look for articles in specialized periodicals.
- She loves skiing, but he doesn't.

Note: Not every long sentence is a run-on sentence. For example, look at this quote from *The Great Gastby*:

Its vanished trees, the trees that had made way for Gatsby's house, had once pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams; for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into an aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder.

If you look at the punctuation, you'll see that this quote is a single sentence. F. Scott Fitzgerald used commas and semicolons in such a way that, despite its great length, the sentence is grammatically sound. Length is no guarantee of a run-on sentence.

Common Causes of Run-Ons

We often write run-on sentences because we sense that the sentences involved are closely related, and dividing them with a period just doesn't seem right. We may also write them because the parts seem too short to need any division, such as in "She loves skiing but he doesn't." However, "She loves skiing" and "he doesn't" are both independent clauses, so they need to be divided by a comma and a coordinating conjunction—not just a coordinating conjunction by itself.

Another common cause of run-on sentences is mistaking adverbial conjunctions for coordinating conjunctions. For example if we were to write, "She loved skiing, however he didn't," we would have produced a comma splice. The correct sentence would be "She loved skiing; however, he didn't."

Fixing Run-On Sentences

Before you can fix a run-on sentence, you'll need to identify the problem. When you write, carefully look at each part of every sentence. Are the parts independent clauses, or are they dependent clauses or phrases? Remember, only independent clauses can stand on their own. This also means they have to stand on their own; they can't run together without correct punctuation.

Let's take a look at a few run-on sentences and their revisions:

1. Most of the hours I've earned toward my associate's degree do not transfer, however, I do have at least some hours the university will accept.
2. The opposite is true of stronger types of stainless steel they tend to be more susceptible to rust.
3. Some people were highly educated professionals, others were from small villages in underdeveloped countries.

Let's start with the first sentence. This is a comma-splice sentence. The adverbial conjunction *however* is being treated like a coordinating conjunction. There are two easy fixes to this problem. The first is to turn the comma before *however* into a period. If this feels like too hard of a stop between ideas, you can change the comma into a semicolon instead.

- Most of the hours I've earned toward my associate's degree do not transfer. However, I do have at least some hours the University will accept.
- Most of the hours I've earned toward my associate's degree do not transfer; however, I do have at least some hours the University will accept.

The second sentence is a run-on as well. "The opposite is true of stronger types of stainless steel" and "they tend to be more susceptible to rust." are both independent clauses. The two clauses are very closely related, and the second clarifies the information provided in the first. The best solution is to insert a colon between the two clauses:

The opposite is true of stronger types of stainless steel: they tend to be more susceptible to rust.

What about the last example? Once again we have two independent clauses. The two clauses provide contrasting information. Adding a conjunction could help the reader move from one kind of information to another. However, you may want that sharp contrast. Here are two revision options:

- Some people were highly educated professionals, while others were from small villages in underdeveloped countries.
- Some people were highly educated professionals. Others were from small villages in underdeveloped countries.

? Exercise 1

Identify the run-on sentences in the following paragraph:

I had the craziest dream the other night. My cousin Jacob and I were on the run from the law. Apparently we were wizards and the law was cracking down on magic. So, we obviously had to go into hiding but I lost track of Jacob and then I got picked up by a cop. But I was able to convince him that the government was corrupt and that he should take me to my escape boat.

Answer

The first two sentences are grammatically sound. The next sentence, however, is not.

Apparently we were wizards and the law was cracking down on magic.

This sentence just needs a comma inserted before the word *and*: Apparently we were wizards**,** and the law was cracking down on magic.

Let's look at the next sentence:

So, we obviously had to go into hiding but I lost track of Jacob and then I got picked up by a cop.

This is also a run-on sentence. While *So* at the beginning of the sentence is technically fine, it's unnecessary, and many teachers dislike it as a transition word. There are three clauses in this run-on sentence, so there are a few different ways you could rework it:

- We obviously had to go into hiding**,** but I lost track of Jacob. After that, I got picked up by a cop.
- We obviously had to go into hiding. Unfortunately, I had lost track of Jacob and had gotten picked up by a cop.

Let's look at the final sentence:

But I was able to convince him that the government was corrupt and that he should take me to my escape boat.

This sentence is technically okay, but the *but* at the start of the sentence is unnecessary, and it could be removed without affecting the meaning of the sentence. Additionally, it may be helpful to clarify who *he* is:

I was able to convince the cop that the government was corrupt and that he should take me to my escape boat.

Run-On Sentences vs. Comma Splices

In English, a clause is a group of words containing a subject and verb. A sentence is a clause that expresses a complete thought. This type of clause is known as an independent clause. Problems occur when independent clauses are joined together incorrectly. Study the following examples.

Independent Clauses	Incorrect Sentences	Problem
The students worked hard on the project. They deserved a high score.	The students worked hard on the project they deserved a high score.	**Run-on**
The students worked hard on the project. They deserved a high score.	The students worked hard on the project, they deserved a high score.	**Comma Splice**

Explanation: The first incorrect sentence is a **RUN-ON** sentence. The two independent clauses have been joined together without a connector or any punctuation marks. The second incorrect sentence is known as a **COMMA SPLICE**. Here, a comma has been incorrectly used to join the two independent clauses together. There are four ways to correct such errors.

1. Use a comma and a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so)

Example: She worked hard on the project, **so** they deserved a high score.

2. Use a semi-colon followed by a conjunctive adverb, such as: *consequently, however, on the other hand, nevertheless, meanwhile,* and *therefore*.

The formula is **semi-colon** + **conjunctive adverb** + **comma**.

Example: The students worked hard on the project**; consequently,** they deserved a high score.

3. Use a semi-colon without a connecting word.

Example: The students worked hard on the project**;** they deserved a high score.

4. Create two sentences by adding a period at the end of the first independent clause and capitalizing the first word of the second independent clause.

Example: The students worked hard on the project**. T**hey deserved a high score.

Sentence Fragments

Fragments are simply grammatically incomplete sentences—they are phrases and dependent clauses. We talked about phrases and clauses a bit in Section 12.2, "Word Order and Sentence Structure." These are grammatical structures that cannot stand on their own: They need to be connected to an independent clause to work in writing. So how can we tell the difference between a sentence and a sentence fragment? And how can we fix fragments when they already exist?

Common Causes of Fragments

Part of the reason we write in fragments is because we often speak that way. However, there is a difference between writing and speech, and it is important to write in complete sentences. Additionally, fragments often happen in writing because a fragment may already seem too long.

Non-finite verbs (gerunds, participles, and infinitives) can often trip people up as well. Since non-finite verbs don't act like verbs, we don't count them as verbs when we're deciding if we have a phrase or a clause. Let's look at a few examples of these:

- Running away from my mother.
- To ensure your safety and security.
- Beaten down since day one.

Even though all of the above have non-finite verbs, they're phrases, not clauses. In order for these to be clauses, they would need an additional verb that acts as a verb in the sentence.

Words like *since*, *when*, and *because* turn an independent clause into a dependent clause. For example "I was a little girl in 1995" is an independent clause, but "Because I was a little girl in 1995" is a dependent clause. This class of word includes the following:

after	although	as	as far as	as if	as long as	as soon as
as though	because	before	even if	even though	every time	if
in order that	since	so	so that	than	though	unless
until	when	whenever	where	whereas	wherever	while

Relative pronouns, such as *that* and *which*, do the same type of thing as those listed above.

Coordinating conjunctions (FANBOYS) can also cause problems. If you start a sentence with a coordinating conjunction, make sure that it is followed a complete clause, not just a phrase!

As you're identifying fragments, keep in mind that command sentences are *not* fragments, despite not having a subject. Commands are the only grammatically correct sentences that lack a subject:

- Drop and give me fifty!
- Count how many times the word *fragrant* is used during commercial breaks.

In this case, the subject "you" is implied.

Fixing Sentence Fragments

Let's take a look at a couple of examples:

1. Ivana appeared at the committee meeting last week. And made a convincing presentation of her ideas about the new product.
2. The committee considered her ideas for a new marketing strategy quite powerful. The best ideas that they had heard in years.
3. She spent a full month evaluating his computer-based instructional materials. Which she eventually sent to her supervisor with the strongest of recommendations.

Let's look at the phrase "And made a convincing presentation of her ideas about the new product" in example one. It's just that: a phrase. There is no subject in this phrase, so the easiest fix is to simply delete the period and combine the two statements:

Ivana appeared at the committee meeting last week and made a convincing presentation of her ideas about the new product.

Let's look at example two. The phrase "the best ideas they had heard in years" is simply a phrase—there is no verb contained in the phrase. By adding "they were" to the beginning of this phrase, we have turned the fragment into an independent clause, which can now stand on its own:

The committee considered her ideas for a new marketing strategy quite powerful; they were the best ideas that they had heard in years.

What about example three? Let's look at the clause "Which she eventually sent to her supervisor with the strongest of recommendations." This is a dependent clause; the word *which* signals this fact. If we change "which she eventually" to "eventually, she," we also turn the dependent clause into an independent clause.

She spent a full month evaluating his computer-based instructional materials. Eventually, she sent the evaluation to her supervisor with the strongest of recommendations.

Editing Fragments that Are Missing a Subject or a Verb

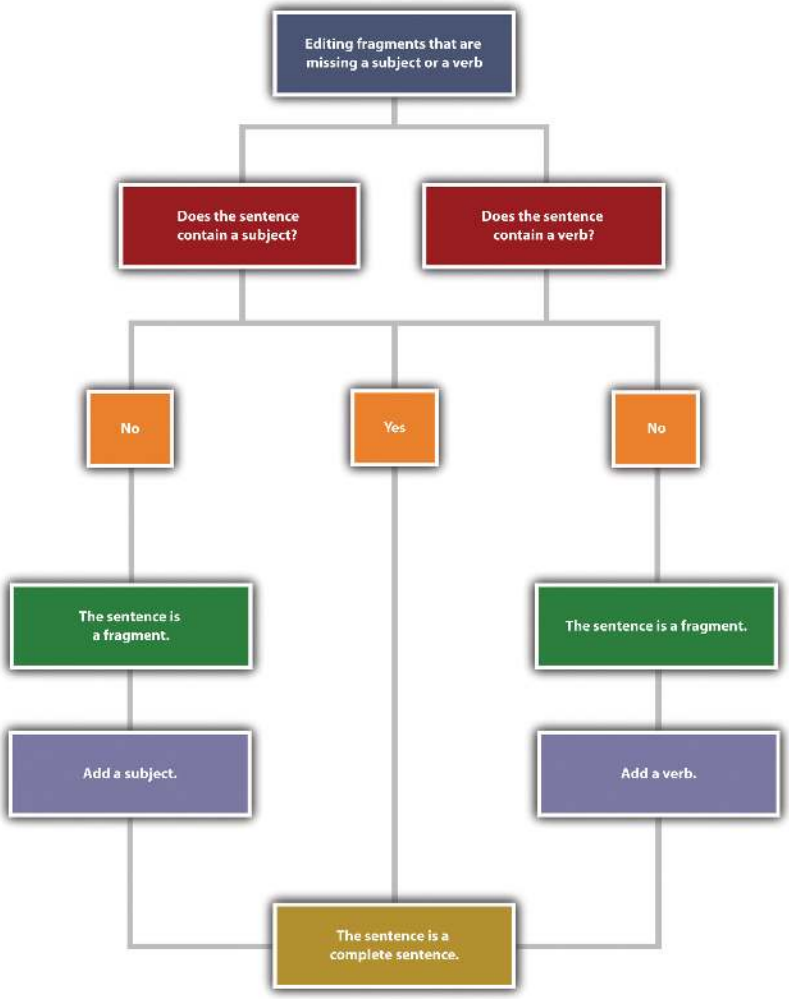


Figure: from "Guide to Writing"

Editing Fragments that Begin with a Gerund

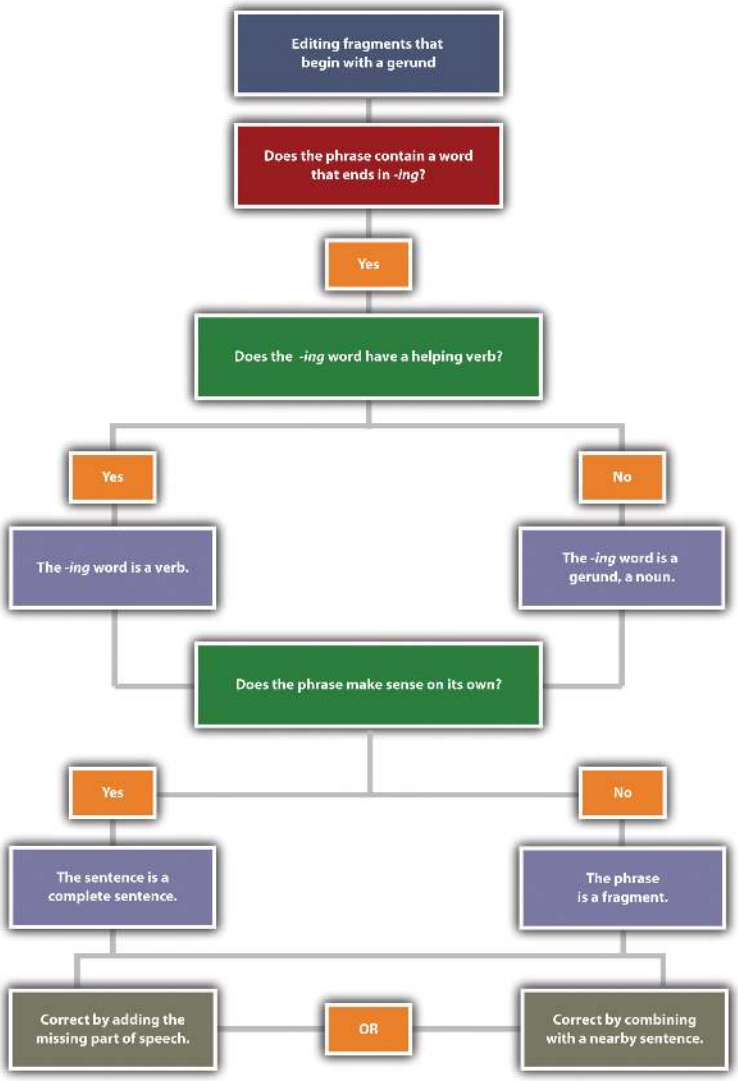


Figure: from "Guide to Writing"

Editing Fragments that Begin with a Prepositional Phrase

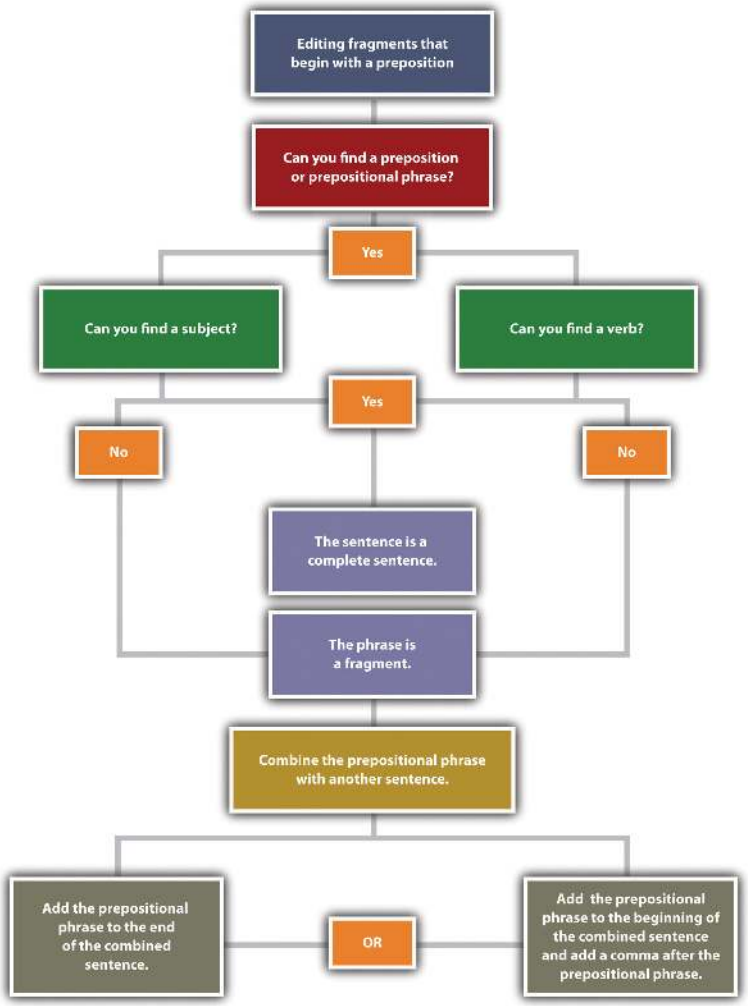


Figure: from "Guide to Writing"

? Exercise 2

Identify the fragments in the sentences below. Why are they fragments? What are some possible solutions?

1. The corporation wants to begin a new marketing push in educational software. Although, the more conservative executives of the firm are skeptical.
2. Include several different sections in your proposal. For example, a discussion of your personnel and their qualifications, your expectations concerning the schedule of the project, and a cost breakdown.
3. The research team has completely reorganized the workload. Making sure that members work in areas of their own expertise and that no member is assigned proportionately too much work.

Answer

Here are some possible revisions for the sentences. Remember, there are multiple solutions. Pay attention to the principles used to create the revised sentence.

In the fragment “Although, the more conservative executives of the firm are skeptical,” the subordinating conjunction *although* is being used as an adverbial conjunction in this sentence. There are two simple revision to resolve the fragment.

- Change *although* to be an adverbial conjunction: “The corporation wants to begin a new marketing push in educational software. However, the more conservative executives of the firm are skeptical.”
- Move the fragment to the beginning of the sentence and link it to the independent clause with a comma after it: “Although the more conservative executives of the firm are skeptical, the corporation wants to begin a new marketing push in educational software.”

The first sentence is a command; it is a correct sentence. The second sentence is a fragment, however. The simplest change is to switch the period before “for example” out for a colon. Colons can be followed by a phrase or dependent clause.

- Include several different sections in your proposal: for example, a discussion of your personnel and their qualifications, your expectations concerning the schedule of the project, and a cost breakdown.

The second sentence is a fragment. You can either change *making* to “they made” and have two sentences, or you can change *making* to “in order to make sure.” *In order to* is a subordinating conjunction, so it does not require a comma beforehand:

- The research team has completely reorganized the workload. They made sure that members work in areas of their own expertise and that no member is assigned proportionately too much work.
- The research team has completely reorganized the workload in order to make sure that members work in areas of their own expertise and that no member is assigned proportionately too much work.

Correcting Sentence Fragments in Dependent Clauses

Dependent clauses, also known as subordinate clauses, contain subjects and verbs. However, unlike independent clauses, they do not express complete thoughts. They are simply parts of sentences, or fragments. Consider the following examples:

Fragment	When we arrived at the restaurant.
Explanation	Although this fragment, or dependent clause has a subject (we) and a verb (arrived), it has no meaning for the reader. It needs to be joined to an independent clause for it to make sense.
Corrected	When we arrived at the restaurant, *our friends were already waiting for us.*

Fragment	Because she was excited about the wedding.
Explanation	Like the first example, this fragment, or dependent clause contains a subject (she) and a verb (was), but it makes no sense on its own. However, we can easily correct the problem by joining the fragment, to an independent clause, as above.
Corrected	Because she was excited about the wedding, *she couldn't sleep.*

? Exercise 3

On your own sheet of paper, identify each sentence as a fragment, a run-on, or correct. Then, rewrite the paragraph by correcting the sentence fragments and run-ons.

My favorite book is *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley, he was born in 1894 and died in 1963 _____. Written in 1931. _____. A futuristic society where humans are born out of test tubes and kept in rigid social classes _____. This may not seem like a humorous premise for a novel, but Huxley uses satire, which is a type of humor that is used to make a serious point. _____. The humans in *Brave New World* learn through sleep teaching, Huxley calls this "hypnopedia" _____. Everyone is kept "happy" in the brave new world by taking a pill called soma, there is one character named John the Savage who does not take soma _____. Because he comes from a different part of the world where there is no technology, and he believes in natural ways of living _____. It turns out that John has a big problem with the brave new world and how people live there _____. Will he be able to survive living there, well you will have to read the novel to find out _____. *Brave New World* is considered a classic in English literature, it is one of the best novels I have ever read _____.

Answer

My favorite book is *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley, he was born in 1894 and died in 1963 **run-on**. Written in 1931. **fragment**. A futuristic society where humans are born out of test tubes and kept in rigid social classes **fragment**. This may not seem like a humorous premise for a novel, but Huxley uses satire, which is a type of humor that is used to make a

> serious point **correct**. The humans in *Brave New World* learn through sleep teaching, Huxley calls this "hypnopedia" **run-on**. Everyone is kept "happy" in the brave new world by taking a pill called soma, there is one character named John the Savage who does not take soma **run-on**. Because he comes from a different part of the world where there is no technology, and he believes in natural ways of living **fragment**. It turns out that John has a big problem with the brave new world and how people live there **correct**. Will he be able to survive living there, well you will have to read the novel to find out **run-on**. *Brave New World* is considered a classic in English literature, it is one of the best novels I have ever read **run-on**.

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9.1.6: Verbs (Part 2)

Modal Auxiliaries

Modal auxiliaries are helping verbs that are used only with a main verb to help express mood.

The following is the basic formula for using a modal auxiliary:

Subject	+	modal auxiliary	+	main verb
James		may		call

There are ten main modal auxiliaries in English.

Table of Modal Auxiliaries

Modal Auxiliary	Use	Modal Auxiliary + Main Verb
can	Expresses an ability or possibility	1. I can lift this forty-pound box. (ability) 2. We can embrace green sources of energy. (possibility)
could	Expresses an ability in the past; a present possibility; a past or future permission	1. I could beat you at chess when we were kids. (past ability) 2. We could bake a pie! (present possibility) 3. Could we pick some flowers from the garden? (future permission)
may	Expresses uncertain future action; permission; ask a yes-no question	1. I may attend the concert. (uncertain future action) 2. You may begin the exam. (permission) 3. May I attend the concert? (yesno questions)
might	Expresses uncertain future action	1. I might attend the concert (uncertain future action—same as may)
shall	Expresses intended future action	1. I shall go to the opera. (intended future action)
should	Expresses obligation; ask if an obligation exists	1. I should mail my RSVP. (obligation, same as ought to) 2. Should I call my mother? (asking if an obligation exists)
will	Expresses intended future action; ask a favor; ask for information	1. I will get an A in this class. (intended future action) 2. Will you buy me some chocolate? (favor) 3. Will you be finished soon? (information)
would	States a preference; request a choice politely; explain an action; introduce habitual past actions	1. I would like the steak, please. (preference) 2. Would you like to have breakfast in bed? (request a choice politely) 3. I would go with you if I didn't have to babysit tonight. (explain an action) 4. He would write to me every week when we were dating. (habitual past action)
must	Expresses obligation	We must be on time for class.
ought to	Expresses obligation	I ought to mail my RSVP. (obligation, same as may)

tip

Use the following format to form a yes-no question with a modal auxiliary:

Modal auxiliary	+	subject	+	main verb
Should		I		drive?

Be aware of these four common errors when using modal auxiliaries:

1. Using an infinitive instead of a base verb after a modal
   A. Incorrect: I can to move this heavy table.
   B. Correct: I can move this heavy table.
2. Using a gerund instead of a base verb after a modal
   a. Incorrect: I could moving to the United States.
   b. Correct: I could move to the United States.
3. Using two modals in a row
   a. Incorrect: I should must renew my passport.
   b. Correct: I must renew my passport.
   c. Correct: I should renew my passport.
4. Leaving out a modal
   a. Incorrect: I renew my passport.
   b. Correct: I must renew my passport.

? Exercise 18

Edit the following paragraph by correcting the common modal auxiliary errors.

I may to go to France on vacation next summer. I shall might visit the Palace of Versailles. I will to drive around the countryside. I could imagining myself living there; however, I will not moved to France because my family should miss me very much.

Modals with Present Perfect Verbs

In the previous section, we defined the present perfect verb tense as describing a continuing situation or something that has just happened. Remember, when a sentence contains a modal auxiliary before the verb, the helping verb is always *have*.

Be aware of the following common errors when using modal auxiliaries in conditional statements:

Using had instead of have

Incorrect: Jamie would had attended the party, but he was sick.

Correct: Jamie would have attended the party, but he was sick.

Leaving out have

Incorrect: Jamie would attended the party, but he was sick.

Correct: Jamie would have attended the party, but he was sick.

Key Takeaways

- The basic formula for using a modal auxiliary is: subject + modal auxiliary + main verb in the base form.
- There are ten main modal auxiliaries in English: can, could, may, might, shall, should, will, would, must, and ought to.
- The four common types of errors when using modals include the following: using an infinitive instead of a base verb after a modal, using a gerund instead of a base verb after a modal, using two modals in a row, and leaving out a modal.
- In the present perfect tense, when a sentence has a modal auxiliary before the verb, the helping verb is always have.
- The two common errors when using modals in the present perfect tense include using had instead of have and leaving out have.

Phrasal Verbs

Prepositions often follow verbs to create expressions with distinct meanings. These expressions are sometimes called prepositional verbs or phrasal verbs. It is important to remember that these expressions cannot be separated.

Verb + Preposition	Meaning	Example
agree with	to agree with something or someone	My husband always agrees with me.
apologize for	to express regret for something, to say sorry about something	I apologize for being late.
believe in	to have a firm conviction in something; to believe in the existence of something	I believe in educating the world's women.
care about	to think that someone or something is important	I care about the health of our oceans.
hear about	to be told about something or someone	I heard about the teachers' strike.
look after	to watch or to protect someone or something	Will you look after my dog while I am on vacation?
talk about	to discuss something	We will talk about the importance of recycling.
speak to, with t	to talk to/with someone	I will speak to his teacher tomorrow.
wait for	to await the arrival of someone or something	I will wait for my package to arrive.

tip

It is a good idea to memorize these combinations of verbs plus prepositions. Write them down in a notebook along with the definition and practice using them when you speak.

Subject-Verb Agreement

Subject-verb agreement is one of the most common errors that people make. Having a solid understanding of this concept is critical when making a good impression, and it will help ensure that your ideas are communicated clearly.

Basic Agreement

Agreement in speech and in writing refers to the proper grammatical match between words and phrases. Parts of sentences must agree, or correspond with other parts, in number, person, case, and gender.

1. Number. All parts must match in singular or plural forms.
2. Person. All parts must match in first person (I), second person (you), or third person (he, she, it, they) forms.
3. Case. All parts must match in subjective (I, you, he, she, it, they, we), objective (me, her, him, them, us), or possessive (my, mine, your, yours, his, her, hers, their, theirs, our, ours) forms.
4. Gender. All parts must match in male or female forms.

Subject-verb agreement describes the proper match between subjects and verbs.

Because subjects and verbs are either singular or plural, the subject of a sentence and the verb of a sentence must agree with each other in number. That is, a singular subject belongs with a singular verb form, and a plural subject belongs with a plural verb form.

Regular Verbs

Regular verbs follow a predictable pattern. For example, in the third person singular, regular verbs always end in -s. Other forms of regular verbs do not end in –s.

	Singular Form	Plural Form
First Person	I live.	We live.
Second Person	You live.	You live.
Third Person	He/She/It lives.	They live.

tip

Add an -es to the third person singular form of regular verbs that end in -sh,-x, -ch, and -s. (I wish/He wishes, I fix/She fixes, I watch/It watches, I kiss/He kisses.) In the singular form, the pronoun you refers to one person. In the plural form, the pronoun you refers to a group of people, such as a team. Many singular subjects can be made plural by adding an -s. Most regular verbs in the present tense end with an -s in the third person singular. This does not make the verbs plural.

Irregular Verbs

Not all verbs follow a predictable pattern. These verbs are called irregular verbs. Some of the most common irregular verbs are be, have, and do. Learn the forms of these verbs in the present tense to avoid errors in subject-verb agreement.

Be

	Singular Form	Plural Form
First Person	I am.	We are.
Second Person	You are.	You are.
Third Person	He/She/It is.	They are.

Have

	Singular Form	Plural Form
First Person	I have.	We have.
Second Person	You have.	You have.
Third Person	He/She/It have.	They have.

Do

	Singular Form	Plural Form
First Person	I do.	We do.
Second Person	You do.	You do.
Third Person	He/She/It does.	They do.

Errors in Subject-Verb Agreement

Errors in subject-verb agreement may occur when

- a sentence contains a compound subject;
- the subject of the sentence is separate from the verb;
- the subject of the sentence is an indefinite pronoun, such as anyone or everyone;
- the subject of the sentence is a collective noun, such as team or organization;
- the subject appears after the verb.

Recognizing the sources of common errors in subject-verb agreement will help you avoid these errors in your writing. This section covers the subject-verb agreement errors in more detail.

Compound Subjects

A compound subject is formed by two or more nouns and the coordinating conjunctions *and*, *or*, or *nor*. A compound subject can be made of singular subjects, plural subjects, or a combination of singular and plural subjects.

- Compound subjects combined with and take a plural verb form.
- Compound subjects combined with or and nor are treated separately. The verb must agree with the subject that is nearest to the verb.

tip

If you can substitute the word “they” for the compound subject, then the sentence takes the third person plural verb form.

Intervening Phrases or Clauses

As you read or write, you may come across a sentence that contains a phrase or clause that separates the subject from the verb. Often, prepositional phrases or dependent clauses add more information to the sentence and appear between the subject and the verb. However, the subject and the verb must still agree.

If you have trouble finding the subject and verb, cross out or ignore the phrases and clauses that begin with prepositions or dependent words. The subject of a sentence will never be in a prepositional phrase or dependent clause.

Indefinite Pronouns

When an indefinite pronoun serves as the subject of a sentence, you will often use a singular verb form. However, keep in mind that exceptions arise. Some indefinite pronouns may require a plural verb form. To determine whether to use a singular or plural verb with an indefinite pronoun, consider the noun that the pronoun would refer to. If the noun is plural, then use a plural verb with the indefinite pronoun.

Indefinite Pronouns that Always Take a Singular Verb	Indefinite Pronouns that can Take a Singular or Plural Verb
anybody, anyone, anything each, everybody, everyone, everything	all (Examples: All of the water **has** evaporated. All of the apples **are** ripe.
nobody, no one, none, nothing somebody, someone, something	some (Examples: Some of the money **was** stolen. Some of the books **were** stolen.

Collective Nouns

Because collective nouns are counted as one, they are singular and require a singular verb.

Example 9.1.6.22:

The class **respects** the teacher

The Subject Follows the Verb

You may encounter sentences in which the subject comes after the verb instead of before the verb. To ensure proper subject-verb agreement, you must correctly identify the subject and the verb.

Example 9.1.6.23:

Somewhere deep in the woods **reigns** the **king** of the elves

In this example the verb (*reigns*) comes before the singular subject (*king*).

Here or There

In sentences that begin with *here* or *there*, the subject follows the verb. If you have trouble identifying the subject and the verb in sentences that start with here or there, it may help to reverse the order of the sentence so the subject comes first.

Example 9.1.6.24:

There **were** many **athletes** training in the gym.

In this example the verb is were and the subject is athletes. (Note: training is not the verb of this sentence. training in the gym is a participial phrase. See Components of a Sentence.)

Questions

Many questions are formed with helping verbs whose form must agree in number with the subject:

Example 9.1.6.25:

Are you **going** to the party tonight? Answer: Yes, I **am going** to the party.

The verb tense used in the question is present progressive (*are going*), and the subject (*you*) is placed after the helping verb are but before the present participle *going*.

Example 9.1.6.26:

Does your **car** run? Answer: Yes, my car runs.

In this example, notice that the *s* ending for the singular subject (car) appears at the end of the helping verb *does* in the question. In the answer to the question, the s ending is attached to the verb *run*, and the helping verb is not used.

tip

If you have trouble finding the subject and the verb in questions, try answering the question being asked.

Exercise 19

Correct the errors in subject-verb agreement in the following sentences. If there are no errors in subject-verb agreement, write OK. Copy the corrected sentence or the word OK on your own sheet of notebook paper.

1. My dog and cats chases each other all the time.

   _____

2. The books that are in my library is the best I have ever read.

   _____

3. Everyone are going to the concert except me.

   _____

4. My family are moving to California.

   _____

5. Here is the lake I told you about.

   _____

6. There is the newspapers I was supposed to deliver.

   _____

7. Which room is bigger?

   _____

8. When are the movie going to start?

   _____

9. My sister and brother cleans up after themselves.

_____

10. Some of the clothes is packed away in the attic.

_____

Exercise 20

Correct the errors in subject-verb agreement in the following paragraph.

Dear Hiring Manager,

I feels that I am the ideal candidate for the receptionist position at your company. I has three years of experience as a receptionist in a company that is similar to yours. My phone skills and written communication is excellent. These skills, and others that I have learned on the job, helps me understand that every person in a company helps make the business a success. At my current job, the team always say that I am very helpful. Everyone appreciate when I go the extra mile to get the job done right. My current employer and coworkers feels that I am an asset to the team. I is efficient and organized. Is there any other details about me that you would like to know? If so, please contact me. Here are my résumé. You can reach me by email or phone. I looks forward to speaking with you in person.

Thanks,

Felicia Fellini

Key Takeaways

- Parts of sentences must agree in number, person, case, and gender.
- A verb must always agree with its subject in number. A singular subject requires a singular verb; a plural subject requires a plural verb.
- Irregular verbs do not follow a predictable pattern in their singular and plural forms. Common irregular verbs are to be, to have, and to do.
- A compound subject is formed when two or more nouns are joined by the words and, or, or nor.
- In some sentences, the subject and verb may be separated by a phrase or clause, but the verb must still agree with the subject.
- Some indefinite pronouns may require a plural verb form.
- Collective nouns require singular verbs.
- In sentences that begin with here and there, the subject follows the verb.

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9.1.7: Nouns and Article Use

Nouns are words that name things, places, people, and ideas. Right now, you may be surrounded by desks, computers, and notebooks. These are called count nouns because you can count the exact number of desks, computers, and notebooks—three desks, one computer, and six notebooks, for example.

On the other hand, you may be carrying a small amount of money in your wallet and sitting on a piece of furniture. These are called non-count nouns. Although you can count the pieces of furniture or the amount of money, you cannot add a number in front of money or furniture, and you cannot simply add -s to the end of a non-count noun. Instead, you must use other words and phrases to indicate the quantity of money and furniture.

Incorrect: five moneys, two furnitures

Correct: some money, two pieces of furniture

Count and Non-count Nouns

A count noun refers to people, places, and things that are separate units. You make count nouns plural by adding –s or -es.

Example 9.1.7.1:

chair -- Make sure to push the chairs against the wall before you leave.

A non-count noun identifies a whole object that cannot be separated from other identical objects and counted individually. Non-count nouns may refer to concrete objects or abstract objects. A concrete noun identifies an object you can see, taste, touch, or count. An abstract noun identifies an object that you cannot see, touch, or count. There are some exceptions, but most abstract nouns cannot be made plural, so they are non-count nouns. Examples of abstract nouns include anger, education, melancholy, softness, violence, and conduct.

Type of Non-count Nouns	Examples	Sample Sentence
Food	sugar, salt, pepper, lettuce, rice	Add more sugar to my coffee, please.
Solids	concrete, chocolate, silver, soap	The ice cream was covered in creamy chocolate.
Abstract Nouns	peace, warmth, hospitality, information	I need more information about the insurance policy.

Exercise 21

Identify whether the italicized noun in the sentence is a count or non-count noun by writing C or NC above the noun.

1. The amount of traffic on the way home was terrible.
2. Forgiveness is an important part of growing up.
3. I made caramel sauce for the organic apples I bought.
4. I prefer film cameras instead of digital ones.
5. My favorite subject is history.

Definite and Indefinite Articles

The word *the* is a definite article. It refers to one or more specific things. For example, the woman refers to not any woman but a particular woman. The definite article *the* is used before singular and plural count nouns.

The words *a* and *an* are indefinite articles. They refer to one nonspecific thing. For example, *a woman* refers to any woman, not a specific, particular woman. The indefinite article *a* or *an* is used before a singular count noun.

- Definite Articles (The) and Indefinite Articles (A/An) with Count Nouns

- I saw the concert. (singular, refers to a specific concert)
  - I saw the concerts. (plural, refers to more than one specific concert)
  - I saw the U2 concert last night. (singular, refers to a specific concert)
  - I saw a concert. (singular, refers to any nonspecific concert)

Two Article Rules

The following rules will help to determine when and what kind of article needs to be used.

Rule 1: A singular count noun needs an article or a determiner. Choose *a* or *an* if the noun is indefinite. Choose *the* if the noun is definite

Rule 2: A plural or non-count noun does not need an article unless it is definite.

Exercise 22

Write the correct article in the blank for each of the following sentences. Write OK if the sentence is correct.

1. (A/An/The) camel can live for days without water. _____
2. I enjoyed (a/an/the) pastries at the Bar Mitzvah. _____
3. (A/An/The) politician spoke of many important issues. _____
4. I really enjoyed (a/an/the) actor's performance in the play. _____
5. (A/An/The) goal I have is to run a marathon this year. _____

Exercise 23

Correct the misused or missing articles and rewrite the paragraph.

Stars are large balls of spinning hot gas like our sun. The stars look tiny because they are far away. Many of them are much larger than sun. Did you know that a Milky Way galaxy has between two hundred billion and four hundred billion stars in it? Scientists estimate that there may be as many as five hundred billion galaxies in an entire universe! Just like a human being, the star has a life cycle from birth to death, but its lifespan is billions of years long. The star is born in a cloud of cosmic gas and dust called a nebula. Our sun was born in the nebula nearly five billion years ago. Photographs of the star-forming nebulas are astonishing.

Key Takeaways

- You can make count nouns plural by adding –s or –es.
- Count nouns are individual people, places, or things that can be counted, such as politicians, deserts, or candles.
- Non-count nouns refer to whole things that cannot be made plural, such as salt, peace, or happiness.
- The is a definite article and is used to refer to a specific person, place, or thing, such as the Queen of England.
- A and an are indefinite articles, and they refer to nonspecific people, places, or things, such as an apple or a bicycle.

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9.1.8: Pronouns

Subject, Object, and Possessive Pronouns

Subject pronouns are often the subject of a sentence—who or what the sentence is about.

Example 9.1.8.1:

Sentence: She loves the desserts in France.

She is the subject.

Example 9.1.8.2:

Sentence: By lunch time, they were hungry.

They is the subject.

Object pronouns are often the object of the verb— who or what was acted upon.

Example 9.1.8.3:

Sentence: Melanie's thoughtfulness touched him.

Him is the object of the verb touched.

Example 9.1.8.4:

Sentence: We lifted it.

It is the object of the verb lifted.

The masculine subject pronoun is *he*, and the masculine object pronoun is *him*. The feminine subject pronoun is *she*, and the feminine object pronoun is *her*.

A pronoun that shows possession or ownership is called a possessive pronoun.

Example 9.1.8.5:

Sentence: The teacher took her apple and left.

The pronoun *her* shows the teacher owns the apple.

Example 9.1.8.6:

Sentence: The hikers spotted their guide on the trail.

The pronoun their shows the hikers follow the guide who was assigned to the hikers.

Table of Pronouns

Subject Pronouns	I, you, he, she, it, we, they
Object Pronouns	me, you, him, her, it, us, them
Possessive Pronouns	my (mine), your(s), his, hers, its, our(s), their(s)

Exercise 24

Complete the following sentences by circling the correct pronoun.

1. Unfortunately, the house was too expensive for (we, us, they).
2. I completed (mine, my, your) research paper, and she completed (his, hers, theirs).
3. My dog Buster is old, but (he, it, them) is very playful.
4. That ring belongs to my father, so it is (hers, his, theirs).
5. I cannot find my textbook, so I think (they, it, he) is lost.

Common Pronoun Errors

English language learners often make the same errors when using pronouns. The following examples illustrate common errors.

Incorrect: Me and Daniela went to the restaurant for lunch.

This sentence is incorrect because an object pronoun (me) is used instead of a subject pronoun.

Correct: Daniela and I went to the restaurant for lunch.

This sentence is now correct because a subject pronoun (I) is used.

Incorrect: Mark put her grocery bag on the counter.

This sentence is incorrect because the pronoun her refers to a female, and Mark is a male.

Correct: Mark put his grocery bag on the counter.

This sentence is now correct because the male pronoun his refers to the male person, Mark.

Incorrect: The woman she went to work earlier than usual.

This sentence is incorrect because the subject the woman is repeated by the pronoun she.

Correct: The woman went to work earlier than usual. (Or) She went to work earlier than usual.

These sentences are now correct because the unnecessary repeated subject has been removed.

Exercise 25

Correct the following sentences that have pronoun errors. If the sentence is correct as it is, write OK.

1. Us are going to the county fair this weekend.
2. Steven did not want to see a movie because she had a headache.
3. The teacher congratulated Maria and me.
4. The eighth grade students they were all behaving mysteriously well.
5. Derrick and he received the best grade on the grammar test.

Relative Pronouns

A relative pronoun is a type of pronoun that helps connect details to the subject of the sentence and may often combine two shorter sentences. The relative pronouns are *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *which*, *that*, *where*. On how they are used, see Relative Pronouns and Adjective Clauses.

First-, Second-, and Third-person Pronouns

	Singular Form	Plural Form
First Person	I am.	We are.
Second Person	You are.	You are.
Third Person	He/She/It is.	They are.

Exercise 26

Complete the following sentences by selecting the correct relative pronoun.

1. He showed me a photo (who, that) upset me.
2. Soccer is a fast moving game (who, that) has many fans worldwide.
3. Juan is a man (which, who) has high standards for everything.
4. Jamaica is a beautiful country (that, who) I would like to visit next year.
5. My mother only eats bananas (who, that) are green.

Exercise 27

Combine the two sentences into one sentence using a relative pronoun.

1. Jeff is a dependable person. He will never let you down.
2. I rode a roller coaster. It was scary.
3. At the beach, I always dig my feet into the sand. It protects them from the hot sun.
4. Jackie is trying not to use so many plastic products. They are not good for the environment.
5. My Aunt Sherry is teaching me how to drive. She has never been in accident or gotten a ticket.

Key Takeaways

- A pronoun is used in place of a noun. There are several types of pronouns, including subject and object pronouns, possessive pronouns, and relative pronouns.
- Subject pronouns are the “who” and “what” the sentence is about. Object pronouns are the “who” and “what” that receives the action. A possessive pronoun is a pronoun showing ownership.
- Common pronoun errors include mixing up subject, object, and gender pronouns, and repeating the subject of a sentence with a pronoun. Relative pronouns help combine two separate sentences.

Pronouns and Antecedents

If there were no pronouns, all types of writing would be quite tedious to read. We would soon be frustrated by reading sentences like “Bob said that Bob was tired or Christina told the class that Christina received an A.” Pronouns help a writer avoid constant repetition. Knowing just how pronouns work is an important aspect of clear and concise writing.

Pronoun Agreement

A pronoun is a word that takes the place of (or refers back to) a noun or another pronoun. The word or words a pronoun refers to is called the antecedent of the pronoun.

Example 9.1.8.7:

1. *Lani* complained that *she* was exhausted.

She refers to Lani. *Lani* is the antecedent of she.

2. *Jeremy* left the party early, so I did not see *him* until Monday at work.

Him refers to Jeremy. *Jeremy* is the antecedent of him.

3. Crina and Rosalie have been best friends ever since they were freshman in high school.

They refers to Crina and Rosalie. *Crina and Rosalie* is the antecedent of they.

Pronoun agreement errors occur when the pronoun and the antecedent do not match or agree with each other. There are several types of pronoun agreement.

Agreement in Number

If the pronoun takes the place of or refers to a singular noun, the pronoun must also be singular.

Agreement in Person

	Singular Pronouns			Plural Pronouns		
First Person	I	me	my (mine)	we	us	our (ours)
Second Person	you	you	your (yours)	you	you	your (your)
Third Person	he, she, it	him, her, it	his, her, its	they	them	their (theirs)

If you use a consistent person, your reader is less likely to be confused.

Indefinite Pronouns and Agreement

Indefinite pronouns do not refer to a specific person or thing and are usually singular. Note that a pronoun that refers to an indefinite singular pronoun should also be singular. Note: The pronoun “they” is often used for gender neutrality.

Common Indefinite Pronouns				
all	each one	few	nothing	several
any	each other	many	one	some
anybody	either	neither	one another	somebody
anything	everybody	nobody	oneself	someone
both	everyone	none	other	something
each	everything	no one	others	anyone

Collective Nouns

Collective nouns suggest more than one person but are usually considered singular.

Common Collective Nouns		
audience	faculty	public
band	family	school
class	government	society
committee	group	team
company	Jury	tribe

? Exercise 28

Complete the following sentences by selecting the correct pronoun. Then circle the noun the pronoun replaces.

1. In the current economy, nobody wants to waste _____ money on frivolous things.
2. If anybody chooses to go to medical school, _____ must be prepared to work long hours.
3. The plumbing crew did _____ best to repair the broken pipes before the next ice storm.
4. If someone is rude to you, try giving _____ a smile in return.
5. My family has _____ faults, but I still love them no matter what.
6. The school of education plans to train _____ students to be literacy tutors.
7. The commencement speaker said that each student has a responsibility toward _____.

8. My mother's singing group has _____ rehearsals on Thursday evenings.
9. No one should suffer _____ pains alone.
10. I thought the flock of birds lost _____ way in the storm.

Who vs. Whom

Who or *whoever* is always the subject of a verb. Use *who* or *whoever* when the pronoun performs the action indicated by the verb.

Example 9.1.8.8:

Who won the marathon last Tuesday?

I wonder who came up with that terrible idea!

On the other hand, whom and whomever serve as objects. They are used when the pronoun does not perform an action. Use whom or whomever when the pronoun is the direct object of a verb or the object of a preposition.

Example 9.1.8.9:

Whom did Frank marry the third time? (direct object of verb)

From whom did you buy that old record player? (object of preposition)

tip

If you are having trouble deciding when to use who and whom, try this trick. Take the following sentence: Who/Whom do I consider my best friend? Reorder the sentence in your head, using either he or him in place of who or whom. I consider him my best friend. I consider he my best friend. Which sentence sounds better? The first one, of course. So the trick is, if you can use him, you should use whom.

Exercise 29

Complete the following sentences by adding who or whom.

1. _____ hit the home run?
2. I remember _____ won the Academy Award for Best Actor last year.
3. To _____ is the letter addressed?
4. I have no idea _____ left the iron on, but I am going to find out.
5. _____ are you going to recommend for the internship?
6. With _____ are you going to Hawaii?
7. No one knew _____ the famous actor was.
8. _____ in the office knows how to fix the copy machine?
9. From _____ did you get the concert tickets?
10. No one knew _____ ate the cake mom was saving.

Key Takeaways

- Pronouns and their antecedents need to agree in number and person.
- Most indefinite pronouns are singular.
- Pronouns can function as subjects or objects.
- Subject pronouns are never used as objects, and object pronouns are never used as subjects.
- Who serves as a subject of a verb.
- Whom serves as an object of a sentence (direct object) or the object of a preposition.

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9.1.9: Punctuation (Part 1)

Commas

The comma is a punctuation mark that indicates a pause in a sentence or a separation of things in a list. Commas can be used in a variety of ways. Look at some of the following sentences to see how you might use a comma when writing a sentence.

1. **Introductory word**: Personally, I think the practice is helpful.
2. **Lists**: The barn, the tool shed, and the back porch were destroyed by the wind.
3. **Coordinating adjectives**: He was tired, hungry, and late.
4. **Conjunctions in compound sentences**: The bedroom door was closed, so the children knew their mother was asleep.
5. **Interrupting words**: I knew where it was hidden, of course, but I wanted them to find it themselves.
6. **Dates, addresses, greetings, and letters**: The letter was postmarked December 8, 1945.
7. **Nonrestrictive adjective clauses**: Jimmy Carter, who was the first president from Georgia, visited Atlanta last week.

Commas after an Introductory Word or Phrase

You may notice a comma that appears near the beginning of the sentence, usually after a word or phrase. This comma lets the reader know where the introductory word or phrase ends and the main sentence begins.

✔ Example 9.1.9.1:

Without spoiling the surprise, we need to tell her to save the date.

In this sentence, without spoiling the surprise is an introductory phrase, while we need to tell her to save the date is the main sentence. Notice how they are separated by a comma. When only an introductory word appears in the sentence, a comma also follows the introductory word.

✔ Example 9.1.9.2:

Ironically, she already had plans for that day

? Exercise 30

Look for the introductory word or phrase. Then add a comma to correct the sentence.

1. Suddenly the dog ran into the house.
2. In the blink of an eye the kids were ready to go to the movies.
3. Confused he tried opening the box from the other end.
4. Without a doubt green is my favorite color.
5. Hesitating she looked back at the directions before proceeding.
6. Fortunately the sleeping baby did not stir when the doorbell rang.
7. Believe it or not the criminal was able to rob the same bank three times.

Commas in a List of Items

When you want to list several nouns in a sentence, you separate each word with a comma. This allows the reader to pause after each item and identify which words are included in the grouping. When you list items in a sentence, put a comma after each noun, then add the word and before the last item.

✔ Example 9.1.9.3:

We'll need to get flour, tomatoes, and cheese at the store.

The pizza will be topped with olives, peppers, and pineapple chunks.

Commas and Coordinating Adjectives

You can use commas to list both adjectives and nouns. A string of adjectives that describe a noun are called coordinating adjectives. These adjectives come before the noun they modify and are separated by commas. One important thing to note, however, is that unlike listing nouns, the word and does not always need to be before the last adjective.

Example 9.1.9.4:

It was a bright, windy, clear day.

Our kite glowed red, yellow, and blue in the morning sunlight.

Exercise 31

Use what you have learned so far about comma use to add commas to the following sentences.

1. Monday Tuesday and Wednesday are all booked with meetings.
2. It was a quiet uneventful unproductive day.
3. We'll need to prepare statements for the Franks Todds and Smiths before their portfolio reviews next week.
4. Michael Nita and Desmond finished their report last Tuesday.
5. With cold wet aching fingers he was able to secure the sails before the storm.
6. He wrote his name on the board in clear precise delicate letters.

Commas before Conjunctions in Compound Sentences

Commas are used to separate two independent clauses. The comma comes after the first independent clause and is followed by a conjunction, such as for, and, or but.

Example 9.1.9.5:

He missed class today, and he thinks he will be out tomorrow, too.

He says his fever is gone, but he is still very tired.

Commas before and after Interrupting Words

In conversations, you might interrupt your train of thought by giving more details about what you are talking about. In a sentence, you might interrupt your train of thought with a word or phrase called interrupting words. Interrupting words can come at the beginning or middle of a sentence. When the interrupting words appear at the beginning of the sentence, a comma appears after the word or phrase.

Example 9.1.9.6:

If you can believe it, people once thought the sun and planets orbited around Earth.

Luckily, some people questioned that theory.

When interrupting words come in the middle of a sentence, they are separated from the rest of the sentence by commas. You can determine where the commas should go by looking for the part of the sentence that is not essential for the sentence to make sense.

Example 9.1.9.7:

An Italian astronomer, Galileo, proved that Earth orbited the sun.

We have known, for hundreds of years now, that the Earth and other planets exist in a solar system.

? Exercise 32

Insert commas to separate the interrupting words from the rest of the sentence.

1. I asked my neighbors the retired couple from Florida to bring in my mail.
2. Without a doubt his work has improved over the last few weeks.
3. Our professor Mr. Alamut drilled the lessons into our heads.
4. The meeting is at noon unfortunately which means I will be late for lunch.
5. We came in time for the last part of dinner but most importantly we came in time for dessert.
6. All of a sudden our network crashed and we lost our files.
7. Alex hand the wrench to me before the pipe comes loose again.

Commas in Dates, Addresses, and the Greetings and Closings of Letters

You also use commas when you write the date, such as in cover letters and emails. Commas are used when you write the date, when you include an address, and when you greet someone.

If you are writing out the full date, add a comma after the day and before the year. You do not need to add a comma when you write the month and day or when you write the month and the year. If you need to continue the sentence after you add a date that includes the day and year, add a comma after the end of the date.

✓ Example 9.1.9.8:

The letter is postmarked May 4, 2001.

Her birthday is May 5.

He visited the country in July 2009.

I registered for the conference on March 7, 2010, so we should get our tickets soon.

You also use commas when you include addresses and locations. When you include an address in a sentence, be sure to place a comma after the street and after the city. Do not place a comma between the state and the zip code. Like a date, if you need to continue the sentence after adding the address, simply add a comma after the address.

✓ Example 9.1.9.9:

We moved to 4542 Boxcutter Lane, Hope, Missouri 70832.

After moving to Boston, Massachusetts, Eric used public transportation to get to work.

Greetings are also separated by commas. When you write an email or a letter, you add a comma after the greeting word or the person's name. You also need to include a comma after the closing, which is the word or phrase you put before your signature.

✓ Example 9.1.9.10:

Hello,

I would like more information about your job posting.

Thank you,

Anita Al-Sayf

Dear Mrs. Al-Sayf,

Thank you for your letter. Please read the attached document for details.

Sincerely,

Jack Fromont

? Exercise 33

Use what you have learned about comma usage to edit the following paragraphs.

1. My brother Nathaniel is a collector of many rare unusual things. He has collected lunch boxes limited edition books and hatpins at various points of his life. His current collection of unusual bottles has over fifty pieces. Usually he sells one collection before starting another.
2. Our meeting is scheduled for Thursday March 20. In that time we need to gather all our documents together. Alice is in charge of the timetables and schedules. Tom is in charge of updating the guidelines. I am in charge of the presentation. To prepare for this meeting please print out any emails faxes or documents you have referred to when writing your sample.
3. It was a cool crisp autumn day when the group set out. They needed to cover several miles before they made camp so they walked at a brisk pace. The leader of the group Garth kept checking his watch and their GPS location. Isabelle Raoul and Maggie took turns carrying the equipment while Carrie took notes about the wildlife they saw. As a result no one noticed the darkening sky until the first drops of rain splattered on their faces.
4. Please have your report complete and filed by April 15 2010. In your submission letter please include your contact information the position you are applying for and two people we can contact as references. We will not be available for consultation after April 10 but you may contact the office if you have any questions. Thank you HR Department.

Key Takeaways

- Punctuation marks provide visual cues to readers to tell them how to read a sentence. Punctuation marks convey meaning.
- Commas indicate a pause or a list in a sentence.
- A comma should be used after an introductory word to separate this word from the main sentence.
- A comma comes after each noun in a list. The word and is added before the last noun, which is not followed by a comma.
- A comma comes after every coordinating adjective except for the last adjective.
- Commas can be used to separate the two independent clauses in compound sentences as long as a conjunction follows the comma.
- Commas are used to separate interrupting words from the rest of the sentence.
- When you write the date, you add a comma between the day and the year. You also add a comma after the year if the sentence continues after the date.
- When they are used in a sentence, addresses have commas after the street address, and the city. If a sentence continues after the address, a comma comes after the zip code.
- When you write a letter, you use commas in your greeting at the beginning and in your closing at the end of your letter.

Semicolons

The semicolon (;) can be used in a variety of ways. The semicolon indicates a break in the flow of a sentence, but functions differently than a period or a comma. When you encounter a semicolon while reading aloud, this represents a good place to pause and take a breath.

Semicolons to Join Two Independent Clauses

Use a semicolon to combine two closely related independent clauses. Relying on a period to separate the related clauses into two shorter sentences could lead to choppy writing. Using a comma would create an awkward run-on sentence.

Correct: Be sure to wear clean, well-pressed clothes to the interview; appearances are important.

Choppy: Be sure to wear clean, well-pressed clothes to the interview. Appearances are important.

Incorrect: Be sure to wear clean, well-pressed clothes to the interview, appearances are important.

In this case, writing the independent clauses as two sentences separated by a period is correct. However, using a semicolon to combine the clauses can make your writing more interesting by creating a variety of sentence lengths and structures while preserving the flow of ideas.

Semicolons to Join Items in a List

You can also use a semicolon to join items in a list when the items in the list already require commas. Semicolons help the reader distinguish between items in the list.

Correct: The color combinations we can choose from are black, white, and grey; green, brown, and black; or red, green, and brown.

Incorrect: The color combinations we can choose from are black, white, and grey, green, brown, and black, or red, green, and brown.

By using semicolons in this sentence, the reader can easily distinguish between the three sets of colors.

tip

Use semicolons to join two main clauses. Do not use semicolons with coordinating conjunctions such as and, or, and but.

Exercise 34

Correct the following sentences by adding semicolons. If the sentence is correct as it is, write OK.

1. I did not notice that you were in the office I was behind the front desk all day.
2. Do you want turkey, spinach, and cheese roast beef, lettuce, and cheese or ham, tomato, and cheese?
3. Please close the blinds there is a glare on the screen.
4. Unbelievably, no one was hurt in the accident.
5. I cannot decide if I want my room to be green, brown, and purple green, black, and brown or green, brown, and dark red.
6. Let’s go for a walk the air is so refreshing.

Key Takeaways

- Use a semicolon to join two independent clauses.
- Use a semicolon to separate items in a list when those items already require a comma.

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9.1.10: Punctuation (Part 2)

Colons

The colon (:) is another punctuation mark used to indicate a full stop. Use a colon to introduce lists, quotes, examples, and explanations. You can also use a colon after the greeting in business letters and memos.

Example 9.1.10.11:

Dear Hiring Manager:

To: Human Resources

From: Deanna Dean

Colons to Introduce a List

Use a colon to introduce a list of items. Introduce the list with an independent clause.

Example 9.1.10.12:

The team will tour three states: New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland.

I have to take four classes this semester: Composition, Statistics, Ethics, and Italian.

Colons to Introduce a Quote

You can use a colon to introduce a quote if the introduction to the quote is a complete, independent clause:

Correct: Mark Twain had some great advice about honesty: “When in doubt, tell the truth.”

Incorrect: Mark Twain said: “When in doubt, tell the truth.”

Correct: Mark Twain said, “When in doubt, tell the truth.”

If a quote is longer than four typed lines, skip a line after the colon and indent the left margin of the quote five spaces. Because quotations longer than four typed lines use line spacing and indentation to indicate a quote, quotation marks are not necessary.

Example 9.1.10.13:

My father always loved Mark Twain’s words:

There are basically two types of people. People who accomplish things, and people who claim to have accomplished things. The first group is less crowded.

tip

Long quotations, which are four typed lines or more, are called block quotations. Block quotations frequently appear in longer essays and research papers.

Colons to Introduce Examples or Explanations

Use a colon to introduce an example or to further explain an idea presented in the first part of a sentence. The first part of the sentence must always be an independent clause; that is, it must stand alone as a complete thought with a subject and verb. Do not use a colon after phrases like such as or for example.

Incorrect: Our company offers many publishing services, such as: writing, editing, and reviewing.

Incorrect: Our company does: writing, editing, and reviewing.

Correct: Our company offers many publishing services: writing, editing, and reviewing.

tip

Capitalize the first letter following a colon for a proper noun, the beginning of a quote, or the first letter of another independent clause. Do NOT capitalize if the information following the colon is not a complete sentence.

Proper noun: We visited three countries: Belize, Honduras, and El Salvador.

Beginning of a quote: My mother loved this line from Hamlet: “To thine own self be true.”

Two independent clauses: There are drawbacks to modern technology: My brother’s cell phone died and he lost a lot of phone numbers.

Incorrect: The recipe is simple: Tomato, basil, and avocado.

? Exercise 35

Correct the following sentences by adding semicolons or colons where needed. If the sentence does not need a semicolon or colon, write OK.

1. Don’t give up you never know what tomorrow brings.

   _____

2. Our records show that the patient was admitted on March 9, 2010 January 13, 2010 and November 16, 2009.

   _____

3. Allow me to introduce myself I am the greatest ice-carver in the world.

   _____

4. Where I come from there are three ways to get to the grocery store by car, by bus, and by foot.

   _____

5. Listen closely you will want to remember this speech.

   _____

6. I have lived in Sedona, Arizona Baltimore, Maryland and Knoxville, Tennessee.

   _____

7. The boss’s message was clear lateness would not be tolerated.

   _____

8. Next semester, we will read some well-known authors, such as Vonnegut, Miller, and Orwell.

   _____

9. My little sister said what we were all thinking “We should have stayed home.”

   _____

10. Trust me I have done this before.

    _____

Key Takeaways

- Use a colon to introduce a list, quote, or example.
- Use a colon after a greeting in business letters and memos.

Quotation Marks

Quotation marks (“ ”) set off a group of words from the rest of the text. Use quotation marks to indicate direct quotations of another person’s words or to indicate a title of a short published work. Quotation marks always appear in pairs.

Direct Quotations

A direct quotation is an exact account of what someone said or wrote. To include a direct quotation in your writing, enclose the words in quotation marks. An indirect quotation is a restatement of what someone said or wrote. An indirect quotation, which is also called reported speech, does not use the person’s exact words. You do not need to use quotation marks for indirect quotations.

Direct quotation: Carly said, “I’m not ever going back there again.”

Indirect quotation: Carly said that she would never go back there.

Punctuating Direct Quotations

Quotation marks show readers another person’s exact words. Often, you will want to identify who is speaking. You can do this at the beginning, middle, or end of the quote. Notice the use of commas and capitalized words.

Beginning: Madison said, “Let’s stop at the farmers market to buy some fresh vegetables for dinner.”

Middle: “Let’s stop at the farmers market,” Madison said, “to buy some fresh vegetables for dinner.

End: “Let’s stop at the farmers market to buy some fresh vegetables for dinner,” Madison said.

Speaker not identified: “Let’s stop at the farmers market to buy some fresh vegetables for dinner.”

Always capitalize the first letter of a quote when it is the beginning of the sentence. When using identifying words in the middle of the quote, the beginning of the second part of the quote does not need to be capitalized.

Use commas between identifying words and quotes. Quotation marks must be placed after commas and periods. Place quotation marks after question marks and exclamation points only if the question or exclamation is part of the quoted text.

Question is part of quoted text: The new employee asked, “When is lunch?”

Question is not part of quoted text: Did you hear her say you were “the next Picasso”?

Exclamation is part of quoted text: My supervisor beamed, “Thanks for all of your hard work!”

Exclamation is not part of quoted text: He said I “single-handedly saved the company thousands of dollars”!

Quotations within Quotations

Use single quotation marks (‘ ’) to show a quotation within in a quotation.

✔ Example 9.1.10.14:

Theresa said, “I wanted to take my dog to the festival, but the man at the gate said, ‘No dogs allowed.’”

“When you say, ‘I can’t help it,’ what exactly does that mean?”

“The instructions say, ‘Tighten the screws one at a time.’”

Titles

Use quotation marks around titles of short works of writing, such as essays, songs, poems, short stories, and chapters in books. Usually, titles of longer works, such as books, magazines, albums, newspapers, and novels, are italicized or underlined, but never both at the same time.

✔ Example 9.1.10.15:

“Annabelle Lee” is one of my favorite romantic poems.

The New York Times has been in publication since 1851.

? Exercise 36

Correct these sentences by adding quotation marks where necessary. If the sentence does not need any quotation marks, write OK.

1. Yasmin said, I don’t feel like cooking. Let’s go out to eat.

   _____

2. Where should we go? said Russell.

   _____

3. Yasmin said it didn't matter to her.

_____

4. I know, said Russell, let's go to the Two Roads Juice Bar.

_____

5. Perfect! said Yasmin.

_____

6. Did you know that the name of the Juice Bar is a reference to a poem? asked Russell.

_____

7. I didn't! exclaimed Yasmin. Which poem?

_____

8. The Road Not Taken, by Robert Frost Russell explained.

_____

9. Oh! said Yasmin, Is that the one that starts with the line, Two roads diverged in a yellow wood?

_____

10. That's the one said Russell.

_____

Key Takeaways

- Use quotation marks to enclose direct quotes and titles of short works.
- Use single quotation marks to enclose a quote within a quote.
- Do not use any quotation marks for indirect quotations.

Apostrophes

An apostrophe (') is a punctuation mark that is used with a noun to show possession or to indicate where a letter has been left out to form a contraction.

Possession

An apostrophe and the letter s indicate who or what owns something. To show possession with a singular noun, add 's.

Example 9.1.10.16:

Jen's dance routine mesmerized everyone in the room.

The dog's leash is hanging on the hook beside the door.

Jess's sister is also coming to the party.

Notice that singular nouns that end in s still take the apostrophe s ('s) ending to show possession.

To show possession with a plural noun that ends in s, just add an apostrophe ('). If the plural noun does not end in s, add an apostrophe and an s ('s).

Plural noun that ends in s: The drummers' sticks all moved in the same rhythm, like a machine.

Plural noun that does not end in s: The people's votes clearly showed that no one supported the management decision.

Contractions

A contraction is a word that is formed by combining two words. In a contraction, an apostrophe shows where one or more letters have been left out. Contractions are commonly used in informal writing but not in formal writing.

Example 9.1.10.17:

I do not like ice cream.

I don’t like ice cream.

Notice how the words do and not have been combined to form the contraction don’t. The apostrophe shows where the o in not has been left out.

Example 9.1.10.18:

We will see you later.

We’ll see you later.

Be careful not to confuse it’s with its. It’s is a contraction of the words it and is. Its is a possessive pronoun.

Example 9.1.10.19:

It’s cold and rainy outside. (It is cold and rainy outside.)

The cat was chasing its tail. (Shows that the tail belongs to the cat.)

When in doubt, substitute the words it is in a sentence. If sentence still makes sense, use the contraction it’s.

Exercise 37

Correct the following sentences by adding apostrophes. If the sentence is correct as it is, write OK.

1. “What a beautiful child! She has her mothers eyes.”
2. My brothers wife is one of my best friends.
3. I couldnt believe it when I found out that I got the job!
4. My supervisors informed me that I wouldnt be able to take the days off.
5. Each of the students responses were unique.
6. Wont you please join me for dinner tonight?

Key Takeaways

- Use apostrophes to show possession. Add ’s to singular nouns and plural nouns that do not end in s.
- Add ’ to plural nouns that end in s.
- Use apostrophes in contractions to show where a letter or letters have been left out.

Dashes

A dash (—) is a punctuation mark used to set off information in a sentence for emphasis. You can enclose text between two dashes, or use just one dash. To create a dash in Microsoft Word, type two hyphens together. Do not put a space between dashes and text.

Example 9.1.10.20:

Arrive to the interview early—but not too early.

Any of the suits—except for the purple one—should be fine to wear.

Exercise 38

Clarify the following sentences by adding dashes. If the sentence is clear as it is, write OK.

1. Which hairstyle do you prefer short or long?

2. I don’t know I hadn’t even thought about that.
3. Guess what I got the job!
4. I will be happy to work over the weekend if I can have Monday off.
5. You have all the qualities that we are looking for in a candidate intelligence, dedication, and a strong work ethic.

Key Takeaways

- Dashes indicate a pause in text.
- Dashes set off information in a sentence to show emphasis.

Hyphens

A hyphen (-) looks similar to a dash but is shorter and used in different ways.

Hyphens between Two Adjectives That Work as One

Use a hyphen to combine words that work together to form a single description.

Example 9.1.10.21:

The fifty-five-year-old athlete was just as qualified for the marathon as his younger opponents.

My doctor recommended against taking the medication, since it can be habit-forming.

My study group focused on preparing for the midyear review.

Hyphens When a Word Breaks at the End of a Line

Use a hyphen to divide a word across two lines of text. You may notice that most word-processing programs will do this for you. If you have to manually insert a hyphen, place the hyphen between two syllables. If you are unsure of where to place the hyphen, consult a dictionary or move the entire word to the next line.

Example 9.1.10.22:

My supervisor was concerned that the team meet-
ing would conflict with the client meeting.

Key Takeaways

- Hyphens join words that work as one adjective.
- Hyphens break words across two lines of text.

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9.1.11: Capitalization

Rules for Capitalization

- Capitalize the first word of a sentence.
- Always capitalize nationalities, races, languages, and religions. For example, American, African American, Hispanic, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, and so on.
- Do not capitalize nouns for people, places, things, streets, buildings, events, and titles when the noun is used in general or common way.
- Capitalize days of the week, months of the year, and holidays.
- Capitalize titles of positions when they are accompanied by proper names.
  - **Examples**: President Obama, Governor Scott Brown, Judge Wheeler.
- Capitalize the names of specific movements or events.
  - **Examples**: the Civil Rights Movement, World War II, D-Day
- Capitalize the letters that make up abbreviations for organizations or agencies.
  - **Examples**: FEMA, EPA, NFL. CNN.
- Computer-related words such as “Internet” and “World Wide Web” are usually capitalized; however, “email” and “online” are never capitalized.
- Proper nouns—the names of specific people, places, objects, streets, buildings, events, or titles of individuals—are always capitalized.

Table of Common vs. Proper Nouns

Common Noun	Proper Noun
museum	The Art Institute of Chicago
theater	Apollo Theater
country	Malaysia
uncle	Uncle Javier
doctor	Dr. Jackson
book	*Pride and Prejudice*
college	Smith College
war	the Spanish-American War
historical event	The Renaissance

Key Takeaways

- Learning and applying the basic rules of capitalization is a fundamental aspect of good writing.
- Identifying and correcting errors in capitalization is an important writing skill.

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9.1.12: Diction and Spelling (Part 1)

The English language contains an enormous and ever-growing number of words. Enhancing your vocabulary by learning new words can seem overwhelming, but if you know the common prefixes and suffixes of English, you will understand many more words. Mastering common prefixes and suffixes is like learning a code. Once you crack the code, you can not only spell words more correctly but also recognize and perhaps even define unfamiliar words.

Prefixes and Suffixes

A prefix is a word part added to the beginning of a word to create a new meaning.

Table of Prefixes

Prefix	Meaning	Example
dis	not, opposite of	dis + satisfied = dissatisfied
mis	wrongly	mis + spell = misspell
un	un	un + acceptable = unacceptable
re	again	re + election = reelection
inter	between	inter + related = interrelated
pre	before	pre + pay = prepay
non	not	non + sense = nonsense
super	above	super + script = superscript
sub	under	sub + merge = submerge
anti	against, opposing	anti + bacterial = antibacterial

? Exercise 39

Add the correct prefix to the word to complete each sentence.

1. I wanted to ease my stomach _____comfort, so I drank some ginger root tea.
2. Lenny looked funny in his _____matched shirt and pants.
3. Penelope felt _____glamorous at the party because she was the only one not wearing a dress.
4. My mother said those _____aging creams do not work, so I should not waste my money on them.
5. The child's _____standard performance on the test alarmed his parents.
6. When my sister first saw the meteor, she thought it was a _____natural phenomenon.
7. Even though she got an excellent job offer, Cherie did not want to _____locate to a different country.
8. With a small class size, the students get to _____act with the teacher more frequently.
9. I slipped on the ice because I did not heed the _____cautions about watching my step.
10. A _____combatant is another word for civilian.

A suffix is a word part added to the end of a word to create a new meaning. Study the suffix rules in the following boxes.

Rules for Prefixes

The main rule to remember when adding a prefix to a word is not to add letters or leave out any letters.

Rule 1

When adding the suffixes -ness and -ly to a word, the spelling of the word does not change.

Example 9.1.12.1:

dark + ness = darkness

scholar + ly = scholarly

Exceptions to Rule 1

When the word ends in y, change the y to i before adding -ness and -ly.

Example 9.1.12.2:

ready + ly = readily

happy + ness = happiness

Rule 2

When the suffix begins with a vowel, drop the silent e in the root word.

Example 9.1.12.3:

care + ing = caring

use + able = usable

Exceptions to Rule 2

When the word ends in ce or ge, keep the silent e if the suffix begins with a or o.

Example 9.1.12.4:

replace + able = replaceable

courage + ous = courageous

Rule 3

When the suffix begins with a consonant, keep the silent e in the original word.

Example 9.1.12.5:

care + ful = careful

care + less = careless

true + ly = truly

argue + ment = argument

Rule 4

When the word ends in a consonant plus y, change the y to i before any suffix not beginning with i.

Example 9.1.12.6:

sunny + er = sunnier

hurry + ing = hurrying

Rule 5

When the suffix begins with a vowel, double the final consonant only if (1) the word has only one syllable or is accented on the last syllable and (2) the word ends in a single vowel followed by a single consonant.

Example 9.1.12.7:

tan + ing = tanning (one syllable word)

regret + ing = regretting (The accent is on the last syllable; the word ends in a single vowel followed by a single consonant.)

cancel + ed = canceled (The accent is not on the last syllable.)

prefer + ed = preferred

Exercise 40

Write the correct forms of the words with their suffixes.

1. refer + ed
2. refer + ence
3. mope + ing
4. approve + al
5. green + ness
6. benefit + ed
7. resubmit + ing
8. use + age
9. greedy + ly
10. excite + ment

Key Takeaways

- A prefix is a word part added to the beginning of a word that changes the word's meaning.
- A suffix is a word part added to the end of a word that changes the word's meaning.
- Learning the meanings of prefixes and suffixes will help expand your vocabulary, which will help improve your writing.

Commonly Confused Words

Some words in English cause trouble for speakers and writers because these words share a similar pronunciation, meaning, or spelling with another word. These words are called commonly confused words. For example, read aloud the following sentences containing the commonly confused words new and knew:

Example 9.1.12.8:

I liked her new sweater.

I knew she would wear that sweater today.

These words may sound alike when spoken, but they carry entirely different usages and meanings. New is an adjective that describes the sweater, and knew is the past tense of the verb to know.

Recognizing Commonly Confused Words

New and knew are just two of the words that can be confusing because of their similarities. Familiarize yourself with the following list of commonly confused words. Recognizing these words in your own writing and in other pieces of writing can help you choose the correct word.

List of Commonly Confused Words

- a, an, and
  - a (article). Used before a word that begins with a consonant.
    a key, a mouse, a screen
  - an (article). Used before a word that begins with a vowel.
    an airplane, an ocean, an igloo
  - and (conjunction). Connects two or more words together.
    peanut butter and jelly, pen and pencil, jump and shout
- accept, except
  - accept (verb). Means to take or agree to something offered.
    They accepted our proposal for the conference.
  - except (conjunction). Means only or but.
    We could fly there except the tickets cost too much.
  - affect, effect
  - affect (verb). Means to create a change.
    Hurricane winds affect the amount of rainfall.
  - effect (noun). Means an outcome or result.
    The heavy rains will have an effect on the crop growth.
- are, our
  - are (verb). A conjugated form of the verb to be.
    My cousins are all tall and blonde.
  - our (pronoun). Indicates possession, usually follows the pronoun we.
    We will bring our cameras to take pictures.
- by, buy
  - by (preposition). Means next to.
    My glasses are by the bed.
  - buy (verb). Means to purchase.
    I will buy new glasses after the doctor's appointment.
- its, it's
  - its (pronoun). A form of it that shows possession.
    The butterfly flapped its wings.
  - it's (contraction). Joins the words it and is.
    It's the most beautiful butterfly I have ever seen.
- know, no
  - know (verb). Means to understand or possess knowledge.
    I know the male peacock sports the brilliant feathers.
  - no. Used to make a negative.
    I have no time to visit the zoo this weekend.
- loose, lose
  - loose (adjective). Describes something that is not tight or is detached.
    Without a belt, her pants are loose on her waist.
  - lose (verb). Means to forget, to give up, or to fail to earn something.
    She will lose even more weight after finishing the marathon training.
- of, have
  - of (preposition). Means from or about.
    I studied maps of the city to know where to rent a new apartment.

    - have (verb). Means to possess something.
      I have many friends to help me move.
    - have (linking verb). Used to connect verbs.
      I should have helped her with that heavy box.
- quite, quiet, quit
    - quite (adverb). Means really or truly.
      My work will require quite a lot of concentration.
    - quiet (adjective). Means not loud.
      I need a quiet room to complete the assignments.
    - quit (verb). Means to stop or to end.
      I will quit when I am hungry for dinner.
- right, write
    - right (adjective). Means proper or correct.
      When bowling, she practices the right form.
    - right (adjective). Also means the opposite of left.
      The ball curved to the right and hit the last pin.
    - write (verb). Means to communicate on paper.
      After the team members bowl, I will write down their scores.
- set, sit
    - set (verb). Means to put an item down.
      She set the mug on the saucer.
    - set (noun). Means a group of similar objects.
      All the mugs and saucers belonged in a set.
    - sit (verb). Means to lower oneself down on a chair or another place.
      I'll sit on the sofa while she brews the tea.
- suppose, supposed
    - suppose (verb). Means to think or to consider.
      I suppose I will bake the bread, because no one else has the recipe.
    - suppose (verb). Means to suggest.
      Suppose we all split the cost of the dinner.
    - supposed (verb). The past tense form of the verb suppose, meaning required or allowed.
      She was supposed to create the menu.
- than, then
    - than (conjunction). Used to connect two or more items when comparing
      Registered nurses require less schooling than doctors.
    - then (adverb). Means next or at a specific time.
      Doctors first complete medical school and then obtain a residency.
- their, they're, there
    - their (pronoun). A form of they that shows possession.
      The dog walker feeds their dogs everyday at two o'clock.
    - they're (contraction). Joins the words they and are.
      They're the sweetest dogs in the neighborhood.
    - there (adverb). Indicates a particular place.
      The dogs' bowls are over there, next to the pantry.
    - there (pronoun). Indicates the presence of something
      There are more treats if the dogs behave.
- to, two, too

- to (preposition). Indicates movement.
  Let's go to the circus.
- to. A word that completes an infinitive verb.
  to play, to ride, to watch.
- two. The number after one. It describes how many.
  Two clowns squirted the elephants with water.
- Too (adverb). Means also or very.
  The tents were too loud, and we left.

- use, used
  - use (verb). Means to apply for some purpose.
    We use a weed whacker to trim the hedges.
  - used. The past tense form of the verb to use
    He used the lawnmower last night before it rained.
  - used to. Indicates something done in the past but not in the present
    He used to hire a team to landscape, but now he landscapes alone.
- who's, whose
  - who's (contraction). Joins the words who and either is or has.
    Who's the new student? Who's met him?
  - whose (pronoun). A form of who that shows possession.
    Whose schedule allows them to take the new student on a campus tour?
- your, you're
  - your (pronoun). A form of you that shows possession.
    Your book bag is unzipped.
  - you're (contraction). Joins the words you and are.
    You're the girl with the unzipped book bag.

The English language contains so many words; no one can say for certain how many words exist. In fact, many words in English are borrowed from other languages. Many words have multiple meanings and forms, further expanding the immeasurable number of English words. Although the list of commonly confused words serves as a helpful guide, even these words may have more meanings than shown here. When in doubt, consult an expert: the dictionary!

Strategies to Avoid Commonly Confused Words

When writing, you need to choose the correct word according to its spelling and meaning in the context. Not only does selecting the correct word improve your vocabulary and your writing, but it also makes a good impression on your readers. It also helps reduce confusion and improve clarity. The following strategies can help you avoid misusing confusing words.

Use a dictionary. Keep a dictionary at your desk while you write. Look up words when you are uncertain of their meanings or spellings. Many dictionaries are also available online, and the Internet's easy access will not slow you down. Check out your cell phone or smartphone to see if a dictionary app is available.

Keep a list of words you commonly confuse. Be aware of the words that often confuse you. When you notice a pattern of confusing words, keep a list nearby, and consult the list as you write. Check the list again before you submit an assignment to your instructor.

Study the list of commonly confused words. You may not yet know which words confuse you, but before you sit down to write, study the words on the list. Prepare your mind for working with words by reviewing the commonly confused words identified in this chapter.

Key Takeaways

- In order to write accurately, it is important for writers to be aware of commonly confused words.
- Although commonly confused words may look alike or sound alike, their meanings are very different.

- Consulting the dictionary is one way to make sure you are using the correct word in your writing. You may also keep a list of commonly confused words nearby when you write, and you may study the list of commonly confused words in this chapter.
- Choosing the proper words leaves a positive impression on your readers.

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9.1.13: Diction and Spelling (Part 2)

Avoiding Slang and Clichés

Avoiding Slang

Slang describes informal words that are considered nonstandard English. Slang often changes with passing fads and may be used by or familiar to only a specific group of people. Most people use slang when they speak and in personal correspondences, such as emails, text messages, and instant messages. Slang is appropriate between friends in an informal context but should be avoided in formal academic writing.

? Exercise 41

Edit the following paragraph by replacing the slang words and phrases with more formal language. Rewrite the paragraph on your own sheet of paper.

I felt like such an airhead when I got up to give my speech. As I walked toward the podium, I banged my knee on a chair. Man, I felt like such a klutz. On top of that, I kept saying “like” and “um,” and I could not stop fidgeting. I was so stressed out about being up there. I feel like I’ve been practicing this speech 24/7, and I still bombed. It was ten minutes of me going off about how we sometimes have to do things we don’t enjoy doing. Wow, did I ever prove my point. My speech was so bad I’m surprised that people didn’t boo. My teacher said not to sweat it, though. Everyone gets nervous his or her first time speaking in public, and she said, with time, I would become a whiz at this speech giving stuff. I wonder if I have the guts to do it again.

Avoiding Clichés

Clichés are descriptive expressions that have lost their effectiveness because they are overused. Writing that uses clichés often suffers from a lack of originality and insight. Avoiding clichés in formal writing will help you write in original and fresh ways.

1. Clichéd: Whenever my brother and I get into an argument, he always says something that makes my blood boil.
2. Plain: Whenever my brother and I get into an argument, he always says something that makes me really angry.
3. Original: Whenever my brother and I get into an argument, he always says something that makes me want to go to the gym and punch the bag for a few hours.

Avoiding Overly General Words

Specific words and images make your writing more interesting to read. Whenever possible, avoid overly general words in your writing; instead, try to replace general language with particular nouns, verbs, and modifiers that convey details and that bring yours words to life. Add words that provide color, texture, sound, and even smell to your writing.

✓ Example 9.1.13.9:

General: My new puppy is cute.

Specific: My new puppy is a ball of white fuzz with the biggest black eyes I have ever seen.

General: My teacher told us that plagiarism is bad.

Specific: My teacher, Ms. Atwater, created a presentation detailing exactly how plagiarism is illegal and unethical.

Spelling Rules

Common Spelling Rules

The best way to master new words is to understand the key spelling rules. Keep in mind, however, that some spelling rules carry exceptions. A spell checker may catch these exceptions, but knowing them yourself will prepare you to spell accurately on the first try. You may want to try memorizing each rule and its exception like you would memorize a rhyme or lyrics to a song.

Write i before e except after c, or when pronounced ay like “neighbor” or “weigh.”

Example 9.1.13.10:

achieve, niece, alien

receive, deceive

When words end in a consonant plus y, drop the y and add an i before adding another ending.

Example 9.1.13.11:

happy + er = happier

cry + ed = cried

When words end in a vowel plus y, keep the y and add the ending.

Example 9.1.13.12:

delay + ed = delayed

Memorize the following exceptions to this rule: day, lay, say, pay = daily, laid, said, paid

When adding an ending that begins with a vowel, such as -able, -ence, -ing, or -ity, drop the last e in a word.

Example 9.1.13.13:

write + ing = writing

pure + ity = purity

When adding an ending that begins with a consonant, such as -less, -ment, or -ly, keep the last e in a word.

Example 9.1.13.14:

hope + less = hopeless

advertise + ment = advertisement

For many words ending in a consonant and an o, add -s when using the plural form.

Example 9.1.13.15:

photo + s = photos

soprano + s = sopranos

Add -es to words that end in s, ch, sh, and x.

Example 9.1.13.16:

church + es = churches

fax + es = faxes

Tips to Improve Spelling Skills

1. Read the words in your assignment carefully, and avoid skimming over the page. Focusing on your written assignment word by word will help you pay close attention to each word's spelling. Skimming quickly, you may overlook misspelled words.
2. Use mnemonic devices to remember the correct spelling of words. Mnemonic devices, or memory techniques and learning aids, include inventive sayings or practices that help you remember. For example, the saying "It is important to be a beautiful person

inside and out" may help you remember that beautiful begins with "be a." The practice of pronouncing the word Wednesday Wed-nes-day may help you remember how to spell the word correctly.

3. Use a dictionary. Many professional writers rely on the dictionary—either in print or online. If you find it difficult to use a regular dictionary, ask your instructor to help you find a "poor speller's dictionary."
4. Use your computer's spell checker. The spell checker will not solve all your spelling problems, but it is a useful tool. See the introduction to this section for cautions about spell checkers.
5. Keep a list of frequently misspelled words. You will often misspell the same words again and again, but do not let this discourage you. All writers struggle with the spellings of certain words; they become aware of their spelling weaknesses and work to improve. Be aware of which words you commonly misspell, and you can add them to a list to learn to spell them correctly.
6. Look over corrected papers for misspelled words. Add these words to your list and practice writing each word four to five times each. Writing teachers will especially notice which words you frequently misspell, and it will help you excel in your classes if they see your spelling improve.
7. Test yourself with flashcards. Sometimes the old-fashioned methods are best, and for spelling, this tried and true technique has worked for many students. You can work with a peer or alone.
8. Review the common spelling rules explained in this chapter. Take the necessary time to master the material; you may return to the rules in this chapter again and again, as needed.

tip

Remember to focus on spelling during the editing and revising step of the writing process. Start with the big ideas such as organizing your piece of writing and developing effective paragraphs, and then work your way down toward the smaller—but equally important— details like spelling and punctuation.

Homonyms

Homonyms are words that sound like one another but have different meanings.

Commonly Misused Homonyms

- principle, principal
  - principle (noun). A fundamental concept that is accepted as true.
    The principle of human equality is an important foundation for all nations.
  - principal (noun). The original amount of debt on which interest is calculated.
    The payment plan allows me to pay back only the principal amount, not any compounded interest.
  - principal (noun). A person who is the main authority of a school.
    The principal held a conference for both parents and teachers.
- where, wear, ware
  - where (adverb). The place in which something happens.
    Where is the restaurant?
  - wear (verb). To carry or have on the body.
    I will wear my hiking shoes when go on a climb tomorrow morning.
  - ware (noun). Articles of merchandise or manufacture (usually, wares).
    When I return from shopping, I will show you my wares.
- lead, led
  - lead (noun). A type of metal used in pipes and batteries.
    The lead pipes in my homes are old and need to be replaced.
  - led (verb). The past tense of the verb lead.
    After the garden, she led the patrons through the museum.
- which, witch

- which (pronoun). Replaces one out of a group.
  Which apartment is yours?
- witch (noun). A person who practices sorcery or who has supernatural powers.
  She thinks she is a witch, but she does not seem to have any powers.

- peace, piece
  - peace (noun). A state of tranquility or quiet.
    For once, there was peace between the argumentative brothers.
  - piece (noun). A part of a whole.
    I would like a large piece of cake, thank you.
- passed, past
  - passed (verb). To go away or move.
    He passed the slower cars on the road using the left lane.
  - past (noun). Having existed or taken place in a period before the present.
    The argument happened in the past, so there is no use in dwelling on it.
- lessen, lesson
  - lessen (verb). To reduce in number, size, or degree.
    My dentist gave me medicine to lessen the pain of my aching tooth.
  - lesson (noun). A reading or exercise to be studied by a student.
    Today's lesson was about mortgage interest rates.
- patience, patients
  - patience (noun). The capacity of being patient (waiting for a period of time or enduring pains and trials calmly).
    The novice teacher's patience with the unruly class was astounding.
  - patients (plural noun). Individuals under medical care.
    The patients were tired of eating the hospital food, and they could not wait for a home-cooked meal.
- sees, seas, seize
  - sees (verb). To perceive with the eye.
    He sees a whale through his binoculars.
  - seas (plural noun). The plural of sea, a great body of salt water.
    The tidal fluctuation of the oceans and seas are influenced by the moon.
  - seize (verb). To possess or take by force.
    The king plans to seize all the peasants' land.
- threw, through
  - threw (verb). The past tense of throw.
    She threw the football with perfect form.
  - through (preposition). A word that indicates movement.
    She walked through the door and out of his life.

Commonly Misspelled Words

The table below lists commonly misspelled words. You probably use these words every day in either speaking or writing. Each word has a segment in bold type, which indicates the problem area of the word that is often spelled incorrectly. If you can, use this list as a guide before, during, and after you write.

Use the following two tricks to help you master these troublesome words:

1. Copy each word a few times and underline the problem area.
2. Copy the words onto flash cards and have a friend test you.

Table of Commonly Misspelled Words

across	disappoint	integration	particular	separate
address	disapprove	intelligent	perform	similar
answer	doesn't	interest	perhaps	since
argument	eighth	interfere	personnel	speech
athlete	embarrass	jewelry	possess	strength
beginning	environment	judgment	possible	success
behavior	exaggerate	knowledge	prefer	surprise
calendar	familiar	maintain	prejudice	taught
career	finally	mathematics	privilege	temperature
conscience	government	meant	probably	thorough
crowded	grammar	necessary	psychology	thought
definite	height	nervous	pursue	tired
describe	Illegal	occasion	reference	until
desperate	immediately	opinion	rhythm	weight
different	Important	optimist	ridiculous	written

Key Takeaways

- Accurate, error-free spelling enhances your credibility with the reader.
- Mastering the rules of spelling may help you become a better speller.
- Knowing the commonly misused homonyms may prevent spelling errors.
- Studying the list of commonly misspelled words in this chapter, or studying a list of your own, is one way to improve your spelling skills.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

10: Sample Essays

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10.1: Introduction to Sample Essays

Learning Objectives

- Identify the role of reading in the writing process.
- Read examples of the rhetorical modes.

This chapter contains quality samples of the rhetorical modes described in Chapter 10. While you read these essays, remember the purpose of the writing and pay attention to the following:

- **Thesis statement.** What is the author's main point of the essay? Identify the sentence and see how well it is supported throughout the essay.
- **Topic sentence.** How well does each topic sentence support the thesis, and how well does it describe the main idea of the following paragraph?
- **Supporting evidence**. Identify the evidence that the author uses to support the essay's main ideas, and gauge their credibility.

The best way to become a better writer is to become a closer reader. As you read each essay carefully take note of the content and the structure as well as the thesis statement, topic sentences, and supporting evidence. These should shape your response to the essay and should also shape your writing.

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10.2: Narrative Essay

Learning Objectives

- Read an example of the narrative rhetorical mode.

My College Education

The first class I went to in college was philosophy, and it changed my life forever. Our first assignment was to write a short response paper to the Albert Camus essay "The Myth of Sisyphus." I was extremely nervous about the assignment as well as college. However, through all the confusion in philosophy class, many of my questions about life were answered.

I entered college intending to earn a degree in engineering. I always liked the way mathematics had right and wrong answers. I understood the logic and was very good at it. So when I received my first philosophy assignment that asked me to write my interpretation of the Camus essay, I was instantly confused. What is the right way to do this assignment, I wondered? I was nervous about writing an incorrect interpretation and did not want to get my first assignment wrong. Even more troubling was that the professor refused to give us any guidelines on what he was looking for; he gave us total freedom. He simply said, "I want to see what you come up with."

Full of anxiety, I first set out to read Camus's essay several times to make sure I really knew what was it was about. I did my best to take careful notes. Yet even after I took all these notes and knew the essay inside and out, I still did not know the right answer. What was my interpretation? I could think of a million different ways to interpret the essay, but which one was my professor looking for? In math class, I was used to examples and explanations of solutions. This assignment gave me nothing; I was completely on my own to come up with my individual interpretation.

Next, when I sat down to write, the words just did not come to me. My notes and ideas were all present, but the words were lost. I decided to try every prewriting strategy I could find. I brainstormed, made idea maps, and even wrote an outline. Eventually, after a lot of stress, my ideas became more organized and the words fell on the page. I had my interpretation of "The Myth of Sisyphus," and I had my main reasons for interpreting the essay. I remember being unsure of myself, wondering if what I was saying made sense, or if I was even on the right track. Through all the uncertainty, I continued writing the best I could. I finished the conclusion paragraph, had my spouse proofread it for errors, and turned it in the next day simply hoping for the best.

Then, a week or two later, came judgment day. The professor gave our papers back to us with grades and comments. I remember feeling simultaneously afraid and eager to get the paper back in my hands. It turned out, however, that I had nothing to worry about. The professor gave me an A on the paper, and his notes suggested that I wrote an effective essay overall. He wrote that my reading of the essay was very original and that my thoughts were well organized. My relief and newfound confidence upon reading his comments could not be overstated.

What I learned through this process extended well beyond how to write a college paper. I learned to be open to new challenges. I never expected to enjoy a philosophy class and always expected to be a math and science person. This class and assignment, however, gave me the self-confidence, critical-thinking skills, and courage to try a new career path. I left engineering and went on to study law and eventually became a lawyer. More important, that class and paper helped me understand education differently. Instead of seeing college as a direct stepping stone to a career, I learned to see college as a place to first learn and then seek a career or enhance an existing career. By giving me the space to express my own interpretation and to argue for my own values, my philosophy class taught me the importance of education for education's sake. That realization continues to pay dividends every day.

Online Narrative Essay Alternatives

Sandra Cisneros offers an example of a narrative essay in *Only Daughter* that captures her sense of her Chicana-Mexican heritage as the only daughter in a family of seven children.

Her complete essay is available on several websites, including the following:

- http://distelrath.wikispaces.com/fil...y+Daughter.doc
- www.cabrillo.edu/academics/en.../100resources/'Only%20Daughter'.pdf
- www.tbaisd.k12.mi.us/departme...y_Daughter.pdf

Gary Shteyngart came to the United States when he was seven years old. The son of Russian Jewish parents who struggled to provide a better life for their son, he reflects on his struggles, including becoming “American,” in *Sixty-Nine Cents*:

- http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2...#ixzz0pihck7DS
- http://www.america.gov/st/peopleplac...0.8106806.html

Sherman Alexie grew up on the Spokane Reservation in Washington State. He chronicles his challenges in school, starting in first grade, in *Indian Education*:

- comosr.spps.org/Alexie.html
- www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/1323207...ation_TEXT.rtf
- www.pfeonyx.com/alliance/Indi...on/Alexie2.pdf

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10.3: Illustration Essay

Learning Objectives

- Read an example of the illustration rhetorical mode.

Letter to the City

To: Lakeview Department of Transportation

From: A Concerned Citizen

The intersection of Central Avenue and Lake Street is dangerous and demands immediate consideration for the installation of a controlling mechanism. I have lived in Lakeview my entire life, and during that time I have witnessed too many accidents and close calls at that intersection. I would like the Department of Transportation to answer this question: how many lives have to be lost on the corner of Central Avenue and Lake Street before a street light or stop sign is placed there?

Over the past twenty years, the population of Lakeview has increased dramatically. This population growth has put tremendous pressure on the city's roadways, especially Central Avenue and its intersecting streets. At the intersection of Central Avenue and Lake Street it is easy to see how serious this problem is. For example, when I try to cross Central Avenue as a pedestrian, I frequently wait over ten minutes for the cars to clear, and even then I must rush to the median. I will then have to continue to wait until I can finally run to the other side of the street. On one hand, even as a physically fit adult, I can run only with significant effort and care. Expecting a senior citizen or a child to cross this street, on the other hand, is extremely dangerous and irresponsible. Does the city have any plans to do anything about this?

Recent data show that the intersection of Central Avenue and Lake Street has been especially dangerous. According to the city's own statistics, three fatalities occurred at that intersection in the past year alone. Over the past five years, the intersection witnessed fourteen car accidents, five of which were fatal. These numbers officially qualify the intersection as the most fatal and dangerous in the entire state. It should go without saying that fatalities and accidents are not the clearest way of measuring the severity of this situation because for each accident that happens, countless other close calls never contribute to city data. I hope you will agree that these numbers alone are sufficient evidence that the intersection at Central Avenue and Lake Street is hazardous and demands immediate attention.

Nearly all accidents mentioned are caused by vehicles trying to cross Central Avenue while driving on Lake Street. I think the City of Lakeview should consider placing a traffic light there to control the traffic going both ways. While I do not have access to any resources or data that can show precisely how much a traffic light can improve the intersection, I think you will agree that a controlled busy intersection is much safer than an uncontrolled one. Therefore, at a minimum, the city must consider making the intersection a four-way stop.

Each day that goes by without attention to this issue is a lost opportunity to save lives and make the community a safer, more enjoyable place to live. Because the safety of citizens is the priority of every government, I can only expect that the Department of Transportation and the City of Lakeview will act on this matter immediately. For the safety and well-being of Lakeview citizens, please do not let bureaucracy or money impede this urgent project.

Sincerely,

A Concerned Citizen

Online Illustration Essay Alternatives

Lewis Thomas provides several illustrative examples in *On Natural Death*:

- http://thefloatinglibrary.com/2009/0...h-lewis-thomas

Jessica Bennett, a senior writer for *Newsweek*, offers an example of an illustration essay when she presents *The Flip Side of Internet Fame*:

- www.newsweek.com/2008/02/21/t...rnet-fame.html

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10.4: Descriptive Essay

Learning Objectives

- Read an example of the descriptive rhetorical mode.

America's Pastime

As the sun hits my face and I breathe in the fresh air, I temporarily forget that I am at a sporting event. But when I open my eyes and look around, I am reminded of all things American. From the national anthem to the international players on the field, all the sights and sounds of a baseball game come together like a slice of Americana pie.

First, the entrance turnstiles click and clank, and then a hallway of noise bombards me. All the fans voices coalesce in a chorus of sound, rising to a humming clamor. The occasional, "Programs, get your programs, here!" jumps out through the hum to get my attention. I navigate my way through the crowded walkways of the stadium, moving to the right of some people, to the left of others, and I eventually find the section number where my seat is located. As I approach my seat I hear the announcer's voice echo around the ball park, "Attention fans. In honor of our country, please remove your caps for the singing of the national anthem." His deep voice echoes around each angle of the park, and every word is heard again and again. The crowd sings and hums "The Star-Spangled Banner," and I feel a surprising amount of national pride through the voices. I take my seat as the umpire shouts, "Play ball!" and the game begins.

In the fifth inning of the game, I decide to find a concessions stand. Few tastes are as American as hot dogs and soda pop, and they cannot be missed at a ball game. The smell of hot dogs carries through the park, down every aisle, and inside every concourse. They are always as unhealthy as possible, dripping in grease, while the buns are soft and always too small for the dog. The best way to wash down the Ball Park Frank is with a large soda pop, so I order both. Doing my best to balance the cold pop in one hand and the wrapped-up dog in the other, I find the nearest condiments stand to load up my hot dog. A dollop of bright green relish and chopped onions, along with two squirts of the ketchup and mustard complete the dog. As I continue the balancing act between the loaded hot dog and pop back to my seat, a cheering fan bumps into my pop hand. The pop splashes out of the cup and all over my shirt, leaving me drenched. I make direct eye contact with the man who bumped into me and he looks me in the eye, looks at my shirt, tells me how sorry he is, and then I just shake my head and keep walking. "It's all just part of the experience," I tell myself.

Before I am able to get back to my seat, I hear the crack of a bat, followed by an uproar from the crowd. Everyone is standing, clapping, and cheering. I missed a home run. I find my aisle and ask everyone to excuse me as I slip past them to my seat. "Excuse me. Excuse me. Thank you. Thank you. Sorry," is all I can say as I inch past each fan. Halfway to my seat I can hear discarded peanut shells crunch beneath my feet, and each step is marked with a pronounced crunch.

When I finally get to my seat I realize it is the start of the seventh inning stretch. I quickly eat my hot dog and wash it down with what is left of my soda pop. The organ starts playing and everyone begins to sing "Take Me Out to the Ball Game." While singing the song, putting my arms around friends and family with me, I watch all the players taking the field. It is wonderful to see the overwhelming amount of players on one team from around the world: Japan, the Dominican Republic, the United States, Canada, and Venezuela. I cannot help but feel a bit of national pride at this realization. Seeing the international representation on the field reminds me of the ways that Americans, though from many different backgrounds and places, still come together under common ideals. For these reasons and for the whole experience in general, going to a Major League Baseball game is the perfect way to glimpse a slice of Americana.

Online Descriptive Essay Alternatives

Susan Berne visits New York and describes her impressions in *Where Nothing Says Everything*, also called *Ground Zero*:

- http://thepurpleenglishteacher.files...groundzero.pdf
- http://www.nytimes.com/2002/04/21/tr...verything.html

Heather Rogers provides a detailed description (book excerpt) of a landfill that challenges the reader to consider his or her own consumption and waste in *The Hidden Life of Garbage*:

- http://www.alternet.org/story/27116

- http://books.google.com/books?id=efU...hill+of+early+morning%22&source=bl&ots=7c4hoFLhTp&sig=ngecGSS27blb9zoy8wLaJX8la_o&hl=en&ei=Vi7xTKDKG4zSsAP2hdGtCw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum= 1&ved=0CBgQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false

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10.5: Classification Essay

Learning Objectives

- Read an example of the classification rhetorical mode.

Types of Higher Education Programs

Today's students have many choices when it comes to pursuing a degree: four-year programs, two-year programs, large or small classroom settings, and even daytime or evening classes. With all the different options to consider, potential students should learn about the different types of colleges so they can find a school that best fits their personality, budget, and educational goals.

One type of higher education program for students to consider is a liberal arts college. These schools tend to be small in size and offer a range of undergraduate degrees in subjects like English, history, psychology, and education. Students may choose a liberal arts college if they want a more intimate classroom setting rather than large lecture-style classes. Students may also consider a liberal arts college if they want to gain knowledge from a variety of disciplines, rather than focus on a single area of study. Many liberal arts schools are privately owned, and some have religious affiliations. Liberal arts schools can come with a hefty price tag, and their high cost presents an obstacle for students on a tight budget; moreover, while some students might appreciate a liberal arts school's intimate atmosphere, others might encounter a lack of diversity in the student body. Still, students seeking a well-rounded education in the humanities will find liberal arts colleges to be one option.

Universities, another type of higher education program, offer both undergraduate and graduate degrees. Usually universities are larger than colleges and can accommodate tens of thousands of students in many different majors and areas of study. A large student body means that class sizes are often larger, and some classes may be taught by graduate students rather than professors. Students will feel at home at a university if they want a focused academic program and state-of-the-art research facilities. While some universities are private, many are public, which means they receive funding from the government, so tuition is more affordable and some even offer discounted in-state tuition for state residents. Also, universities attract many international students, so those looking for a variety of campus cultural groups and clubs will appreciate a greater sense of diversity among the student body. Universities can be overwhelming for some, but they are the right fit for students who seek research opportunities and academic studies, especially in the fields of mathematics and science.

Community college is a type of higher education program popular with students on a limited budget who want to take college courses but may not know what they want to major in. Most schools offer degrees after two years of study, usually an associate's degree that prepares students to enter the work force; many students choose to study at a community college for two years and then transfer to a four-year college to complete their undergraduate degree. Like liberal arts schools, classes are small and allow instructors to pay more attention to their students. Community college allows students to live at home rather than in a dormitory, which also keeps costs down. While some young people might not like the idea of living at home for school, many adults choose to attend community college so they can advance their education while working and living with their families.

Online universities are another type of higher education program that are gaining popularity as technology improves. These schools offer many of the same degree programs as traditional liberal arts colleges and universities. Unlike traditional programs, which require students to attend classes and lectures, online universities offer greater academic flexibility and are a great option for students wishing to pursue a degree while still working full time. At online universities, students access course materials, such as video lectures and assessments, remotely using a personal computer and are able to speed up or slow down their progress to complete their degree at their own pace. Students may attend classes in the comfort of their own home or a local library, but students hoping for the social community of higher education might not enjoy this aspect of higher education.

With so many colleges and universities to choose from, it may be difficult for a student to narrow down his or her selection, but once a student knows what he or she is looking for, the process may become much easier. It is very important for students to learn about the different types of higher education programs available before making their selections.

Online Classification Essay Alternatives

Amy Tan describes relationship with her heritage, her mother, and her languages in *Mother Tongue*:

- www.scribd.com/doc/13297165/M...Tan-I-Am-Not-A

- learning.swc.hccs.edu/members...r%20Tongue.pdf
- teachers.sduhsd.k12.ca.us/mcu...r%20tounge.pdf

Jonathan Koppell discusses anonymity, your name, and how the Internet has changed in *On the Internet, There's No Place to Hide*:

- www.newamerica.net/publicatio..._place_to_hide

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10.6: Process Analysis Essay

Learning Objectives

- Read an example of the process analysis rhetorical mode.

How to Grow Tomatoes from a Seedling

Growing tomatoes is a simple and rewarding task, and more people should be growing them. This paper walks readers through the main steps for growing and maintaining patio tomatoes from a seedling.

The first step in growing tomatoes is determining if you have the appropriate available space and sunlight to grow them. All tomato varieties require full sunlight, which means at least six hours of direct sun every day. If you have south-facing windows or a patio or backyard that receives direct sunlight, you should be able to grow tomatoes. Choose the location that receives the most sun.

Next, you need to find the right seedling. Growing tomatoes and other vegetables from seeds can be more complicated (though it is not difficult), so I am only discussing how to grow tomatoes from a seedling. A seedling, for those who do not know, is typically understood as a young plant that has only recently started growing from the seed. It can be anything from a newly germinated plant to a fully flowering plant. You can usually find tomato seedlings at your local nursery for an affordable price. Less than five dollars per plant is a common price. When choosing the best seedling, look for a plant that is short with healthy, full leaves and no flowers. This last point tends to be counterintuitive, but it is extremely important. You do not want a vegetable plant that has already started flowering in the nursery because it will have a more difficult time adapting to its new environment when you replant it. Additionally, choose a plant with one strong main stem. This is important because the fewer stems that a tomato plant has, the more easily it can transport nutrients to the fruit. Multiple stems tend to divide nutrients in less efficient ways, often resulting in either lower yields or smaller fruit.

Once you have found the right seedlings to plant back home, you need to find the best way of planting them. I recommend that you plant your tomatoes in containers. If you have the space and sunlight, then you can certainly plant them in the ground, but a container has several advantages and is usually most manageable for the majority of gardeners. The containers can be used in the house, on a patio, or anywhere in the backyard, and they are portable. Containers also tend to better regulate moisture and drain excess water. Choose a container that is at least 10 inches in diameter and at least 1 foot deep. This will provide sufficient room for root development.

In addition to the container, you also need the appropriate soil mixture and draining mechanisms. For the best drainage, fill the bottom of your container with 2 or 3 inches of gravel. On top of the gravel, fill ¾ of the container with soil. Choose a well-balanced organic soil. The three main ingredients you will find described on soil bags are N-P-K—that is, nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. Without going into too much detail about the role of each element in plant growth, I will tell you that an average vegetable will grow fine in a 10-5-5 mixture. This ratio, too, will be easy to find at your local nursery.

Once you have the gravel in the bottom of the container and the soil on top, you are ready to transplant the tomato. Pick up the tomato in the plastic container it comes in from the nursery. Turn it upside down, and holding the stem between your fingers, pat the bottom lightly several times, and the plant should fall into your hand. Next, you should gently break up the root ball that formed in the nursery container with your hands. Be gentle, but be sure to rip them up a bit; this helps generate new root growth in the new container. Be careful not to damage the roots too much, as this could stunt the growth or even destroy the plant altogether.

Next, carve out a hole in the soil to make space for the plant. Make it deep enough to go about an inch higher than it was previously buried and wide enough so all the roots can comfortably fit within and beneath it. Place the seedling in the hole and push the removed soil back on top to cover the base of the plant. After that, the final step in planting your tomato is mulch. Mulch is not necessary for growing plants, but it can be very helpful in maintaining moisture, keeping out weeds, and regulating soil temperature. Place 2–3 inches of mulch above the soil and spread it out evenly.

Once the mulch is laid, you are mostly done. The rest is all watering, waiting, and maintenance. After you lay the mulch, pour the plant a heavy amount of water. Water the plant at its base until you see water coming through the bottom of the container. Wait ten minutes, and repeat. This initial watering is very important for establishing new roots. You should continue to keep the soil moist, but never soaking wet. One healthy watering each morning should be sufficient for days without rain. You can often forego

watering on days with moderate rainfall. Watering in the morning is preferable to the evening because it lessens mold and bacteria growth.

Choosing to grow the patio variety of tomatoes is easiest because patio tomatoes do not require staking or training around cages. They grow in smaller spaces and have a determinate harvest time. As you continue to water and monitor your plant, prune unhealthy looking leaves to the main stem, and cut your tomatoes down at the stem when they ripen to your liking. As you can see, growing tomatoes can be very easy and manageable for even novice gardeners. The satisfaction of picking and eating fresh food, and doing it yourself, outweighs all the effort you put in over the growing season.

Online Process Analysis Essay Alternatives:

Stanley Fish, a professor of humanities and law at Florida International University, tells us why *Getting Coffee Is Hard to Do*:

- http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/06/op...1.7000425.html
- http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com...-is-hard-to-do

Arthur Miller takes a humorous look at a gruesome process in *Get It Right: Privatize Executions*:

- http://www.davidglensmith.com/lonestar/1301/PDFs/miller.pdf
- http://www.nytimes.com/1992/05/08/op...xecutions.html
- api.ning.com/files/-3HiJ651xE...Rat-AyxVuVAgEE bfbuyGbTu9gpi7z3gT4jqd52W3fBsDRfFGgEgLxB5wO4/GetItRight.PrivatizeExecutionsArthurMiller.pdf

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10.7: Definition Essay

Learning Objectives

- Read an example of the definition rhetorical mode.

Defining Good Students Means More Than Just Grades

Many people define good students as those who receive the best grades. While it is true that good students often earn high grades, I contend that grades are just one aspect of how we define a good student. In fact, even poor students can earn high grades sometimes, so grades are not the best indicator of a student's quality. Rather, a good student pursues scholarship, actively participates in class, and maintains a positive, professional relationship with instructors and peers.

Good students have a passion for learning that drives them to fully understand class material rather than just worry about what grades they receive in the course. Good students are actively engaged in scholarship, which means they enjoy reading and learning about their subject matter not just because readings and assignments are required. Of course, good students will complete their homework and all assignments, and they may even continue to perform research and learn more on the subject after the course ends. In some cases, good students will pursue a subject that interests them but might not be one of their strongest academic areas, so they will not earn the highest grades. Pushing oneself to learn and try new things can be difficult, but good students will challenge themselves rather than remain at their educational comfort level for the sake of a high grade. The pursuit of scholarship and education rather than concern over grades is the hallmark of a good student.

Class participation and behavior are another aspect of the definition of a good student. Simply attending class is not enough; good students arrive punctually because they understand that tardiness disrupts the class and disrespects the professors. They might occasionally arrive a few minutes early to ask the professor questions about class materials or mentally prepare for the day's work. Good students consistently pay attention during class discussions and take notes in lectures rather than engage in off-task behaviors, such as checking their cell phones or daydreaming. Excellent class participation requires a balance between speaking and listening, so good students will share their views when appropriate but also respect their classmates' views when they differ from their own. It is easy to mistake quantity of class discussion comments with quality, but good students know the difference and do not try to dominate the conversation. Sometimes class participation is counted toward a student's grade, but even without such clear rewards, good students understand how to perform and excel among their peers in the classroom.

Finally, good students maintain a positive and professional relationship with their professors. They respect their instructor's authority in the classroom as well as the instructor's privacy outside of the classroom. Prying into a professor's personal life is inappropriate, but attending office hours to discuss course material is an appropriate, effective way for students to demonstrate their dedication and interest in learning. Good students go to their professor's office during posted office hours or make an appointment if necessary. While instructors can be very busy, they are usually happy to offer guidance to students during office hours; after all, availability outside the classroom is a part of their job. Attending office hours can also help good students become memorable and stand out from the rest, particularly in lectures with hundreds enrolled. Maintaining positive, professional relationships with professors is especially important for those students who hope to attend graduate school and will need letters of recommendation in the future.

Although good grades often accompany good students, grades are not the only way to indicate what it means to be a good student. The definition of a good student means demonstrating such traits as engaging with course material, participating in class, and creating a professional relationship with professors. While every professor will have different criteria for earning an A in their course, most would agree on these characteristics for defining good students.

Online Definition Essay Alternatives

Judy Brady provides a humorous look at responsibilities and relationships in *I Want a Wife*:

- http://www.columbia.edu/~sss31/rainbow/wife.html
- bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/ever...ant_a_Wife.pdf

Gayle Rosenwald Smith shares her dislike of the name for a sleeveless T-shirt, *The Wife-Beater*:

- www.usd305.com/21272010169245...9123836146.pdf

Philip Levine defines *What Work Is*:

- http://www.ibiblio.org/ipa/poems/levine/what_work_is.php
- http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/what-work-is

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10.8: Compare-and-Contrast Essay

Learning Objectives

- Read an example of the compare-and-contrast rhetorical mode.

Comparing and Contrasting London and Washington, DC

Both Washington, DC, and London are capital cities of English-speaking countries, and yet they offer vastly different experiences to their residents and visitors. Comparing and contrasting the two cities based on their history, their culture, and their residents show how different and similar the two are.

Both cities are rich in world and national history, though they developed on very different time lines. London, for example, has a history that dates back over two thousand years. It was part of the Roman Empire and known by the similar name, Londinium. It was not only one of the northernmost points of the Roman Empire but also the epicenter of the British Empire where it held significant global influence from the early sixteenth century on through the early twentieth century. Washington, DC, on the other hand, has only formally existed since the late eighteenth century. Though Native Americans inhabited the land several thousand years earlier, and settlers inhabited the land as early as the sixteenth century, the city did not become the capital of the United States until the 1790s. From that point onward to today, however, Washington, DC, has increasingly maintained significant global influence. Even though both cities have different histories, they have both held, and continue to hold, significant social influence in the economic and cultural global spheres.

Both Washington, DC, and London offer a wide array of museums that harbor many of the world's most prized treasures. While Washington, DC, has the National Gallery of Art and several other Smithsonian galleries, London's art scene and galleries have a definite edge in this category. From the Tate Modern to the British National Gallery, London's art ranks among the world's best. This difference and advantage has much to do with London and Britain's historical depth compared to that of the United States. London has a much richer past than Washington, DC, and consequently has a lot more material to pull from when arranging its collections. Both cities have thriving theater districts, but again, London wins this comparison, too, both in quantity and quality of theater choices. With regard to other cultural places like restaurants, pubs, and bars, both cities are very comparable. Both have a wide selection of expensive, elegant restaurants as well as a similar amount of global and national chains. While London may be better known for its pubs and taste in beer, DC offers a different bar-going experience. With clubs and pubs that tend to stay open later than their British counterparts, the DC night life tend to be less reserved overall.

Both cities also share and differ in cultural diversity and cost of living. Both cities share a very expensive cost of living—both in terms of housing and shopping. A downtown one-bedroom apartment in DC can easily cost $1,800 per month, and a similar "flat" in London may double that amount. These high costs create socioeconomic disparity among the residents. Although both cities' residents are predominantly wealthy, both have a significantly large population of poor and homeless. Perhaps the most significant difference between the resident demographics is the racial makeup. Washington, DC, is a "minority majority" city, which means the majority of its citizens are races other than white. In 2009, according to the US Census, 55 percent of DC residents were classified as "Black or African American" and 35 percent of its residents were classified as "white." London, by contrast, has very few minorities—in 2006, 70 percent of its population was "white," while only 10 percent was "black." The racial demographic differences between the cities is drastic.

Even though Washington, DC, and London are major capital cities of English-speaking countries in the Western world, they have many differences along with their similarities. They have vastly different histories, art cultures, and racial demographics, but they remain similar in their cost of living and socioeconomic disparity.

Online Compare-and-Contrast Essay Alternatives

Ellen Laird compares and contrasts traditional and distance education in *I'm Your Teacher, Not Your Internet-Service Provider*:

- http://eec.edc.org/cwis_docs/NEWS_AR...aird_Ellen.pdf
- http://celt.cui.edu/celt/webct_for_instructors/Laird_Article.htm
- http://depedia.com/mediawiki/index.p...rvice_Provider

Deborah Tannen compares and contrasts conversation styles in *Sex, Lies and Conversation: Why Is It So Hard for Men and Women to Talk to Each Other?*

- http://www9.georgetown.edu/faculty/t...nd/sexlies.htm

Alex Wright examines communication patterns, old and new, in *Friending, Ancient or Otherwise*:

- http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/02/we.../02wright.html

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10.9: Cause-and-Effect Essay

Learning Objectives

- Read an example of the cause-and-effect rhetorical mode.

Effects of Video Game Addiction

Video game addition is a serious problem in many parts of the world today and deserves more attention. It is no secret that children and adults in many countries throughout the world, including Japan, China, and the United States, play video games every day. Most players are able to limit their usage in ways that do not interfere with their daily lives, but many others have developed an addiction to playing video games and suffer detrimental effects.

An addiction can be described in several ways, but generally speaking, addictions involve unhealthy attractions to substances or activities that ultimately disrupt the ability of a person to keep up with regular daily responsibilities. Video game addiction typically involves playing games uncontrollably for many hours at a time—some people will play only four hours at a time while others cannot stop for over twenty-four hours. Regardless of the severity of the addiction, many of the same effects will be experienced by all.

One common effect of video game addiction is isolation and withdrawal from social experiences. Video game players often hide in their homes or in Internet cafés for days at a time—only reemerging for the most pressing tasks and necessities. The effect of this isolation can lead to a breakdown of communication skills and often a loss in socialization. While it is true that many games, especially massive multiplayer online games, involve a very real form of e-based communication and coordination with others, and these virtual interactions often result in real communities that can be healthy for the players, these communities and forms of communication rarely translate to the types of valuable social interaction that humans need to maintain typical social functioning. As a result, the social networking in these online games often gives the users the impression that they are interacting socially, while their true social lives and personal relations may suffer.

Another unfortunate product of the isolation that often accompanies video game addiction is the disruption of the user's career. While many players manage to enjoy video games and still hold their jobs without problems, others experience challenges at their workplace. Some may only experience warnings or demerits as a result of poorer performance, or others may end up losing their jobs altogether. Playing video games for extended periods of time often involves sleep deprivation, and this tends to carry over to the workplace, reducing production and causing habitual tardiness.

Video game addiction may result in a decline in overall health and hygiene. Players who interact with video games for such significant amounts of time can go an entire day without eating and even longer without basic hygiene tasks, such as using the restroom or bathing. The effects of this behavior pose significant danger to their overall health.

The causes of video game addiction are complex and can vary greatly, but the effects have the potential to be severe. Playing video games can and should be a fun activity for all to enjoy. But just like everything else, the amount of time one spends playing video games needs to be balanced with personal and social responsibilities.

Online Cause-and-Effective Essay Alternatives

Norman Cousins examines cause and effect in boxing in *Who Killed Benny Paret?*

- ecmd.nju.edu.cn/UploadFile/6/2552/wb2427.doc

Lawrence Otis Graham examines racism, and whether it has changed since the 1970s, in *The "Black Table" Is Still There*:

- http://scremeens.googlepages.com/The...Tableessay.rtf

Robin Tolmach Lakoff discusses the power of language to dehumanize in *From Ancient Greece to Iraq: The Power of Words in Wartime*:

- http://www.nytimes.com/2004/05/18/sc...n-wartime.html

Alan Weisman examines the human impact on the planet and its effects in *Earth without People*:

- http://discovermagazine.com/2005/feb/earth-without-people

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10.10: Persuasive Essay

Learning Objectives

- Read an example of the persuasive rhetorical mode.

Universal Health Care Coverage for the United States

The United States is the only modernized Western nation that does not offer publicly funded health care to all its citizens; the costs of health care for the uninsured in the United States are prohibitive, and the practices of insurance companies are often more interested in profit margins than providing health care. These conditions are incompatible with US ideals and standards, and it is time for the US government to provide universal health care coverage for all its citizens. Like education, health care should be considered a fundamental right of all US citizens, not simply a privilege for the upper and middle classes.

One of the most common arguments against providing universal health care coverage (UHC) is that it will cost too much money. In other words, UHC would raise taxes too much. While providing health care for all US citizens would cost a lot of money for every tax-paying citizen, citizens need to examine exactly how much money it would cost, and more important, how much money is "too much" when it comes to opening up health care for all. Those who have health insurance already pay too much money, and those without coverage are charged unfathomable amounts. The cost of publicly funded health care versus the cost of current insurance premiums is unclear. In fact, some Americans, especially those in lower income brackets, could stand to pay less than their current premiums.

However, even if UHC would cost Americans a bit more money each year, we ought to reflect on what type of country we would like to live in, and what types of morals we represent if we are more willing to deny health care to others on the basis of saving a couple hundred dollars per year. In a system that privileges capitalism and rugged individualism, little room remains for compassion and love. It is time that Americans realize the amorality of US hospitals forced to turn away the sick and poor. UHC is a health care system that aligns more closely with the core values that so many Americans espouse and respect, and it is time to realize its potential.

Another common argument against UHC in the United States is that other comparable national health care systems, like that of England, France, or Canada, are bankrupt or rife with problems. UHC opponents claim that sick patients in these countries often wait in long lines or long wait lists for basic health care. Opponents also commonly accuse these systems of being unable to pay for themselves, racking up huge deficits year after year. A fair amount of truth lies in these claims, but Americans must remember to put those problems in context with the problems of the current US system as well. It is true that people often wait to see a doctor in countries with UHC, but we in the United States wait as well, and we often schedule appointments weeks in advance, only to have onerous waits in the doctor's "waiting rooms."

Critical and urgent care abroad is always treated urgently, much the same as it is treated in the United States. The main difference there, however, is cost. Even health insurance policy holders are not safe from the costs of health care in the United States. Each day an American acquires a form of cancer, and the only effective treatment might be considered "experimental" by an insurance company and thus is not covered. Without medical coverage, the patient must pay for the treatment out of pocket. But these costs may be so prohibitive that the patient will either opt for a less effective, but covered, treatment; opt for no treatment at all; or attempt to pay the costs of treatment and experience unimaginable financial consequences. Medical bills in these cases can easily rise into the hundreds of thousands of dollars, which is enough to force even wealthy families out of their homes and into perpetual debt. Even though each American could someday face this unfortunate situation, many still choose to take the financial risk. Instead of gambling with health and financial welfare, US citizens should press their representatives to set up UHC, where their coverage will be guaranteed and affordable.

Despite the opponents' claims against UHC, a universal system will save lives and encourage the health of all Americans. Why has public education been so easily accepted, but not public health care? It is time for Americans to start thinking socially about health in the same ways they think about education and police services: as rights of US citizens.

Online Persuasive Essay Alternatives

Martin Luther King Jr. writes persuasively about civil disobedience in *Letter from Birmingham Jail*:

- www.stanford.edu/group/King/f...birmingham.pdf
- web.cn.edu/kwheeler/documents/Letter_Birmingham_Jail.pdf
- www.oak-tree.us/stuff/King-Birmingham.pdf

Michael Levin argues *The Case for Torture*:

- http://people.brandeis.edu/~teuber/torture.html
- www.canyons.edu/departments/p...phy/levin.html

Alan Dershowitz argues *The Case for Torture Warrants*:

- www.alandershowitz.com/public...ewarrants.html

Alisa Solomon argues *The Case against Torture*:

- http://www.villagevoice.com/2001-11-...inst-torture/1

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10.11: Rhetorical Analysis Essay

Sample Rhetorical Analysis

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