

ENGWR 300: COLLEGE COMPOSITION



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ENGWR 300: College Composition -
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This text was compiled on 06/07/2025

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Licensing

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

1: Starting the Writing Process

1.1: Reading to Write Effectively

1.2: Online Reading Tips

1.3: Why It Matters- Writing Process

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1.1: Reading to Write Effectively

Reading to Write Effectively: Why you need a reading strategy before writing anything

Given all of the reading and writing that we are expected to accomplish as college/university students, it's important to be as efficient as possible when committing our time to these responsibilities. Three of the most important suggestions for approaching reading and, therefore, writing, efficiently are as follows:

read with a pen in hand; don't expect yourself to remember key concepts/ideas

- *most of us can't remember everything that we've read and then call it to memory when we're writing. Therefore, reading with a pen in hand prepares you to circle/underline key concepts/ideas in the text you're reading. This creates a way of "tracing" key concepts/ideas throughout the text so that when it's time to recall what you've read and use it to guide your writing, it will be much easier to condense the entire text into a unique, organized, written response. If you don't want to write in the text that you're reading, open a blank Word document for keeping track of key concepts/ideas (and page numbers).*

write while reading because it's an informal way of "conversing with" the author of the text (i.e. learning about how your writing can contribute something useful to "the conversation" of your resources)

- *in addition to circling/underlining key concepts/ideas throughout your reading process, it may also be helpful to keep a list of questions, connections with other texts/assignments/disciplines, etc. because this list can easily translate into "official" writing. For instance, even if your teacher isn't requiring a written assignment in response to the reading assignment, if you keep a working document with questions, connections, etc. regarding the reading assignment, you will likely be much better prepared to discuss the reading, not to mention that your notations can easily serve in the short-term as a Twitter/Facebook post (which is helpful for providing others' responses to your ideas) or in the long-term as an idea for a final paper. For most of us, it's much easier to have somewhere to start when, eventually, we need to complete a writing assignment based on the reading assignments of the course.*

develop research questions/research key words while reading; most of the time, it's fairly easy to identify research key words/ create unique research questions while reading actively

- *the notations you keep in the texts you're reading can help to prevent the frustration of figuring out "what to write about" when it comes time to interpret the reading assignments into unique written work. They give you something to start with – either in the sense that you can extend the ideas you have already written down, or challenge them by researching what's missing ... either way, you have something to work with, which helps to alleviate some of the anxiety of staring at a blank page.*

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https://courses.lumenlearning.com/englishcomp2kscopexmaster/?utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fcatalogs.lumenlearning.com%2Fcatalogs%2F1.

1.2: Online Reading Tips

Reading on a Screen



Figure 1.2.1

Even if you take primarily face-to-face classes in college, you'll likely find that a significant amount of the reading you'll have to do in college comes from online sources: articles on the Web, online library databases, e-books. The academic reading process of previewing, active reading, summarizing, and reviewing can be used to read these online materials, just like any other text.

However, effective online reading takes time and practice, and you need to carefully consider your approach. Read on for a list of tips that can help you successfully complete your online reading.

Eliminate distractions to maintain focus

In addition to the usual distractions found in a space (like people, cell phones, and televisions), online readers can be easily distracted by computer features (like games, instant messaging, and Facebook). Shut these programs off, and make sure your environment stays focused. You can even download tools to block programs that might cause distractions for a set period of time, to help you maintain your willpower.

Set a time limit

Reading from a computer screen can cause eye strain, so plan to read for shorter periods of time. For example, read for about 30 minutes and then take a 10 minute break away from your monitor. Use this time to think about what you just read and identify the key points or themes.

Identify why you are reading

Perhaps you are looking for sources of information for an assignment or paper. Maybe you need some background information on a topic. Or, possibly you need to learn specific subject matter for your course. Knowing why you are reading will help you decide exactly what strategies you should use. Choose a strategy based on your learning purpose.

If you are clear on your purpose but do not have a study guide or assignment to guide your reading, you may find it helpful to generate some personal study questions to focus your efforts. For instance, if you were studying interpersonal communication in the criminal justice field, you could ask: "What are the three important interpersonal communication skills? Why are they important? How can these skills be developed?" Record these questions in your notes and refer to them as you read.

Consider saving the document you are reading in a form you can manipulate

After evaluating the document you plan to read, save it to your personal files. This allows you to highlight key ideas or make summary notes in the margins of the document itself. These markings can then be transferred later into your own notes.

Preview before you read

Previewing the title, headings, and subheadings of a document will give you a better sense of its content and organization as well as make you aware of what you already know about the topic. You can then make an informed choice about:

- whether or not the material suits your purpose
- which sections of the material you should read
- how thoroughly you should read to accomplish your purpose

Get prepared to take notes

Whether you choose to use paper or a computer program, it is important to record important ideas for future reference. Have paper and pen readily available or open a blank Word document, so you are prepared to take notes once you start reading.

Take notes

Record important information on your note paper or in your Word document. Note taking helps you understand ideas and ensure you have the material for later reference. Be sure to record ideas in point form and in your own words and experiment with different note taking strategies to find one that suits your needs.

If you feel you might need the information for an assignment, record the document's reference information next to the notes you created. This step is important since you must cite all the references you draw on in assignment and papers. It is easier to do this step now rather than later when you may have forgotten the website address.

Read difficult material out loud

Sometimes it is helpful to *hear* what you are reading, especially if the material is complex or difficult to understand. Study in a space where you can read aloud to yourself. Alternatively, you can ask a friend or family member to review complex material with you. When two people look at information together, they can usually make sense of difficult materials.

Conclusion

An immense amounts of online resources are available to you. By using effective strategies and following the above suggestions, you will increase your chances of successfully accomplishing your reading task.

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1.3: Why It Matters- Writing Process

Learning Objectives

- Analyze topic selection activities
- Analyze prewriting activities
- Analyze activities to find evidence in support of a claim
- Analyze essay organizational techniques
- Analyze drafting activities
- Analyze revision activities
- Analyze proofreading activities

Why is it necessary to analyze the process of writing?

You’ve likely heard the phrase “writing process” before, and the steps below may be familiar to you.

THE WRITING PROCESS



Figure 1.3.1

Though these steps are often talked about as separate tasks, they are actually much more fluid. Don’t overlook the importance of the arrows around each item. These arrows indicate the most vital aspect of the writing process: it doesn’t just go in one direction.

One step bleeds into the next. Sometimes an issue comes up late in the process, such as during revision, which requires going back to the prewriting stage for a bit. This kind of dance through the steps is expected, and healthy. You make your own path through the process.

The Writing Process, Illustrated

The video below is a beautiful example of one person’s application of the writing process. He narrates the stages he goes through to complete blog entries for a course he’s taking. Though you may not be writing the same kind of product, you can certainly analyze his process to see how it might be applied in other writing situations.

Note: Accurate close captioning is only available while viewing through this textbook. If you choose to view the video on YouTube, only auto-generated captions will be available.



Were there steps in this video that surprised you? That seemed out of order to you? Would you be able to adapt his process to the next writing task you're faced with?

The rest of this module will address the individual stages of the writing process, and how they work together.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2: Rhetorical Analysis and Documenting Sources

[2.1: MLA Style Guide](#)

[2.2: MLA Document Formatting](#)

[2.3: MLA Works Cited](#)

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2.1: MLA Style Guide

This MLA Style guide was created by librarians at Cosumnes River College. It can also be viewed full screen in another window. If you want a printed copy of any page or section, it's recommended that you go to the actual guide and print from the full screen mode: [MLA Style Guide \(8th edition\)](#)



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/ MLA Style

Cosumnes River College Library / LibGuides / MLA Style Guide, 8th ed.8th ed.

MLA Style Guide, 8th ed.: MLA Style 8th ed.

MLA Style 8th ed.	Citation Basics	Authors & Contributors	Entries & Chapters	Books & eBooks	Articles	Websites & Webpages
Government Documents	TV, Film & Video	Music & Podcasts	Social Media & Email	Interviews	Artwork & Maps	
In-Text Citations	Hanging Indent	Need Help?				

In This Guide

Navigating This Guide

This page gives you some general information about the importance of citation, formatting your paper, links to sample Works Cited pages and full MLA style papers. Click the tabs at the top to see specific MLA citation examples.



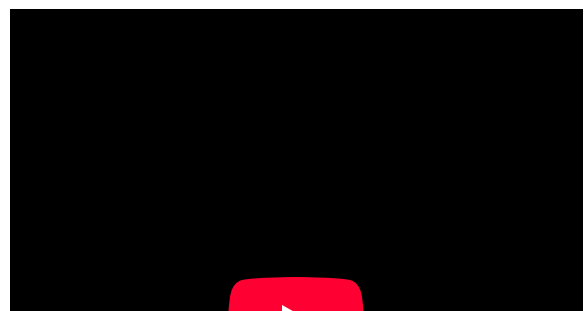
Citing Your Sources - MLA Style

Citing Your Sources

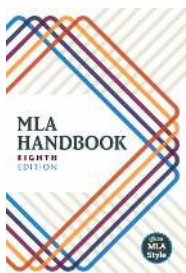
Why is Citation Important? - Citing your sources in college assignments gives you credibility.

Consult these sources for proper MLA

Formatting an MLA Paper



Consult these sources for proper MLA formatting:



MLA Handbook, 8th edition

by The Modern Language

Association of America

Call Number: LB2369 .G53

2016

ISBN: 9781603292627

Publication Date: 2016



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2.2: MLA Document Formatting

Overall Structure of an MLA Paper

One purpose of using MLA format is to streamline the writing process and establish a consistent and uniform way of presenting material. For this reason, there are specific guidelines you'll need to follow when formatting your paper.

General MLA Formatting Rules

- **Font:** Your paper should be written in 12-point text. Whichever font you choose, MLA requires that regular and italicized text be easily distinguishable from each other. Times and Times New Roman are often recommended.
- **Line Spacing:** All text in your paper should be double-spaced.
- **Margins:** All page margins (top, bottom, left, and right) should be 1 inch. All text should be left-justified.
- **Indentation:** The first line of every paragraph should be indented 0.5 inches.
- **Page Numbers:** Create a right-justified header 0.5 inches from the top edge of every page. This header should include your last name, followed by a space and the page number. Your pages should be numbered with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3...) and should start with the number 1 on your title page. Most word-processing programs have the ability to automatically add the correct page number to each page so you don't have to do this by hand.
- **Use of Italics:** In MLA style, you should italicize (rather than underline) the titles of books, plays, or other standalone works. You should also italicize (rather than underline) words or phrases you want to lend particular emphasis—though you should do this rarely.
- **Sentence Spacing:** Include just one single space after a period before the next sentence: "Mary went to the store. She bought some milk. Then she went home."
- **The first page:** Like the rest of your paper, everything on your first page, even the headers, should be double-spaced. The following information should be left-justified in regular font at the top of the first page (in the main part of the page, not the header):
 - on the first line, your first and last name
 - on the second line, your instructor's name
 - on the third line, the name of the class
 - on the fourth line, the date
- **The title:** After the header, the next double-spaced line should include the title of your paper. This should be centered and in title case, and it should not be bolded, underlined, or italicized (unless it includes the name of a book, in which case just the book title should be italicized).
- **The Oxford Comma:** The Oxford comma (also called the serial comma) is the comma that comes after the second-to-last item in a series or list. For example: *The UK includes the countries of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.* In the previous sentence, the comma immediately after "Wales" is the Oxford comma. In general writing conventions, whether the Oxford comma should be used is actually a point of fervent debate among passionate grammarians. However, it's a requirement in MLA style, so double-check all your lists and series to make sure you include it!

Jane/John Doe

Instructor Ryan

ENC 1101.xxx

23 August 2010

Doe 1

Paper Title

→ The opening line of your paper begins here. There is no extra line on either side of the title. The margins on all four sides of the page are set at 1". The font for *all text* is the same type and size—usually Times Roman 10 or 12. The top right header is ½" down from the top of the page and is 1" from the right side of the page. It falls outside of the area where the main text of the paper is placed, and the header consists of your last name, a space, and the page number. This right side header is repeated on each page, its page number changing with the page.

→ Tabbed in 5 spaces, the next paragraph begins here. Please note that there are no extra lines or spaces between paragraphs. (If you use Word 2007, go to this web page: <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/921174>.)

This pattern repeats itself all the way through the paper. From the moment you type your name at the top left, all of the lines are double-spaced. Everything is the same distance apart.

This pattern repeats itself all the way through the paper. From the moment you type your name at the top left, all of the lines are double-spaced. Everything is the same distance apart.

→ The purpose for stressing MLA formatting is not to force you to learn mundane facts or to jump through an idiotic hoop. It's to standardize the mode of presentation (Last name Page number). When you get into your major, your professors, the good ones, will expect your work to be presented according to your field's style manual. Some use the various styles noted in *EW* Chapters 48-54. But the work—and the research included in your papers—will be required to look a certain way. So all I'm asking for you to do is to model your work after the appropriate

Comment [14]: Your heading should appear only on the first page. Note the order of the information and it is double spaced. Your last name, along with the page number, will appear at the top of each page in the header, ½ inch from the top and right aligned.

Comment [15]: Your paper should have an original title; it should be centered, not underlined, italicized, in quotes, or bolded. Capitalize the first letter of each major word in the title. Note that there is not a title page.

Comment [16]: When citing sources, include the last name of the author, followed by the page number where you got the information. There is no comma between the name and page number. The citation is in parentheses, with the sentence ending period outside of the closing parenthesis.

Figure 2.2.1

Example 2.2.1:

Visit the **Modern Language Association website** to see an example of a student paper following MLA guidelines. You can also read more on the MLA website about correctly **formatting your document**.

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2.3: MLA Works Cited

Formatting the Works Cited Section

In MLA style, all the sources you cite throughout the text of your paper are listed together in full in the Works Cited section, which comes after the main text of your paper.

- **Page numbers:** Just as the rest of your paper, the top of the page should retain the right-justified header with your last name and the page number.
- **Title:** On the first line, the title of the page—"Works Cited"—should appear centered, and not italicized or bolded.
- **Spacing:** Like the rest of your paper, this page should be double-spaced and have 1-inch margins (don't skip an extra line between citations).
- **Alphabetical order:** Starting on the next line after the page title, your references should be listed in alphabetical order by author. Multiple sources by the same author should be listed chronologically by year within the same group.
- **Hanging indents:** Each reference should be formatted with what is called a hanging indent. This means the first line of each reference should be flush with the left margin (i.e., not indented), but the rest of that reference should be indented 0.5 inches further. Any word-processing program will let you format this automatically so you don't have to do it by hand. (In Microsoft Word, for example, you simply highlight your citations, click on the small arrow right next to the word "Paragraph" on the home tab, and in the popup box choose "hanging indent" under the "Special" section. Click OK, and you're done.)

Freeman 8

Works Cited

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Figure 2.3.1

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

3: Rhetorical Situation

- 3.1: Case Study- The Cost of Poor Communication
- 3.2: Understanding the Rhetorical Situation
- 3.3: Rhetorical Analysis in the Real World- A Useful Thinking Tool
- 3.4: Backpacks vs. Briefcases- Steps toward Rhetorical Analysis
 - 3.4.1: First Impressions
 - 3.4.2: Implications of Rhetorical Analysis
 - 3.4.3: Discussion

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3.1: Case Study- The Cost of Poor Communication

No one knows exactly how much poor communication costs business, industry and government each year, but estimates suggest billions. In fact, a recent estimate claims that the cost in the U.S. alone are close to \$4 billion annually!^[1] Poorly-worded or inefficient emails, careless reading or listening to instructions, documents that go unread due to poor design, hastily presenting inaccurate information, sloppy proofreading — all of these examples result in inevitable costs. The problem is that these costs aren't usually included on the corporate balance sheet at the end of each year, so often the problem remains unsolved.

You may have seen the Project Management Tree Cartoon before (**Figure 1.4.1**); it has been used and adapted widely to illustrate the perils of poor communication during a project.

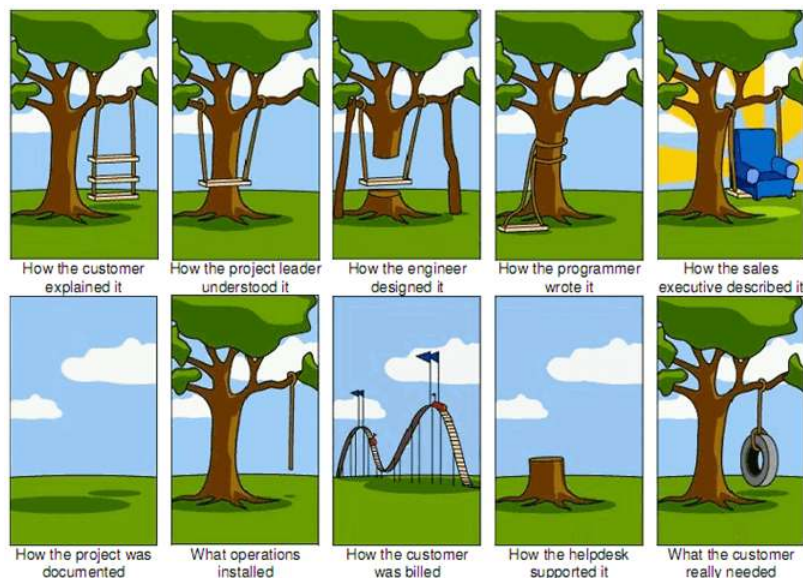


Figure 1.4.1 Project Management Tree Swing Cartoon. ^[2]

The waste caused by imprecisely worded regulations or instructions, confusing emails, long-winded memos, ambiguously written contracts, and other examples of poor communication is not as easily identified as the losses caused by a bridge collapse or a flood. But the losses are just as real—in reduced productivity, inefficiency, and lost business. In more personal terms, the losses are measured in wasted time, work, money, and ultimately, professional recognition. In extreme cases, losses can be measured in property damage, injuries, and even deaths.

The following “case studies” show how poor communications can have real world costs and consequences. For example, consider the “Comma Quirk” in the Rogers Contract that cost \$2 million.^[3] A small [error in spelling a company name](#) cost £8.8 million.^[4] Examine Edward Tufte’s [discussion](#) of the failed PowerPoint presentation that attempted to prevent the Columbia Space Shuttle disaster.^[5] The failure of project managers and engineers to communicate effectively resulted in the deadly [Hyatt Regency walkway collapse](#).^[6] The case studies below offer a few more examples that might be less extreme, but much more common.

In small groups, examine each “case” and determine the following:

1. Define the **rhetorical situation**: Who is communicating to whom about what, how, and why? What was the goal of the communication in each case?
2. Identify the **communication error** (poor task or audience analysis? Use of inappropriate language or style? Poor organization or formatting of information? Other?)
3. Explain what **costs/losses** were incurred by this problem.
4. Identify **possible solutions** or strategies that would have prevented the problem, and what benefits would be derived from implementing solutions or preventing the problem.

Present your findings in a brief, informal presentation to the class.

Exercises adapted from T.M Georges’ *Analytical Writing for Science and Technology*.^[7]

CASE 1: The promising chemist who buried his results

Bruce, a research chemist for a major petro-chemical company, wrote a dense report about some new compounds he had synthesized in the laboratory from oil-refining by-products. The bulk of the report consisted of tables listing their chemical and physical properties, diagrams of their molecular structure, chemical formulas and computer printouts of toxicity tests. Buried at the end of the report was a casual speculation that one of the compounds might be a particularly effective insecticide.

Seven years later, the same oil company launched a major research program to find more effective but environmentally safe insecticides. After six months of research, someone uncovered Bruce's report and his toxicity tests. A few hours of further testing confirmed that one of Bruce's compounds was the safe, economical insecticide they had been looking for.

Bruce had since left the company, because he felt that the importance of his research was not being appreciated.

CASE 2: The rejected current regulator proposal

The Acme Electric Company worked day and night to develop a new current regulator designed to cut the electric power consumption in aluminum plants by 35%. They knew that, although the competition was fierce, their regulator could be produced more cheaply, was more reliable, and worked more efficiently than the competitors' products.

The owner, eager to capture the market, personally but somewhat hastily put together a 120-page proposal to the three major aluminum manufacturers, recommending that their regulators be installed at all company plants.

She devoted the first 87 pages of the proposal to the mathematical theory and engineering design behind his new regulator, and the next 32 to descriptions of the new assembly line she planned to set up to produce regulators quickly. Buried in an appendix were the test results that compared her regulator's performance with present models, and a poorly drawn graph showed how much the dollar savings would be.

Acme Electric didn't get the contracts, despite having the best product. Six months later, the company filed for bankruptcy.

CASE 3: The instruction manual the scared customers away

As one of the first to enter the field of office automation, Sagatec Software, Inc. had built a reputation for designing high-quality and user-friendly database and accounting programs for business and industry. When they decided to enter the word-processing market, their engineers designed an effective, versatile, and powerful program that Sagatec felt sure would outperform any competitor.

To be sure that their new word-processing program was accurately documented, Sagatec asked the senior program designer to supervise writing the instruction manual. The result was a thorough, accurate and precise description of every detail of the program's operation.

When Sagatec began marketing its new word processor, cries for help flooded in from office workers who were so confused by the massive manual that they couldn't even find out how to get started. Then several business journals reviewed the program and judged it "too complicated" and "difficult to learn." After an impressive start, sales of the new word processing program plummeted.

Sagatec eventually put out a new, clearly written training guide that led new users step by step through introductory exercises and told them how to find commands quickly. But the rewrite cost Sagatec \$350,000, a year's lead in the market, and its reputation for producing easy-to-use business software.

CASE 4: One garbled memo – 26 baffled phone calls

Joanne supervised 36 professionals in 6 city libraries. To cut the costs of unnecessary overtime, she issued this one-sentence memo to her staff:

When workloads increase to a level requiring hours in excess of an employee's regular duty assignment, and when such work is estimated to require a full shift of eight (8) hours or more on two (2) or more consecutive days, even though unscheduled days intervene, an employee's tour of duty shall be altered so as to include the hours when such work must be done, unless an adverse impact would result from such employee's absence from his previously scheduled assignment.

After the 36 copies were sent out, Joanne's office received 26 phone calls asking what the memo meant. What the 10 people who didn't call about the memo thought is uncertain. It took a week to clarify the new policy.

CASE 5: Big science — Little rhetoric

The following excerpt is from Carl Sagan's book, *The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark*,^[8] itself both a plea for and an excellent example of clear scientific communication:

The Superconducting Supercollider (SSC) would have been the preeminent instrument on the planet for probing the fine structure of matter and the nature of the early Universe. Its price tag was \$10 to \$15 billion. It was cancelled by Congress in 1993 after about \$2 billion had been spent — a worst of both worlds outcome. But *this* debate was not, I think, mainly about declining interest in the support of science. Few in Congress understood what modern high-energy accelerators are for. They are not for weapons. They have no practical applications. They are for something that is, worrisomely from the point of view of many, called “the theory of everything.” Explanations that involve entities called quarks, charm, flavor, color, etc., sound as if physicists are being cute. The whole thing has an aura, in the view of at least some Congresspeople I've talked to, of “nerds gone wild” — which I suppose is an uncharitable way of describing curiosity-based science. No one asked to pay for this had the foggiest idea of what a Higgs boson is. I've read some of the material intended to justify the SSC. At the very end, some of it wasn't too bad, but there was nothing that really addressed what the project was about on a level accessible to bright but skeptical non-physicists. If physicists are asking for 10 or 15 billion dollars to build a machine that has no practical value, at the very least they should make an extremely serious effort, with dazzling graphics, metaphors, and capable use of the English language, to justify their proposal. More than financial mismanagement, budgetary constraints, and political incompetence, I think this is the key to the failure of the SSC.

CASE 6: The co-op student who mixed up genres

Chris was simultaneously enrolled in a university writing course and working as a co-op student at the Widget Manufacturing plant. As part of his co-op work experience, Chris shadowed his supervisor/mentor on a safety inspection of the plant, and was asked to write up the results of the inspection in a **compliance memo**. In the same week, Chris's writing instructor assigned the class to write a narrative essay based on some personal experience. Chris, trying to be efficient, thought that the plant visit experience could provide the basis for his essay assignment as well.

He wrote the essay first, because he was used to writing essays and was pretty good at it. He had never even seen a compliance memo, much less written one, so was not as confident about that task. He began the essay like this:

On June 1, 2018, I conducted a safety audit of the Widget Manufacturing plant in New City. The purpose of the audit was to ensure that all processes and activities in the plant adhere to safety and handling rules and policies outlined in the Workplace Safety Handbook and relevant government regulations. I was escorted on a 3-hour tour of the facility by...

Chris finished the essay and submitted it to his writing instructor. He then revised the essay slightly, keeping the introduction the same, and submitted it to his co-op supervisor. He “aced” the essay, getting an A grade, but his supervisor told him that the report was unacceptable and would have to be rewritten — especially the beginning, which should have clearly indicated whether or not the plant was in compliance with safety regulations. Chris was aghast! He had never heard of putting the “conclusion” at the **beginning**. He missed the company softball game that Saturday so he could rewrite the report to the satisfaction of his supervisor.

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2. J. Ward, “The project management tree swing cartoon, past and present,” TamingData, July 8, 2019 [Online] Available: <https://www.tamingdata.com/2010/07/08/the-project-management-tree-swing-cartoon-past-and-present/>. CC-BY-ND 4.0. ↵
3. G. Robertson, “Comma quirk irks Rogers,” *Globe and Mail*, Aug. 6, 2006 [Online]. Available: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/comma-quirk-irks-rogers/article1101686/>↵
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5. E. Tufte, *The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint*, 2001 [Online]. Available: https://www.inf.ed.ac.uk/teaching/courses/pi/2016_2017/phil/tufte-powerpoint.pdf↵
6. C. McFadden, “Understanding the tragic Hyatt Regency walkway collapse,” *Interesting Engineering*, July 4, 2017 [Online]: <https://interestingengineering.com/understanding-hyatt-regency-walkway-collapse>↵
7. T.M. Goerges (1996), *Analytical Writing for Science and Technology* [Online], Available: <https://www.scribd.com/document/96822930/Analytical-Writing>↵

8. C. Sagan, *The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark*, New York, NY: Random House, 1995. [↩](#)

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3.2: Understanding the Rhetorical Situation

It is common knowledge in the workplace that no one really *wants* to read what you write, and even if they want to or have to read it, they will likely not read all of it. So how do you get your reader to understand what you need quickly and efficiently? Start by doing a detailed **Task and Audience Analysis** — make sure you understand the “rhetorical situation.” Before you begin drafting a document, determine the needs of your rhetorical situation (See **Figure 1.3.1**).



Figure 1.3.1 The Rhetorical Situation.

The “rhetorical situation” is a term used to describe the components of any situation in which you may want to communicate, whether in written or oral form. To define a “rhetorical situation,” ask yourself this question: “**who is talking to whom about what, how, and why?**” There are five main components:

- Purpose
- Writer
- Audience
- Message
- Context/Culture

PURPOSE refers to *why* you are writing. Determining your purpose requires that you engage in **Task Analysis** — that is, determine what you hope to accomplish by writing this document. Ask yourself what you hope the reader(s) will do/think/decide/ or how they will behave as a result of reading the text. There are three general purposes for communication in the workplace: 1) to create a record, 2) to give or request information, and 3) to persuade.

Within those general purposes, you will find a myriad of specific purposes. For example, your purpose may be to propose an innovative solution to a specific problem. In this case, you want the reader to agree to explore the idea further, or approve funding for further research and development, which would fall under the general purpose of writing to persuade.

WRITER refers to you, the writer/creator/designer of the communication. It is important to examine your own motivation for writing and any biases, past experiences, and knowledge you bring to the writing situation. These elements will influence how you craft the message, whether positively or negatively. This examination should also include your role within the organization, as well as your position relative to your target audience.

AUDIENCE refers to your readers/listeners/viewers/users. **Audience Analysis** is possibly the most critical part of understanding the rhetorical situation. Consider **Figure 1.3.2** below. Is your audience internal (within your company) or external (such as clients, suppliers, customers, other stakeholders)? Are they lateral to you (at the same position or level), upstream from you (management), or downstream from you (employees, subordinates)? Who is the primary audience? Who are the secondary audiences? These questions, and others, help you to create an understanding of your audience that will help you craft a message that is designed to effectively communicate specifically to them.

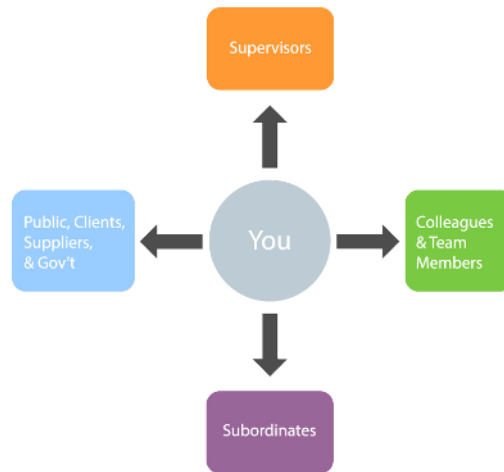


Figure 1.3.2 Understanding your relationship to your audience.

Keep in mind that your different audiences will also have a specific purpose in reading your document. Consider what their various purposes might be, and how you can best help them achieve their purpose. What do they already know? What do they need to know? Considering what they are expected to do with the information you provide will help you craft your message effectively. Consider also that technical writing often has a long “life-span” – a document you write today could be filed away and reviewed months or even years down the road. Consider the needs of that audience as well.

Audience	Purpose for Reading
Executives	Make decisions
Supervising Experts/Managers	Advise decision makers; direct subordinates
Technical Experts/Co-workers	Implement decisions; advise
Lay People/Public/Clients	Become informed; choose options; make decisions

Some companies develop audience profiles to help guide their communications. This is a good exercise whenever you have something to communicate, especially if the information is complex. Here are some questions to consider as part of the audience profile:

Developing an Audience Profile

- Who are your primary readers? (specific names and titles, or general roles)
- Are they above you in the organizational hierarchy? Lateral, subordinate? Outside of your organization?
- Who else might read this document? (secondary readers)
- Do you know what their attitude towards the topic is?
- How might cultural differences affect their expectations and interpretations?
- How much technical background do the readers have?
- How much do they already know about the topic?
- What situation gave rise to this document?

MESSAGE refers to the information you want to communicate. This is the content of your document. It should be aligned to your purpose and targeted to your audience. While it is important to carefully choose what content your audience needs, it is equally critical to cut out content that your audience does not need or want. “Time is money” may be a tired old cliché, but it is important to avoid wasting your audience’s time with information that is unnecessary or irrelevant to them. Your message should be professional, and expressed in an appropriate **tone** for the audience, purpose, and context. We will discuss aspects of using a professional style and tone in crafting your message more in [Chapter 2](#).

CONTEXT refers to the situation that creates the need for the writing. In other words, what has happened or needs to happen that creates the need for communication? The context is influenced by timing, location, current events, and culture, which can be organizational or social. Ignoring the context for your communication could result in awkward situations, or possibly offensive ones. It will almost certainly impact your ability to clearly convey your message to your audience.

Consider the subtle (and not so subtle) similarities and differences in the rhetorical situation when you offer feedback on Course Experience Surveys vs when you evaluate an instructor on Ratemyprofessor.com.

Exercise : Identify the differences in the rhetorical situations

	Course Evaluation Survey	Ratemyprofessor.com
Purpose		
Audience		
Writer		
Message		
Context		

Exercise : Task and audience analysis

Download [Task and Audience Analysis Exercises \(.docx\)](#)

The table below contains a collection of details about a research project you have just completed on rising sea levels. Imagine that you're writing documents for each of the 5 following audiences:

1. **Your supervisor/boss**
2. **Scientists**
3. **The general public**
4. **Politician**
5. **High school students**

What information about rising sea levels might each audience be interested in? As you go down the list, write in the blank spaces in front of each detail the letter that corresponds to the audiences that you think would find this detail most relevant.

Consider what kind of document might contain that information for that audience.

Interested Audience	Categories of Information on Sea Level Rise
	The dollar damage caused by sea level increases each year.
	A literature review of previous research on rising sea levels.
	Descriptions of calibration procedures for your instruments.
	Some basic physics of how tides and currents work.
	How much your project costs.
	A log of all your measurements during the whole project.
	A list of people who worked on the project.
	Specifications of a new instrument to measure water conditions.
	A new result showing a connection between sea level and coastal developments.
	Procedures you used to avoid statistical biases in your data.
	Your plans for further measurements.
	Your recommendations for future research.

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3.3: Rhetorical Analysis in the Real World- A Useful Thinking Tool

This article is from Kennesaw State University writing center. It can also be viewed full screen. If you want a printed copy, it's recommended that you go to the website and print from the full screen mode: [Rhetorical Analysis in the Real World: A Useful Thinking Tool](#).

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SECTION OVERVIEW

3.4: Backpacks vs. Briefcases- Steps toward Rhetorical Analysis

3.4.1: First Impressions

3.4.2: Implications of Rhetorical Analysis

3.4.3: Discussion

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3.4.1: First Impressions

Laura Bolin Carroll

First Impressions

Imagine the first day of class in first year composition at your university.* The moment your professor walked in the room, you likely began analyzing her and making assumptions about what kind of teacher she will be. You might have noticed what kind of bag she is carrying—a tattered leather satchel? a hot pink polka-dotted backpack? a burgundy brief case? You probably also noticed what she is wearing—trendy slacks and an untucked striped shirt? a skirted suit? jeans and a tee shirt?

It is likely that the above observations were only a few of the observations you made as your professor walked in the room. You might have also noticed her shoes, her jewelry, whether she wears a wedding ring, how her hair is styled, whether she stands tall or slumps, how quickly she walks, or maybe even if her nails are done. If you don't tend to notice any of these things about your professors, you certainly do about the people around you—your roommate, others in your residence hall, students you are assigned to work with in groups, or a prospective date. For most of us, many of the people we encounter in a given day are subject to this kind of quick analysis.

Now as you performed this kind of analysis, you likely didn't walk through each of these questions one by one, write out the answer, and add up the responses to see what kind of person you are interacting with. Instead, you quickly took in the information and made an informed, and likely somewhat accurate, decision about that person.

Over the years, as you have interacted with others, you have built a mental database that you can draw on to make conclusions about what a person's looks tell you about their personality. You have become able to analyze quickly what people are saying about themselves through the way they choose to dress, accessorize, or wear their hair.

We have, of course, heard that you “can't judge a book by its cover,” but, in fact, we do it all the time. Daily we find ourselves in situations where we are forced to make snap judgments. Each day we meet different people, encounter unfamiliar situations, and see media that asks us to do, think, buy, and act in all sorts of ways. In fact, our saturation in media and its images is one of the reasons why learning to do rhetorical analysis is so important. The more we know about how to analyze situations and draw informed conclusions, the better we can become about making savvy judgments about the people, situations and media we encounter.

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3.4.2: Implications of Rhetorical Analysis

Media is one of the most important places where this kind of analysis needs to happen. Rhetoric—the way we use language and images to persuade—is what makes media work. Think of all the media you see and hear every day: Twitter, television shows, web pages, billboards, text messages, podcasts. Even as you read this chapter, more ways to get those messages to you quickly and in a persuasive manner are being developed. Media is constantly asking you to buy something, act in some way, believe something to be true, or interact with others in a specific manner. Understanding rhetorical messages is essential to help us to become informed consumers, but it also helps evaluate the ethics of messages, how they affect us personally, and how they affect society.

Take, for example, a commercial for men’s deodorant that tells you that you’ll be irresistible to women if you use their product. This campaign doesn’t just ask you to buy the product, though. It also asks you to trust the company’s credibility, or ethos, and to believe the messages they send about how men and women interact, about sexuality, and about what constitutes a healthy body. You have to decide whether or not you will choose to buy the product and how you will choose to respond to the messages that the commercial sends.

Or, in another situation, a Facebook group asks you to support health care reform. The rhetoric in this group uses people’s stories of their struggles to obtain affordable health care. These stories, which are often heart-wrenching, use emotion to persuade you—also called pathos. You are asked to believe that health care reform is necessary and urgent, and you are asked to act on these beliefs by calling your congresspersons and asking them to support the reforms as well.

Because media rhetoric surrounds us, it is important to understand how rhetoric works. If we refuse to stop and think about how and why it persuades us, we can become mindless consumers who buy into arguments about what makes us value ourselves and what makes us happy. For example, research has shown that only 2% of women consider themselves beautiful (“Campaign”), which has been linked to the way that the fashion industry defines beauty. We are also told by the media that buying more stuff can make us happy, but historical surveys show that US happiness peaked in the 1950s, when people saw as many advertisements in their lifetime as the average American sees in one year (Leonard).

Our worlds are full of these kinds of social influences. As we interact with other people and with media, we are continually creating and interpreting rhetoric. In the same way that you decide how to process, analyze or ignore these messages, you create them. You probably think about what your clothing will communicate as you go to a job interview or get ready for a date. You are also using rhetoric when you try to persuade your parents to send you money or your friends to see the movie that interests you. When you post to your blog or tweet you are using rhetoric. In fact, according to rhetorician Kenneth Burke, rhetoric is everywhere: “wherever there is persuasion, there is rhetoric. And wherever there is ‘meaning,’ there is ‘persuasion.’ Food eaten and digested is not rhetoric. But in the meaning of food there is much rhetoric, the meaning being persuasive enough for the idea of food to be used, like the ideas of religion, as a rhetorical device of statesmen” (71–72). In other words, most of our actions are persuasive in nature. What we choose to wear (tennis shoes vs. flip flops), where we shop (Whole Foods Market vs. Wal-Mart), what we eat (organic vs. fast food), or even the way we send information (snail mail vs. text message) can work to persuade others.

Chances are you have grown up learning to interpret and analyze these types of rhetoric. They become so commonplace that we don’t realize how often and how quickly we are able to perform this kind of rhetorical analysis. When your teacher walked in on the first day of class, you probably didn’t think to yourself, “I think I’ll do some rhetorical analysis on her clothing and draw some conclusions about what kind of personality she might have and whether I think I’ll like her.” And, yet, you probably were able to come up with some conclusions based on the evidence you had.

However, when this same teacher hands you an advertisement, photograph or article and asks you to write a rhetorical analysis of it, you might have been baffled or felt a little overwhelmed. The good news is that many of the analytical processes that you already use to interpret the rhetoric around you are the same ones that you’ll use for these assignments.

The Rhetorical Situation, Or Discerning Context

One of the first places to start is context. Rhetorical messages always occur in a specific situation or context. The president’s speech might respond to a specific global event, like an economic summit; that’s part of the context. You choose your clothing depending on where you are going or what you are doing; that’s context. A television commercial comes on during specific programs and at specific points of the day; that’s context. A billboard is placed in a specific part of the community; that’s context, too.

In an article called “The Rhetorical Situation,” Lloyd Bitzer argues that there are three parts to understanding the context of a rhetorical moment: exigence, audience and constraints. Exigence is the circumstance or condition that invites a response; “imperfection marked by urgency; it is a defect, an obstacle, something waiting to be done, a thing which is other than it should be” (Bitzer 304). In other words, rhetorical discourse is usually responding to some kind of problem. You can begin to understand a piece’s exigence by asking, “What is this rhetoric responding to?” “What might have happened to make the rhetor (the person who creates the rhetoric) respond in this way?”

The exigence can be extremely complex, like the need for a new Supreme Court justice, or it can be much simpler, like receiving an email that asks you where you and your friends should go for your road trip this weekend. Understanding the exigence is important because it helps you begin to discover the purpose of the rhetoric. It helps you understand what the discourse is trying to accomplish.

Another part of the rhetorical context is audience, those who are the (intended or unintended) recipients of the rhetorical message. The audience should be able to respond to the exigence. In other words, the audience should be able to help address the problem. You might be very frustrated with your campus’s requirement that all first-year students purchase a meal plan for on-campus dining. You might even send an email to a good friend back home voicing that frustration. However, if you want to address the exigence of the meal plans, the most appropriate audience would be the person/office on campus that oversees meal plans. Your friend back home cannot solve the problem (though she may be able to offer sympathy or give you some good suggestions), but the person who can change the meal plan requirements is probably on campus. Rhetors make all sorts of choices based on their audience. Audience can determine the type of language used, the formality of the discourse, the medium or delivery of the rhetoric, and even the types of reasons used to make the rhetor’s argument. Understanding the audience helps you begin to see and understand the rhetorical moves that the rhetor makes.

The last piece of the rhetorical situation is the constraints. The constraints of the rhetorical situation are those things that have the power to “constrain decision and action needed to modify the exigence” (Bitzer 306). Constraints have a lot to do with how the rhetoric is presented. Constraints can be “beliefs, attitudes, documents, facts, traditions, images, interests, motives” (Bitzer 306). Constraints limit the way the discourse is delivered or communicated. Constraints may be something as simple as your instructor limiting your proposal to one thousand words, or they may be far more complex like the kinds of language you need to use to persuade a certain community.

So how do you apply this to a piece of rhetoric? Let’s say you are flipping through a magazine, and you come across an advertisement that has a large headline that reads “Why Some People Say ‘D’OH’ When You Say ‘Homer’” (“Why”). This ad is an Ad Council public service announcement (PSA) to promote arts education and is sponsored by Americans for the Arts and NAMM, the trade association of the international music products industry.

Since you want to understand more about what this ad means and what it wants you to believe or do, you begin to think about the rhetorical situation. You first might ask, “what is the ad responding to? What problem does it hope to address?” That’s the exigence. In this case, the exigence is the cutting of arts funding and children’s lack of exposure to the arts. According to the Ad Council’s website, “the average kid is provided insufficient time to learn and experience the arts. This PSA campaign was created to increase involvement in championing arts education both in and out of school” (“Arts”). The PSA is responding directly to the fact that kids are not getting enough arts education.

Then you might begin to think about to whom the Ad Council targeted the ad. Unless you’re a parent, you are probably not the primary audience. If you continued reading the text of the ad, you’d notice that there is information to persuade parents that the arts are helpful to their children and to let them know how to help their children become more involved with the arts. The ad tells parents that “the experience will for sure do more than entertain them. It’ll build their capacity to learn more. In fact, the more art kids get, the smarter they become in subjects like math and science. And that’s reason enough to make a parent say, ‘D’oh!’, For Ten Simple Ways to instill art in your kids’ lives visit AmericansForTheArts.org” (“Why”). Throughout the text of the ad, parents are told both what to believe about arts education and how to act in response to the belief.

There also might be a secondary audience for this ad—people who are not the main audience of the ad but might also be able to respond to the exigence. For example, philanthropists who could raise money for arts education or legislators who might pass laws for arts funding or to require arts education in public schools could also be intended audiences for this ad.

Finally, you might want to think about the constraints or the limitations on the ad. Sometimes these are harder to get at, but we can guess a few things. One constraint might be the cost of the ad. Different magazines charge differently for ad space as well as placement within the magazine, so the Ad Council could have been constrained by how much money they wanted to spend to circulate the ad. The ad is also only one page long, so there might have been a limitation on the amount of space for the ad. Finally, on the Ad Council's webpage, they list the requirements for organizations seeking the funding and support of the Ad Council. There are twelve criteria, but here are a few:

1. The sponsor organization must be a private non-profit 501(c)3 organization, private foundation, government agency or coalition of such groups.
2. The issue must address the Ad Council's focus on Health & Safety, Education, or Community. Applications which benefit children are viewed with favor—as part of the Ad Council's Commitment to Children.
3. The issue must offer a solution through an individual action.
4. The effort must be national in scope, so that the message has relevance to media audiences in communities throughout the nation. ("Become")

Each of these criteria helps to understand the limitations on both who can participate as rhetor and what can be said.

The exigence, audience and constraints are only one way to understand the context of a piece of rhetoric, and, of course, there are other ways to get at context. Some rhetoricians look at subject, purpose, audience and occasion. Others might look at the "rhetorical triangle" of writer, reader, and purpose.

An analysis using the rhetorical triangle would ask similar questions about audience as one using the rhetorical situation, but it would also ask questions about the writer and the purpose of the document. Asking questions about the writer helps the reader determine whether she or he is credible and knowledgeable. For example, the Ad Council has been creating public service announcements since 1942 ("Loose Lips Sink Ships," anyone?) and is a non-profit agency. They also document their credibility by showing the impact of their campaigns in several ways: "Destruction of our forests by wildfires has been reduced from 22 million acres to less than 8.4 million acres per year, since our Forest Fire Prevention campaign began" and "6,000 Children were paired with a mentor in just the first 18 months of our mentoring campaign" ("About"). Based on this information, we can assume that the Ad Council is a credible rhetor, and whether or not we agree with the rhetoric they produce, we can probably assume it contains reliable information. Asking questions about the next part of the rhetorical triangle, the purpose of a piece of rhetoric, helps you understand what the rhetor is trying to achieve through the discourse. We can discern the purpose by asking questions like "what does the rhetor want me to believe after seeing this message?" or "what does the rhetor want me to do?" In some ways, the purpose takes the exigence to the next step. If the exigence frames the problem, the purpose frames the response to that problem.

The rhetorical situation and rhetorical triangle are two ways to begin to understand how the rhetoric functions within the context you find it. The key idea is to understand that no rhetorical performance takes place in a vacuum. One of the first steps to understanding a piece of rhetoric is to look at the context in which it takes place. Whatever terminology you (or your instructor) choose, it is a good idea to start by locating your analysis within a rhetorical situation.

The Heart of the Matter—The Argument

The rhetorical situation is just the beginning of your analysis, though. What you really want to understand is the argument—what the rhetor wants you to believe or do and how he or she goes about that persuasion. Effective argumentation has been talked about for centuries. In the fourth century BCE, Aristotle was teaching the men of Athens how to persuade different kinds of audiences in different kinds of rhetorical situations. Aristotle articulated three "artistic appeals" that a rhetor could draw on to make a case—logos, pathos, and ethos.

Logos is commonly defined as argument from reason, and it usually appeals to an audience's intellectual side. As audiences we want to know the "facts of the matter," and logos helps present these—statistics, data, and logical statements. For example, on our Homer ad for the arts, the text tells parents that the arts will "build their capacity to learn more. In fact, the more art kids get, the smarter they become in subjects like math and science" ("Why"). You might notice that there aren't numbers or charts here, but giving this information appeals to the audience's intellectual side.

That audience can see a continuation of the argument on the Ad Council's webpage, and again much of the argument appeals to logos and draws on extensive research that shows that the arts do these things:

- Allow kids to express themselves creatively and bolster their self-confidence.
- Teach kids to be more tolerant and open.
- Improve kids' overall academic performance.
- Show that kids actively engaged in arts education are likely to have higher SAT scores than those with little to no arts involvement.
- Develop skills needed by the 21st century workforce: critical thinking, creative problem solving, effective communication, teamwork and more.
- Keep students engaged in school and less likely to drop out. ("Arts")

Each bullet above is meant to intellectually persuade parents that they need to be more intentional in providing arts education for their children.

Few of us are persuaded only with our mind, though. Even if we intellectually agree with something, it is difficult to get us to act unless we are also persuaded in our heart. This kind of appeal to emotion is called pathos. Pathetic appeals (as rhetoric that draws on pathos is called) used alone without logos and ethos can come across as emotionally manipulative or overly sentimental, but are very powerful when used in conjunction with the other two appeals.

Emotional appeals can come in many forms—an anecdote or narrative, an image such as a photograph, or even humor. For example, on their web campaign, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) uses an image of a baby chick and of Ronald McDonald wielding a knife to draw attention to their Chicken McCruely Un-Happy Meal. These images are meant to evoke an emotional response in the viewer and, along with a logos appeal with the statistics about how cruelly chickens are treated, persuade the viewer to boycott Mc-Donalds.

Pathos can also be a very effective appeal if the rhetor has to persuade the audience in a very short amount of time, which is why it is used heavily in print advertisements, billboards, or television commercials. An investment company will fill a 30-second commercial with images of families and couples enjoying each other, seeming happy, and surrounded by wealth to persuade you to do business with them. The 30-second time spot does not allow them to give the 15-year growth of each of their funds, and pathetic appeals will often hold our interest much longer than intellectual appeals.

The ad promoting the importance of art uses humor to appeal to the audience's emotional side. By comparing the epic poet Homer to Homer Simpson and his classic "d'oh!" the ad uses humor to draw people into their argument about the arts. The humor continues as they ask parents if their kids know the difference between the Homers, "The only Homer some kids know is the one who can't write his own last name" ("Why"). The ad also appeals to emotion through its language use (diction), describing Homer as "one very ancient dude," and describing The Odyssey as "the sequel" to The Iliad. In this case, the humor of the ad, which occurs in the first few lines, is meant to draw the reader in and help them become interested in the argument before the ad gets to the logos, which is in the last few lines of the ad.

The humor also makes the organization seem real and approachable, contributing to the ethos. The humor might lead you to think that Americans for the Arts is not a stuffy bunch of suits, but an organization you can relate to or one that has a realistic understanding of the world. Ethos refers to the credibility of the rhetor—which can be a person or an organization. A rhetor can develop credibility in many ways. The tone of the writing and whether that tone is appropriate for the context helps build a writer's ethos, as does the accuracy of the information or the visual presentation of the rhetoric.

In the Homer ad, the ethos is built in several ways. The simple, humorous and engaging language, such as "Greek Gods. Achilles Heel. Trojan Horse. All of these icons are brought to us by one very ancient dude—Homer. In The Iliad and its sequel, The Odyssey, he presented Greek mythology in everyday language" ("Why") draws the audience in and helps the tone of the ad seem very approachable. Also, the knowledge of Greek mythology and the information about how the arts help children—which also contribute to the logos appeal—make the ad seem credible and authoritative. However, the fact that the ad does not use too many statistics or overly technical language also contributes to the ethos of the ad because often sounding too intellectual can come across as pompous or stuffy.

Aristotle's artistic appeals are not the only way to understand the argument of rhetoric. You might choose to look at the claim or the unstated assumptions of a piece; someone else might consider the visual appeal of the rhetoric, like the font, page layout, types of paper, or images; another person might focus on the language use and the specific word choice and sentence structure of a piece.

Logos, pathos, and ethos can provide a nice framework for analysis, but there are numerous ways to understand how a piece of rhetoric persuades (or fails to persuade).

Looking at the context and components of a piece of rhetoric often isn't enough, though, because it is important to draw conclusions about the rhetoric—does it successfully respond to the exigence? Is it an ethical approach? Is it persuasive? These kinds of questions let you begin to create your own claims, your own rhetoric, as you take a stand on what other people say, do, or write.

Beginning to Analyze

Once you have established the context for the rhetoric you are analyzing, you can begin to think about how well it fits into that context. You've probably been in a situation where you arrived way underdressed for an occasion. You thought that the dinner was just a casual get together with friends; it turned out to be a far more formal affair, and you felt very out of place. There are also times when discourse fails to respond to the situation well—it doesn't fit. On the other hand, successful discourses often respond very well to the context. They address the problem, consider the audience's needs, provide accurate information, and have a compelling claim. One of the reasons you work to determine the rhetorical situation for a piece of discourse is to consider whether it works within that context. You can begin this process by asking questions like:

- Does the rhetoric address the problem it claims to address?
- Is the rhetoric targeted at an audience who has the power to make change?
- Are the appeals appropriate to the audience?
- Does the rhetor give enough information to make an informed decision?
- Does the rhetoric attempt to manipulate in any way (by giving incomplete/inaccurate information or abusing the audience's emotions)?
- What other sub-claims do you have to accept to understand the rhetor's main claim? (For example, in order to accept the Ad Council's claim that the arts boost math and science scores, you first have to value the boosting of those scores.)
- What possible negative effects might come from this rhetoric?

Rhetorical analysis asks how discourse functions in the setting in which it is found. In the same way that a commercial for denture cream seems very out of place when aired during a reality television show aimed at teenagers, rhetoric that does not respond well to its context often fails to persuade. In order to perform analysis, you must understand the context and then you must carefully study the ways that the discourse does and does not respond appropriately to that context.

The bottom line is that the same basic principles apply when you look at any piece of rhetoric (your instructor's clothing, an advertisement, the president's speech): you need to consider the context and the argument. As you begin to analyze rhetoric, there are lots of different types of rhetoric you might encounter in a college classroom, such as

- Political cartoon
- Wikipedia entry
- Scholarly article
- Bar Graph
- Op-Ed piece in the newspaper
- Speech
- YouTube video
- Book chapter
- Photograph
- PowerPoint Presentation

All of the above types of discourse try to persuade you. They may ask you to accept a certain kind of knowledge as valid, they may ask you to believe a certain way, or they may ask you to act. It is important to understand what a piece of rhetoric is asking of you,

how it tries to persuade you, and whether that persuasion fits within the context you encounter it in. Rhetorical analysis helps you answer those questions.

Implications of Rhetorical Analysis, Or Why Do This Stuff Anyway?

So you might be wondering if you know how to do this analysis already—you can tell what kind of person someone is by their clothing, or what a commercial wants you to buy without carefully listening to it—why do you need to know how to do more formal analysis? How does this matter outside a college classroom?

Well, first of all, much of the reading and learning in college requires some level of rhetorical analysis: as you read a textbook chapter to prepare for a quiz, it is helpful to be able to distill the main points quickly; when you read a journal article for a research paper, it is necessary to understand the scholar's thesis; when you watch a video in class, it is useful to be able to understand how the creator is trying to persuade you. But college is not the only place where an understanding of how rhetoric works is important. You will find yourself in many situations—from boardrooms to your children's classrooms or churches to city council meetings where you need to understand the heart of the arguments being presented.

One final example: in November 2000, Campbell's Soup Company launched a campaign to show that many of their soups were low in calories and showed pre-pubescent girls refusing to eat because they were "watching their weight." A very small organization called Dads and Daughters, a group that fights advertising that targets girls with negative body images, contacted Campbell's explaining the problems they saw in an ad that encouraged young girls to be self-conscious about their weight, and asked Campbell's to pull the ad. A few days later, Campbell's Vice President for Marketing and Corporate Communications called. One of the dads says, "the Vice President Acknowledged he had received their letter, reviewed the ad again, saw their point, and was pulling the ad," responding to a "couple of guys writing a letter" ("Media"). Individuals who understand rhetorical analysis and act to make change can have a tremendous influence on their world.

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3.4.3: Discussion

Discussion

1. What are examples of rhetoric that you see or hear on a daily basis?
2. What are some ways that you create rhetoric? What kinds of messages are you trying to communicate?
3. What is an example of a rhetorical situation that you have found yourself in? Discuss exigence, audience, and constraints.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: Peer Review

[4.1: Peer Review](#)

[4.2: Revising and Editing](#)

[4.3: Getting Feedback](#)

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4.1: Peer Review



Who better to ask if your essay is meeting its goals than someone else working on the same task? Consider reaching out to a classmate to offer to exchange insights on drafts before the due date.

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4.2: Revising and Editing

Learning Objectives

- Identify major areas of concern in the draft essay during revising and editing.
- Use peer reviews and editing checklists to assist revising and editing.
- Revise and edit the first draft of your essay and produce a final draft.

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.

tip

How do you get the best out of your revisions and editing? Here are some strategies that writers have developed to look at their first drafts from a fresh perspective. Try them throughout this course; 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.
- Pretend you are one of your readers. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied? Why?
- 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.

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.

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.

 Note

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 off-topic 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 diagonal, 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 truer blacks 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!

Figure 4.2.1

 tip

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.

Writing at Work

Many companies hire copyeditors and proofreaders to help them produce the cleanest possible final drafts of large writing projects. Copyeditors 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.

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. Table 7.3 “Common Transitional Words and Phrases” groups many common transitions according to their purpose.

Table 7.3 - Common Transitional Words and Phrases

Transitions That Show Sequence or Time		
after	before	later
afterward	before long	meanwhile
as soon as	finally	next
at first	first, second, third	soon
at last	in the first place	then
Transitions That Show Position		
above	across	at the bottom
at the top	behind	below
beside	beyond	inside
near	next to	opposite
to the left, to the right, to the side	under	where
Transitions That Show a Conclusion		
indeed	hence	in conclusion
in the final analysis	therefore	thus
Transitions That Continue a Line of Thought		
consequently	furthermore	additionally
because	besides the fact	following this idea further
in addition	in the same way	moreover
looking further	considering..., it is clear that	
Transitions That Change a Line of Thought		
but	yet	however
nevertheless	on the contrary	on the other hand
Transitions That Show Importance		
above all	best	especially
in fact	more important	most important
most	worst	

Transitions That Introduce the Final Thoughts in a Paragraph or Essay

finally	last	in conclusion
most of all	least of all	last of all

All-Purpose Transitions to Open Paragraphs or to Connect Ideas Inside Paragraphs

admittedly	at this point	certainly
granted	it is true	generally speaking
in general	in this situation	no doubt
no one denies	obviously	of course
to be sure	undoubtedly	unquestionably

Transitions that Introduce Examples

for instance	for example
--------------	-------------

Transitions That Clarify the Order of Events or Steps

first, second, third	generally, furthermore, finally	in the first place, also, last
in the first place, furthermore, finally	in the first place, likewise, lastly	

After Maria 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.

tip

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 (HDTV) with a large screen to watch sports and DVDs on. ^There's 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 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. ^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!

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 e-book reader, which is a recent invention, may become as commonplace as the cell phone. My over-sixty uncle bought an e-book reader, and his wife bought an e-book reader, too. **Revised:** The e-book reader, a recent invention, may become as commonplace as the cell phone. My over-sixty uncle and his wife both bought e-book readers.

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.

~~confuses buyers more than purchasing~~
 Finally, 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~~
~~and with~~
~~screen to watch sports and DVDs on.~~ ~~^ There's~~ good reason. ~~for this confusion. You face~~
~~decisions you never had to make with the old, bulky picture-tube televisions.~~ The first
~~involves~~ ~~which~~
 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 expressed as 1080p,
~~as~~ ~~on~~
 or full HD, or ~~^768p~~, which is half that. The trouble is that ~~^ if you have~~ a smaller
~~screen,~~ viewers will not ~~between them~~
~~screen,~~ 32-inch or 37-inch diagonal ~~^you won't~~ be able to tell the difference ~~^ with~~
 the naked eye. The second 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
~~deeper~~
 screens show ~~true~~ 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.~~
~~models. ^Don't buy more television than you need!!~~

Figure 4.2.3

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:

- | | |
|-----------------|------------|
| 1. Point: _____ | Why: _____ |
| 2. Point: _____ | Why: _____ |
| 3. Point: _____ | Why: _____ |

5. These places in your essay are not clear to me:

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Where: _____ | Needs improvement |
| because _____ | |
| 2. Where: _____ | Needs improvement because |
| _____ | |
| 3. Where: _____ | Needs improvement because |
| _____ | |

6. The one additional change you could make that would improve this essay significantly is _____.

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.

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:

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

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

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.

tip

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.

The last section of this book 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 checklist to help you edit your writing.

Checklist

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, where allowed, correctly?
- Can I find any errors in the use of commonly confused words, such as *to/too/two*?

tip

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.

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 4.2.1

1. Answer the following two questions about Mariah's paragraph in "Creating Unity" above:

- Do you agree with Mariah’s decision to make the deletions she made? Did she cut too much, too little, or just enough? Explain.
- Is the explanation of what screen resolution means a digression? Or is it audience friendly and essential to understanding the paragraph? Explain.

Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

2. Now start to revise the first draft of the essay you wrote. Reread it to find any statements that affect the unity of your writing. Decide how best to revise.

3. Answer the following questions about Mariah’s revised paragraph in “Creating Coherence.”

- Do you agree with the transitions and other changes that Mariah made to her paragraph? Which would you keep and which were unnecessary? Explain.
- What transition words or phrases did Mariah add to her paragraph? Why did she choose each one?
- 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.

4. Now return to the first draft of the essay you wrote 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.

5. Answer the following questions about Mariah’s revised paragraph:

- Read the unrevised and the revised paragraphs aloud. Explain in your own words how changes in word choice have affected Mariah’s writing.
- 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?
- What effect does removing contractions and the pronoun *you* have on the tone of the paragraph? How would you characterize the tone now? Why?

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. Work with two partners. Go back to #3 in this lesson and compare your responses about Mariah’s paragraph with your partners’. Recall Mariah’s purpose for writing and her audience. Then, working individually, list where you agree and where you disagree about revision needs.

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

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4.3: Getting Feedback

This article is from The Writing Center from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. It can also be viewed full screen. If you want a printed copy, it's recommended that you go to the website and print from the full screen mode: [Getting Feedback](#).



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- 2604:a880:2:d1::2b9c:8001
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- Reference this support identifier:
04901cf4aaaf6b63fd3a3e2ea1dd97949b25c08e71d24b166aa682c52f6d5a09

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

5: Citing, Summarizing, Quoting, and Paraphrasing

5.1: MLA In-Text Citations

5.2: When to Quote and When to Paraphrase

5.3: Quotations

5.4: Paraphrase and Summary

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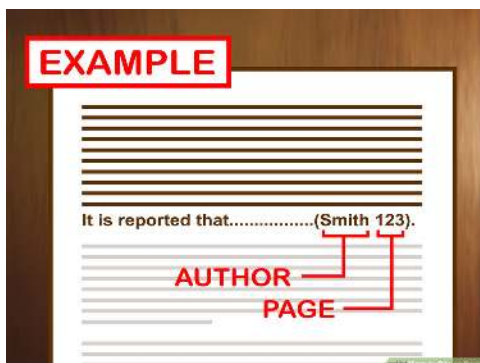
5.1: MLA In-Text Citations

Because the use of in-text citations will be so integral to your writing processes, being able to instantly craft correct citations and identify incorrect citations will save you time during writing and will help you avoid having unnecessary points taken off for citation errors.

Here is the standard correct in-text citation style according to MLA guidelines:

“Quotation” (Author’s Last Name Page Number).

Take a moment to carefully consider the placement of the parts and punctuation of this in-text citation. Note that there is no punctuation indicating the end of a sentence inside of the quotation marks—closing punctuation should instead follow the parentheses. There is also no punctuation between the author’s last name and the page number inside of the parentheses. The misplacement of these simple punctuation marks is one of the most common errors students make when crafting in-text citations.



Include the right information in the in-text citation. Every time you reference material in your paper, you must tell the reader the name of the author whose information you are citing. You must include a page number that tells the reader where, in the source, they can find this information. The most basic structure for an in-text citation looks like this: (Smith 123).

So, let’s say we have the following quote, which comes from page 100 of Elizabeth Gaskell’s *North and South*: “Margaret had never spoken of Helstone since she left it.”^[1]

The following examples show **incorrect** MLA formatting:

“Margaret had never spoken of Helstone since she left it.” (Gaskell 100)	<i>Incorrect because the period falls within the quotation marks</i>
“Margaret had never spoken of Helstone since she left it” (Gaskell, 100).	<i>Incorrect because of the comma separating the author’s last name and the page number</i>
“Margaret had never spoken of Helstone since she left it” (Elizabeth Gaskell 100).	<i>Incorrect because the author’s full name is used instead of just her last name</i>
“Margaret had never spoken of Helstone since she left it” (<i>North and South</i> 100).	<i>Incorrect because the title of the work appears, rather than the author’s last name; the title should only be used if no author name is provided</i>

The following example shows **correct** MLA formatting:

“Margaret had never spoken of Helstone since she left it” (Gaskell 100).

However, there are exceptions to the above citation guideline. Consider the following format of an in-text citation, which is also formed correctly.

Elizabeth Gaskell’s narrator makes it clear that “Margaret had never spoken of Helstone since she left it” (100).

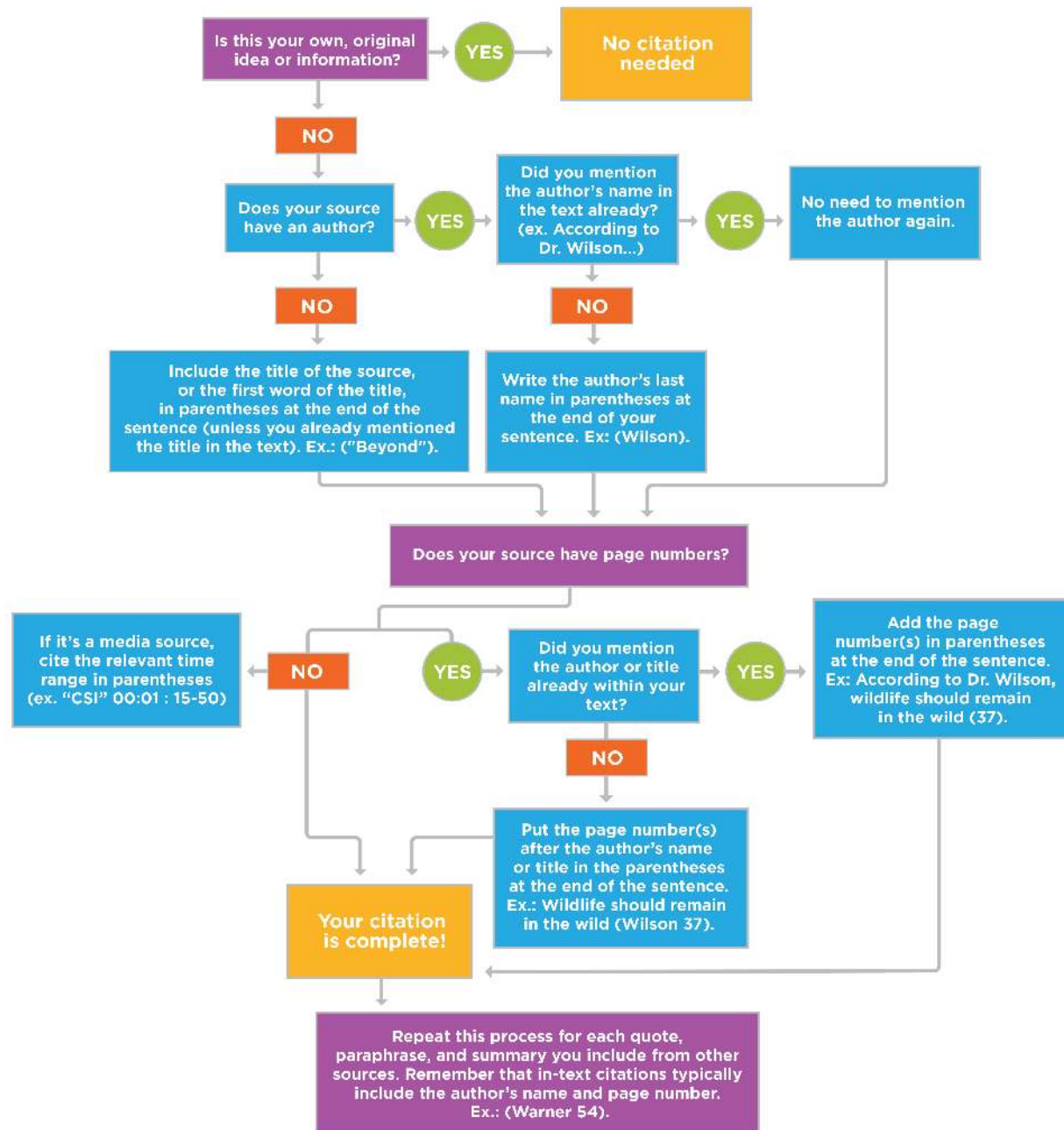
Do you notice the difference between this citation format and the format of the first example? Unlike the first example, this citation does not list the author’s last name inside the parentheses. This is because the last name is included in quotation’s introduction, which makes the identity of the author clear to the reader. Including the author’s last name again inside of the parenthesis would be thus redundant and is not required for MLA citation.

The same rule about inclusion of the author's last name applies for paraphrased information, as well, as shown in the following example:

Elizabeth Gaskell's narrator makes it clear that her protagonist does not speak of her home once she is in Milton (100).

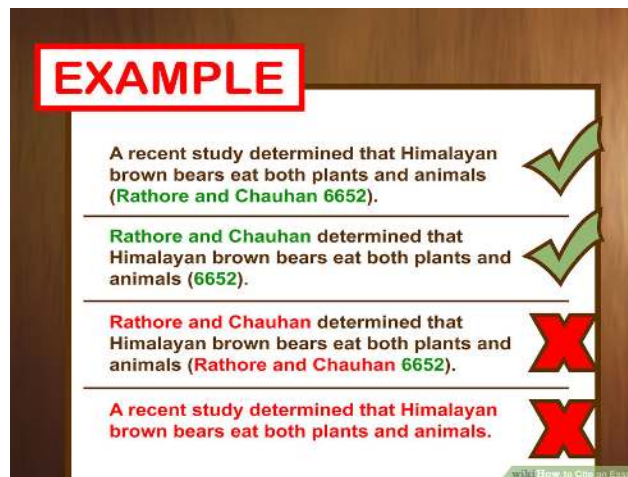
In this paraphrase, the author's last name precedes the paraphrased material, but as in the case of quotation integration, if the author's last name is not described in the paraphrase then it is required inside of the parentheses before the page number.

When and How to Create MLA In-Text Citations



Accessible options for above graphic: Text description for screen readers: [Section 16: Accessible Content: MLA In-Text Citations](#) and PDF: [When and How to create an MLA in-text citation](#).

Being more compliant with MLA in-text citation guidelines will become easier if you review these examples and the citation rules on which they rely.



In-text citations are often parenthetical, meaning you add information to the end of a sentence in parentheses. But if you include that necessary information in the language of the sentence itself, you should not include the parenthetical citation. This example shows you proper uses of in-text citations.

1. Gaskell, Elizabeth. North and South. Oxford UP, 1973. ↩

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5.2: When to Quote and When to Paraphrase

“When to Quote and When to Paraphrase” was written by Brianna Jerman

Academic writing requires authors to connect information from outside sources to their own ideas in order to establish credibility and produce an effective argument.

Sometimes, the rules surrounding source integration and plagiarism may seem confusing, so many new writers err on the side of caution by using the simplest form of integration: direct quotation. However, using direct quotes is not always the best way to use a source. Paraphrasing or summarizing a text is sometimes a more effective means of supporting a writer’s argument than directly quoting. Taking into consideration the purpose of their own writing and the purpose of utilizing the outside source, authors should seek to vary the ways in which they work sources into their own writing.

Paraphrasing and quoting are two of the three ways an author can integrate sources. The two methods are closely related, and therefore, can sometimes be confused with one another. Quoting borrows the exact wording used in a source and is indicated by placing quotes around the borrowed material. Paraphrasing, on the other hand, borrows an idea found in a shorter passage but communicates this idea using different words and word order. While it is acceptable to loosely follow a similar structure, paraphrasing requires more than simply changing a few of the original words to synonyms. Both paraphrasing and directly quoting have their merit, but they should be used at different times for different purposes. An author chooses to use one of these strategies depending on why the source is being used and what information the source provides.

When to Paraphrase

Paraphrasing provides an author the opportunity to tailor the passage for the purpose of his or her own essay, which cannot always be done when using a direct quote. Paraphrasing should be used to

- Further explain or simplify a passage that may be difficult to understand. It could be that the topic, such as the process of extracting stem cells, is particularly difficult to follow, or that the author has used language that further complicates the topic. In such situations, paraphrasing allows an author to clarify or simplify a passage so the audience can better understand the idea.
- Establish the credibility of the author. In connection to the above point, paraphrasing a complicated passage can help the author establish trust with his or her audience. If an author directly quotes a difficult passage without analysis or further explanation, it may appear that he or she does not understand the idea. Paraphrasing not only clarifies the idea in the passage but also illustrates that the writer, since he or she can articulate this difficult message to the reader, is knowledgeable about the topic and should be trusted.
- Maintain the flow of the writing. Each author has a unique voice, and using direct quotes can interrupt this voice. Too many quotes can make an essay sound choppy and difficult to follow. Paraphrasing can help communicate an important idea in a passage or source without interrupting the flow of the essay.
- Eliminate less relevant information. Since paraphrasing is written using the author’s own words, he or she can be more selective in what information from a passage should be included or omitted. While an author should not manipulate a passage unnecessarily, paraphrasing allows an author to leave out unrelated details that would have been part of a direct quote.
- Communicate relevant statistics and numerical data. A lot of times, sources offer statistical information about a topic that an author may find necessary to developing his or her own argument. For example, statistics about the percentage of mothers who work more than one job may be useful to explaining how the economy has affected children rearing practices. Directly quoting statistics such as this should be avoided.

When to Quote

Direct quotes should be used sparingly, but when they are used, they can be a powerful rhetorical tool. As a rule, avoid using long quotes when possible, especially those longer than three lines. When quotes are employed, they should be used to

- Provide indisputable evidence of an incredible claim. Directly quoting a source can show the audience exactly what the source says so there is not suspicion of misinterpretation on the author’s part.
- Communicate an idea that is stated in a particularly striking or unique way. A passage should be quoted if the source explains an idea in the best way possible or in a way that cannot be reworded. Additionally, quoting should be used when the original passage is particularly moving or striking.
- Serve as a passage for analysis. If an author is going to analyze the quote or passage, the exact words should be included in the essay either before or following the author’s analysis.

- Provide direct evidence for or proof of an author's own claim. An author can use a direct quote as evidence for a claim he or she makes. The direct quote should follow the author's claim and a colon, which indicates that the following passage is evidence of the statement that precedes it.
- Support or clarify information you've already reported from a source. Similar to the above principle, an author can use a direct quote as further evidence or to emphasize a claim found in the source. This strategy should be used when an idea from a source is particularly important to an author's own work.
- Provide a definition of a new or unfamiliar term or phrase. When using a term that is used or coined by the source's author or that is unfamiliar to most people, use direct quotes to show the exact meaning of the phrase or word according to the original source.

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5.3: Quotations

What this handout is about

Used effectively, quotations can provide important pieces of evidence and lend fresh voices and perspectives to your narrative. Used ineffectively, however, quotations clutter your text and interrupt the flow of your argument. This handout will help you decide when and how to quote like a pro.

When should I quote?



Figure 5.3.1

Use quotations at strategically selected moments. You have probably been told by teachers to provide as much evidence as possible in support of your thesis. But packing your paper with quotations will not necessarily strengthen your argument. The majority of your paper should still be your original ideas in your own words (after all, it's your paper). And quotations are only one type of evidence: well-balanced papers may also make use of paraphrases, data, and statistics. The types of evidence you use will depend in part on the conventions of the discipline or audience for which you are writing. For example, papers analyzing literature may rely heavily on direct quotations of the text, while papers in the social sciences may have more paraphrasing, data, and statistics than quotations.

1. Discussing specific arguments or ideas.

Sometimes, in order to have a clear, accurate discussion of the ideas of others, you need to quote those ideas word for word. Suppose you want to challenge the following statement made by John Doe, a well-known historian:

“At the beginning of World War Two, almost all Americans assumed the war would end quickly.”

If it is especially important that you formulate a counterargument to this claim, then you might wish to quote the part of the statement that you find questionable and establish a dialogue between yourself and John Doe:

Historian John Doe has argued that in 1941 “almost all Americans assumed the war would end quickly” (Doe 223). Yet during the first six months of U.S. involvement, the wives and mothers of soldiers often noted in their diaries their fear that the war would drag on for years.

2. Giving added emphasis to a particularly authoritative source on your topic.

There will be times when you want to highlight the words of a particularly important and authoritative source on your topic. For example, suppose you were writing an essay about the differences between the lives of male and female slaves in the U.S. South. One of your most provocative sources is a narrative written by a former slave, Harriet Jacobs. It would then be appropriate to quote some of Jacobs's words:

Harriet Jacobs, a former slave from North Carolina, published an autobiographical slave narrative in 1861. She exposed the hardships of both male and female slaves but ultimately concluded that “slavery is terrible for men; but it is far more terrible for women.”

In this particular example, Jacobs is providing a crucial first-hand perspective on slavery. Thus, her words deserve more exposure than a paraphrase could provide. Jacobs is quoted in Harriet A. Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, ed. Jean Fagan Yellin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

3. Analyzing how others use language.

This scenario is probably most common in literature and linguistics courses, but you might also find yourself writing about the use of language in history and social science classes. If the use of language is your primary topic, then you will obviously need to quote

users of that language.

Examples of topics that might require the frequent use of quotations include:

Southern colloquial expressions in William Faulkner's Light in August

Ms. and the creation of a language of female empowerment

A comparison of three British poets and their use of rhyme

4. Spicing up your prose.



Figure 5.3.2

In order to lend variety to your prose, you may wish to quote a source with particularly vivid language. All quotations, however, must closely relate to your topic and arguments. Do not insert a quotation solely for its literary merits.

One example of a quotation that adds flair:

Calvin Coolidge's tendency to fall asleep became legendary. As H. L. Mencken commented in the *American Mercury* in 1933, "Nero fiddled, but Coolidge only snored."

How do I set up and follow up a quotation?

Once you've carefully selected the quotations that you want to use, your next job is to weave those quotations into your text. The words that precede and follow a quotation are just as important as the quotation itself. You can think of each quote as the filling in a sandwich: it may be tasty on its own, but it's messy to eat without some bread on either side of it. Your words can serve as the "bread" that helps readers digest each quote easily. Below are four guidelines for setting up and following up quotations.

In illustrating these four steps, we'll use as our example, Franklin Roosevelt's famous quotation, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

1. Provide a context for each quotation.

Do not rely on quotations to tell your story for you. It is your responsibility to provide your reader with a context for the quotation. The context should set the basic scene for when, possibly where, and under what circumstances the quotation was spoken or written. So, in providing a context for our above example, you might write:

When Franklin Roosevelt gave his inaugural speech on March 4, 1933, he addressed a nation weakened and demoralized by economic depression.

2. Attribute each quotation to its source.

Tell your reader who is speaking. Here is a good test: try reading your text aloud. Could your reader determine without looking at your paper where your quotations begin? If not, you need to attribute the quote more noticeably.

Avoid getting into the "he/she said" attribution rut! There are many other ways to attribute quotes besides this construction. Here are a few alternative verbs, usually followed by "that":

add	remark	exclaim
announce	reply	state
comment	respond	estimate
write	point out	predict
argue	suggest	propose
declare	criticize	proclaim

note	complain	opine
observe	think	note

Different reporting verbs are preferred by different disciplines, so pay special attention to these in your disciplinary reading. If you're unfamiliar with the meanings of any of these words or others you find in your reading, consult a dictionary before using them.

3. Explain the significance of the quotation.

Once you've inserted your quotation, along with its context and attribution, don't stop! Your reader still needs your assessment of why the quotation holds significance for your paper. Using our Roosevelt example, if you were writing a paper on the first one-hundred days of FDR's administration, you might follow the quotation by linking it to that topic:

With that message of hope and confidence, the new president set the stage for his next one-hundred days in office and helped restore the faith of the American people in their government.

4. Provide a citation for the quotation.

All quotations, just like all paraphrases, require a formal citation. For more details about particular citation formats, see the [UNC Library's citation tutorial](#). In general, you should remember one rule of thumb: Place the parenthetical reference or footnote/endnote number after—not within—the closed quotation mark.

Roosevelt declared, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself" (Roosevelt, Public Papers 11).

Roosevelt declared, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."¹

How much should I quote?

As few words as possible. Remember, your paper should primarily contain your own words, so quote only the most pithy and memorable parts of sources. Here are three guidelines for selecting quoted material judiciously.

1. Excerpt fragments.

Sometimes, you should quote short fragments, rather than whole sentences. Suppose you interviewed Jane Doe about her reaction to John F. Kennedy's assassination. She commented:

"I couldn't believe it. It was just unreal and so sad. It was just unbelievable. I had never experienced such denial. I don't know why I felt so strongly. Perhaps it was because JFK was more to me than a president. He represented the hopes of young people everywhere."

You could quote all of Jane's comments, but her first three sentences are fairly redundant. You might instead want to quote Jane when she arrives at the ultimate reason for her strong emotions:

Jane Doe grappled with grief and disbelief. She had viewed JFK, not just as a national figurehead, but as someone who "represented the hopes of young people everywhere."

2. Excerpt those fragments carefully!

Quoting the words of others carries a big responsibility. Misquoting misrepresents the ideas of others. Here's a classic example of a misquote:

John Adams has often been quoted as having said: "This would be the best of all possible worlds if there were no religion in it."

John Adams did, in fact, write the above words. But if you see those words in context, the meaning changes entirely. Here's the rest of the quotation:

Twenty times, in the course of my late reading, have I been on the point of breaking out, 'this would be the best of all possible worlds, if there were no religion in it!!!!' But in this exclamation, I should have been as fanatical as Bryant or Cleverly. Without religion, this world would be something not fit to be mentioned in public company—I mean hell.

As you can see from this example, context matters!

This example is from Paul F. Boller, Jr. and John George, *They Never Said It: A Book of Fake Quotes, Misquotes, and Misleading Attributions* (Oxford University Press, 1989).

3. Use block quotations sparingly.

There may be times when you need to quote long passages. However, you should use block quotations only when you fear that omitting any words will destroy the integrity of the passage. If that passage exceeds four lines (some sources say five), then set it off as a block quotation.

Here are a few general tips for setting off your block quotation—to be sure you are handling block quotes correctly in papers for different academic disciplines, check the index of the citation style guide you are using:

1. Set up a block quotation with your own words followed by a colon.
2. Indent. You normally indent 4-5 spaces for the start of a paragraph. When setting up a block quotation, indent the entire paragraph once from the left-hand margin.
3. Single space or double space within the block quotation, depending on the style guidelines of your discipline (MLA, CSE, APA, Chicago, etc.).
4. Do not use quotation marks at the beginning or end of the block quote—the indentation is what indicates that it's a quote.
5. Place parenthetical citation according to your style guide (usually after the period following the last sentence of the quote).
6. Follow up a block quotation with your own words.

So, using the above example from John Adams, here's how you might include a block quotation:

After reading several doctrinally rigid tracts, John Adams recalled the zealous ranting of his former teacher, Joseph Cleverly, and minister, Lemuel Bryant. He expressed his ambivalence toward religion in an 1817 letter to Thomas Jefferson:

Twenty times, in the course of my late reading, have I been on the point of breaking out, 'this would be the best of all possible worlds, if there were no religion in it!!!!' But in this exclamation, I should have been as fanatical as Bryant or Cleverly. Without religion, this world would be something not fit to be mentioned in public company—I mean hell.

Adams clearly appreciated religion, even if he often questioned its promotion.

How do I combine quotation marks with other punctuation marks?

It can be confusing when you start combining quotation marks with other punctuation marks. You should consult a style manual for complicated situations, but the following two rules apply to most cases:

1) Keep periods and commas within quotation marks.

So, for example:

According to Professor Jones, Lincoln “feared the spread of slavery,” but many of his aides advised him to “watch and wait.”

In the above example, both the comma and period were enclosed in the quotation marks. The main exception to this rule involves the use of internal citations, which always precede the last period of the sentence. For example:

According to Professor Jones, Lincoln “feared the spread of slavery,” but many of his aides advised him to “watch and wait” (Jones 143).

Note, however, that the period remains inside the quotation marks when your citation style involved superscript footnotes or endnotes. For example:

According to Professor Jones, Lincoln “feared the spread of slavery,” but many of his aides advised him to “watch and wait.”²

2) Place all other punctuation marks (colons, semicolons, exclamation marks, question marks) outside the quotation marks, except when they were part of the original quotation.

Take a look at the following examples:

The student wrote that the U. S. Civil War “finally ended around 1900”!

The coach yelled, “Run!”

In the first example, the author placed the exclamation point outside the quotation mark because she added it herself to emphasize the absurdity of the student's comment. The student's original comment had not included an exclamation mark. In the second example, the exclamation mark remains within the quotation mark because it is indicating the excited tone in which the coach yelled the command. Thus, the exclamation mark is considered to be part of the original quotation.

How do I indicate quotations within quotations?

If you are quoting a passage that contains a quotation, then you use single quotation marks for the internal quotation. Quite rarely, you quote a passage that has a quotation within a quotation. In that rare instance, you would use double quotation marks for the second internal quotation.

Here's an example of a quotation within a quotation:

In "The Emperor's New Clothes," Hans Christian Andersen wrote, "'But the Emperor has nothing on at all!' cried a little child."

Remember to consult your style guide to determine how to properly cite a quote within a quote.

When do I use those three dots (. . .)?

Whenever you want to leave out material from within a quotation, you need to use an ellipsis, which is a series of three periods, each of which should be preceded and followed by a space. So, an ellipsis in this sentence would look like . . . this. There are a few rules to follow when using ellipses:

1. Be sure that you don't fundamentally change the meaning of the quotation by omitting material.

Take a look at the following example: "The Writing Center is located on the UNC campus and serves the entire UNC community."

"The Writing Center . . . serves the entire UNC community."

The reader's understanding of the Writing Center's mission to serve the UNC community is not affected by omitting the information about its location.

2. Do not use ellipses at the beginning or ending of quotations, unless it's important for the reader to know that the quotation was truncated.

For example, using the above example, you would NOT need an ellipsis in either of these situations:

"The Writing Center is located on the UNC campus . . ."

The Writing Center " . . . serves the entire UNC community."

3. Use punctuation marks in combination with ellipses when removing material from the end of sentences or clauses.

For example, if you take material from the end of a sentence, keep the period in as usual.

"The boys ran to school, forgetting their lunches and books. Even though they were out of breath, they made it on time."

"The boys ran to school. . . . Even though they were out of breath, they made it on time."

Likewise, if you excerpt material at the end of clause that ends in a comma, retain the comma.

"The red car came to a screeching halt that was heard by nearby pedestrians, but no one was hurt."

"The red car came to a screeching halt . . . , but no one was hurt."

Is it ever okay to insert my own words or change words in a quotation?



Figure 5.3.3

Sometimes it is necessary for clarity and flow to alter a word or words within a quotation. You should make such changes rarely. In order to alert your reader to the changes you've made, you should always bracket the altered words. Here are a few examples of situations when you might need brackets.

1. Changing verb tense or pronouns in order to be consistent with the rest of the sentence.

Suppose you were quoting a woman who, when asked about her experiences immigrating to the United States, commented “nobody understood me.” You might write:

Esther Hansen felt that when she came to the United States “nobody understood [her].”

In the above example, you’ve changed “me” to “her” in order to keep the entire passage in third person. However, you could avoid the need for this change by simply rephrasing:

“Nobody understood me,” recalled Danish immigrant Esther Hansen.

2. Including supplemental information that your reader needs in order to understand the quotation.

For example, if you were quoting someone’s nickname, you might want to let your reader know the full name of that person in brackets.

“The principal of the school told Billy [William Smith] that his contract would be terminated.”

Similarly, if a quotation referenced an event with which the reader might be unfamiliar, you could identify that event in brackets.

“We completely revised our political strategies after the strike [of 1934].”

3. Indicating the use of nonstandard grammar or spelling.

In rare situations, you may quote from a text that has nonstandard grammar, spelling, or word choice. In such cases, you may want to insert *[sic]*, which means “thus” or “so” in Latin. Using *[sic]* alerts your reader to the fact that this nonstandard language is not the result of a typo on your part. Always italicize “sic” and enclose it in brackets. There is no need to put a period at the end. Here’s an example of when you might use *[sic]*:

Twelve-year-old Betsy Smith wrote in her diary, “Father is afraid that he will be guilty of beach *[sic]* of contract.”

Here *[sic]* indicates that the original author wrote “beach of contract,” not breach of contract, which is the accepted terminology.

4. Do not overuse brackets!

For example, it is not necessary to bracket capitalization changes that you make at the beginning of sentences. For example, suppose you were going to use part of this quotation:

“We never looked back, but the memory of our army days remained with us the rest of our lives.”

If you wanted to begin a sentence with an excerpt from the middle of this quotation, there would be no need to bracket your capitalization changes.

“The memory of our army days remained with us the rest of our lives,” commented Joe Brown, a World War II veteran.

Not

“[T]he memory of our army days remained with us the rest of our lives,” commented Joe Brown, a World War II veteran.

Works consulted

We consulted these works while writing the original version of this handout. This is not a comprehensive list of resources on the handout’s topic, and we encourage you to do your own research to find the latest publications on this topic. Please do not use this list as a model for the format of your own reference list, as it may not match the citation style you are using. For guidance on formatting citations, please see the [**UNC Library’s citation tutorial**](#).

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5.4: Paraphrase and Summary

Learning Objective

- Differentiate among paraphrase, summary, and quotation

There are two ways of integrating source material into your writing other than directly quoting from it: paraphrase and summary. Let's talk about how to define and identify each method.

What Does Paraphrase Look Like?

Consider the following passage by Thoreau:

Most men, even in this comparatively free country, through mere ignorance and mistake, are so occupied with the factitious cares and superfluously coarse labors of life that its finer fruits cannot be plucked by them. Their fingers, from excessive toil, are too clumsy and tremble too much for that. Actually, the laboring man has not leisure for a true integrity day by day; he cannot afford to sustain the manliest relations to men; his labor would be depreciated in the market.

Paraphrases should begin by making it clear that the information to come is from your source. If you are using MLA format, you should include the author's last name and the page number of the paraphrased content in a parenthetical citation.

To paraphrase the passage above, you might begin as follows:

Even though Thoreau praised the virtues of the intellectual life, he did not consider... (Thoreau 100).

Paraphrases may sometimes include brief quotations, but most of the paraphrase should be in your own words.

What might a paraphrase of the Thoreau passage look like? Below is one way a writer might paraphrase it:

In his text, *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*, Henry David Thoreau points to the incongruity of free men becoming enslaved and limited by constant labor and worry. Using the metaphor of a fruit to represent the pleasures of a thoughtful life, Thoreau suggests that men have become so traumatized by constant labor that their hands—as representative of their minds—have become unable to pick the “finer fruits” available to a less burdened life even when that fruit becomes available to them (110).

Note that the paragraph above is almost exactly the same length as the original. It's also important to note that the paraphrased passage has a different structure and significant changes in wording. The main ideas are the same, but the student has paraphrased effectively by putting the information into her own words.

What are the benefits of paraphrasing? The paraphrase accomplishes three goals:

1. Like the summary, it contextualizes the information (who said it, when, and where).
2. It restates all the supporting points used by Thoreau to develop the idea that man is hurt by focusing too much on labor.
3. The writer uses his or her own words for most of the paraphrase, allowing the writer to maintain a strong voice while sharing important information from the source.

Paraphrasing is likely the most common way you will integrate your source information. Quoting should be minimal in most research papers. Paraphrasing allows you to integrate sources without losing your voice as a writer to those sources. Paraphrasing can be tricky, however. You really have to make changes to the wording. Changing a few words here and there doesn't count as a paraphrase, and including exact phrases from the source without putting them in quotation marks can get you into trouble with plagiarism.

Do I get this?

Paraphrasing is a skill that takes time to develop. One way of becoming familiar with paraphrasing is by examining successful and unsuccessful attempts at paraphrasing. Read the quote below from page 179 of Howard Gardner's book titled *Multiple Intelligences* and then examine the two attempts at paraphrasing that follow.

“America today has veered too far in the direction of formal testing without adequate consideration of the costs and limitations of an exclusive emphasis on that approach.”^[1]

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What Does Summary Look Like?

Summarizing involves condensing the main idea of a source into a much shorter overview. A summary outlines a source's most important points and general position. When summarizing a source, it is a good idea to use a citation to give credit to the original

author. You should reference the author or source in the appropriate citation method at the end of the summary.

How to Construct a Summary

- Decide what part of the source is most relevant to your argument.
- Pick out the most important sentences in that part of the source. In most cases, you'll focus on the main points.
- Paraphrase those sentences. If they include any important or memorable phrases, quote those in your paraphrases. List the paraphrased sentences in the order they occur in the original.
- Add any other information that readers might need to understand how your paraphrased sentences connect to one another.
- Revise the list so that it reads not like a list but like a paragraph.

How to Mix Quotation with Summary

A long summary can make readers feel that you and they are too distant from an important source. So when you write a summary as long as half a page, look for memorable phrases that you can quote within your summary.

“Colomb and Williams emphasize that drafting is “an act of discovery” that can fuel a writer’s creative thinking. They acknowledge that some writers have to draft carefully and stick closely to their outlines, but they advise writers to draft as freely and as openly as they can. They encourage even slow and careful drafters to be open to new ideas and surprises and not to be limited by what they do before drafting. They still stress the value of steady work that follows a plan: for example, writing a little bit every day rather than all at once “in a fit of desperate inspiration.” But they show writers how to make the best of a plan while hoping that you will “discover what your storyboard has missed.”^[2]

When you add a few quotations to your summary, you seem a more lively writer. You give readers an idea of your source without quoting so much that your paper reads like a cut-and-paste job. If you have pages that are mostly summary and paraphrase, add a few notable quotations that will liven up your writing.

-
1. Gardner, Howard. Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons in Theory and Practice. BasicBooks, 2006 ↵
 2. Kate L. Turabian. A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, Seventh Edition : Chicago Style for Students and Researchers. Revised by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, and University of Chicago Press Editorial Staff. (University of Chicago Press, 2007), 83-7. ↵

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- Quote Sandwich, from Chapter 5: Critical Thinking, Source Evaluations, and Analyzing Academic Writing. **Authored by:** Denise Snee, Kristin Houlton, Nancy Heckel. Edited by Kimberly Jacobs. **Located at:** http://lgdata.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com/docs/679/734444/Snee_2012_Research_Analysis_and_Writing.pdf. **Project:** Research, Writing, and Analysis. **License:** [CC BY-NC-SA: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike](#)
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- How to Summarize Accurately, section on summary. **Located at:** <http://www.groundsforargument.org/drupal/evidence/sidebar/summarize>. **Project:** Grounds for Argument. **License:** [CC BY-NC-SA: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike](#)

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

6: Annotated Bibliography

[6.1: Annotated Bibliographies - An Illustrated Guide](#)

[6.2: Transitions- Developing Relationships between Ideas](#)

[6.3: Credibility Markers](#)

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6.1: Annotated Bibliographies - An Illustrated Guide

A quick tour of the what, why, and how of an [annotated bibliography which you can download](#). Created by Daniel Brown to support information literacy instruction at Lincoln Memorial University.

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6.2: Transitions- Developing Relationships between Ideas

Once you have a main idea, and supporting ideas, how can you be sure that your readers will understand the relationships between them? How are the ideas connected? One way to emphasize these relationships and logical connections is using **clear transitions** between ideas as illustrated in **Figure 7.4**.

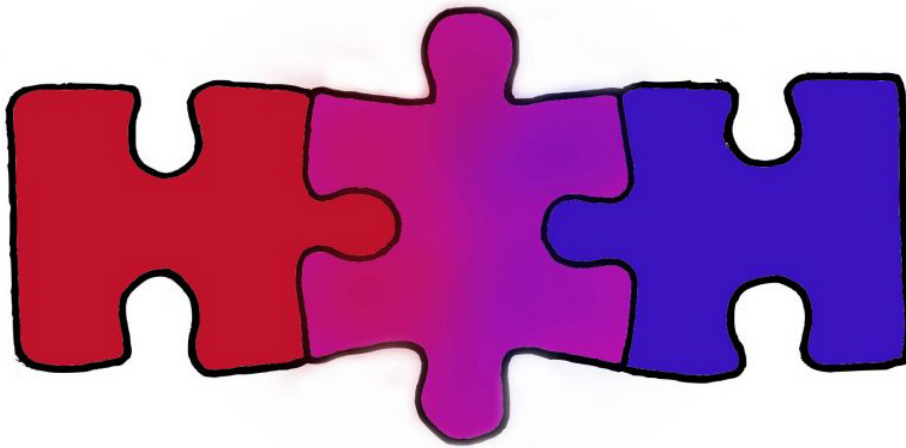
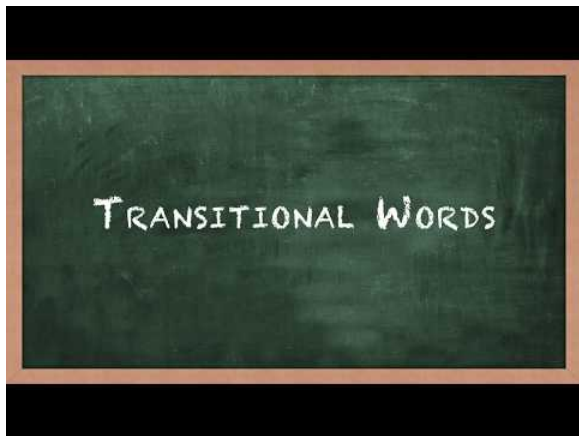


Figure 7.4: Transitioning between ideas

Think of transitions as segues that help the reader **move from one idea to another**. Rather than leaping to a new idea, a transition weaves thoughts together. Transitions signal the order of ideas, highlight relationships, unify concepts, let readers know what's coming next, or remind them about what's already been covered. When instructors or peers comment that your writing is choppy, abrupt, or needs to flow better, you might need to work on building some better transitions into your writing. If a reader comments that they are not sure how something relates to your thesis or main idea, a transition is probably the right tool for the job. You should build solid transitions during the drafting phase. See **Film Clip 7.1** about transitional words.



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: pb.libretexts.org/nursingwriting/?p=233

Film Clip 7.1: Transitional words [1:23]

Sentence-level transitions

Transitions between sentences often use **connecting words** to emphasize relationships between one sentence and another. See **Table 7.3** for examples of how to show connections between ideas in adjacent sentences.

Table 7.3: Examples of showing connections between sentences.

Showing connections	Examples
---------------------	----------

Words that indicate similarity include: also, similarly, and likewise.	In my practice, I have observed nurses demonstrate empathy by engaging in active listening with clients. <i>In the same way</i> , I have practiced empathetic behaviours by acknowledging clients' feelings and probing further about their emotions.
Words that indicate contrast include: despite, on the other hand, in contrast, and yet.	Mortecai (2019) found that handwashing is vital to reducing nosocomial infections. <i>However</i> , Barton (2020) and Latai and Leung (2020) have indicated that only 75% of healthcare providers effectively practice hand hygiene.
Words that indicate examples include: for instance, for example, specifically, and to illustrate.	The cost of college tuition is higher than ever, so students are becoming increasingly motivated to keep costs as low as possible. <i>For example</i> , some students are renting books instead of buying books.
Words that indicate cause and effect include: therefore, so, and thus.	Davaine notes that sugar leads to ill-health effects. <i>Therefore</i> , it is important to examine sugar consumption and read food labels.
Words that indicate additional support include: also, besides, equally important, and additionally.	Researchers have noted that sugar leads to ill-health effects. <i>Equally important</i> , it has been noted that foods high in saturated fats increase risks for cardiovascular disease.

Paragraph- or section-level transitions

It's important to consider how to emphasize the **relationships not just between sentences but also between paragraphs**. See **Table 7.4** for strategies to help you show your readers how the main ideas of your paragraphs relate to each other and also to your paper's main idea/thesis.

Table 7.4: Examples of showing connections between paragraphs

Showing connections	Examples
Signposts are words or phrases that indicate where you are in the process of organizing an idea. They might indicate that you are introducing a new concept, summarizing an idea, or concluding your thoughts. They may include words like: first, then, next, finally, in sum, and in conclusion.	The first problem with this practice is... The next thing to consider is... Some final thoughts about this topic are...
As you conclude a paragraph, you may want to give a hint about what's coming in the next paragraph or section. Forward-looking sentences at the end of paragraphs can help provide a transition and prepare your readers for the next paragraphs. Don't leave your readers hanging by introducing a completely new or unrelated topic.	Walking has positive effects on physical health, but it also offers other benefits.
Rather than concluding a paragraph by looking forward, you might instead begin a paragraph by looking back. Backward-looking sentences at the beginning of paragraphs can be helpful as a review.	While the physical benefits of walking are great, the benefits of walking to mental health cannot be overlooked.

A word of caution

Be careful not to **overuse transitions** in your writing – your readers will quickly find them tiring or obvious. Try to find creative ways to let your readers know where they are situated within the ideas presented in your writing. Here is an example of the overuse of transitions:

Sugar is a common additive in many foods. Historically, it was socialized as a luxury food item (let them eat cake!). Today, sugar is highly pervasive. Similarly, it is also highly addictive, as research has demonstrated tolerances to sugar and the desire to consume

more, the more one eats. Consequently, we are seeing ill-health effects from the overconsumption of sugar. And yet, little is being done to limit sugar uptake.

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6.3: Credibility Markers

Learning Objective

- Differentiate among the markers of credibility in writing

The table below will help you see the application of different markers of credibility. Think about your strategy for maintaining credibility and authority in your own writing; you will most likely rely on all four markers in some combination.

Marker	Explanation	Application
Signal Phrases	Signal phrases point the readers to the information from a source. Good signal phrases can highlight the credentials of an author or source.	For example, notice how in the following example, the writer establishes the source's strong credentials: John Smith, the Distinguished Professor of Economics at the University of Northern Mississippi, argues that the senator's flat tax plan is regressive.
Complete, Accurate Citations	Citations help demonstrate that you are trustworthy as an author and provide a clear way for a reader to verify your evidence.	Each part of a citation provides a piece of searchable information. For example, a reader can search for the author's name to find other things that he or she has written. If readers search for John Smith, they will find that he has been publishing articles on taxation for 45 years.
Demonstration of Relevance	Critical thinking and reasoning demonstrate to your reader the significance of your evidence and enhance your credibility.	Don't assume that your reader can figure out why you are using a particular source. It's your job as the writer to explain your reasoning. John Smith's article may be highly technical and difficult to understand. Your job is to use paraphrase and summary to make the ideas accessible to your readers and to show them why those ideas are important.
Supporting Evidence	Evidence is required for any claim. The more relevant evidence that you include, with accurate citation, the more credible your writing will be.	Even if John Smith is a distinguished professor of economics, his word alone isn't enough to prove your claim about the senator's flat tax plan. You must support your argument with specific evidence.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

7: Academic Voice and Synthesis

7.1: Using Multiple Sources

7.2: Bringing Sources into the Conversation

7.3: Word Choice

7.4: Tone, Language, and Appeal

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7.1: Using Multiple Sources

Sources are a great help for understanding a topic more deeply. But what about when sources don't quite agree with one another, or challenge what you have experienced yourself?

This is where your skill of **synthesis** comes into play, as a writer. Synthesizing includes comparison and contrast, but also allows you to combine multiple perspectives on a topic to reach a deeper understanding.

This video explains the process of synthesis in action.



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7.2: Bringing Sources into the Conversation

Learning Objective

- Identify the five components of the “source sandwich”

A good way to begin thinking about how to integrate source material into a paper is to consider how we integrate sources into a conversation. When you’re discussing a topic in person with a few friends, you might make references to outside sources with phrases like these:

“When I was watching the news, I heard them say that . . . I read in the newspaper that . . . John told me that . . .”

Notice how we automatically shape our sentences to work source references into the flow of conversation. Think about this next time you try to work a source into a piece of writing: if you were speaking this aloud in conversation, how would you introduce the material to your listeners? What information would you give them to help them understand who the author was and why his or her views were worth referencing? After giving the information, how would you then link it back to the point you were trying to make? Just as you would do this in a conversation if you found it necessary to refer to an outside source, you also need to do this in your writing.

Whether you use a direct quotation, a summary, or a paraphrase, it is important to distinguish source material from your own ideas and to explain how the cited source fits into your argument. You can think of this process as a sandwich with multiple parts. You’ll want to: transition into and introduce the source, use a signal phrase to actually move into the material from the source, provide a citation that can be easily connected to the full citation material in your bibliography or works cited list, and explain how this material fits into your argument. This pattern, or convention, of source integration is sometimes called a “source sandwich.” An illustration of the “source sandwich” appears below.

The Source sandwich

 Transition and Introduction	In order to use a new source effectively, you should begin the paragraph in which you will use it with a clear transition from the paragraph that precedes it. This transition should serve both to integrate the new material with the rest of your paper and introduce the new source material.
 Signal Phrase	A signal phrase is an action verb phrase that connects the source’s author with its content.
 Quotation, Paraphrase or Summary	The source’s content comes after the signal phrase. This content can be summary, paraphrase, or direct quotation.
 Citation	The in-text citation connects the body of your paper with the references page and identifies the source in relation to the references page.

Explanation of the material's relevance

The explanation of the source content's relevance is your synthesis or analysis of the content and an illustration that shows how it relates to your own work.

Use the source sandwich convention to integrate material from sources into your own writing so that your readers will understand the material's importance and purpose. The activity below will provide practice in constructing a source sandwich. Read the passage about “mindful me” rooms in elementary schools and answer the questions that follow.

practice

Read the following passage and answer the questions below.

Reflective practice has also started to replace detention in schools across the country. Robert W. Coleman Elementary School is one of the first to adopt this method. As of 2014, this school has had no suspensions. When students fight or misbehave, they are sent to a “mindful me” room instead of the principal's office, and they learn to peacefully solve these conflicts themselves (Khorsandi). Administrators at the school claim to have seen a marked improvement in student behavior. Coleman Principal Carillian Thompson explains, “The mindfulness practices have actually taught the students how to redirect that negative energy into something positive” (Khorsandi). The changes have resulted in more focus on academics and extracurricular activities at Coleman, which has made parents in the district happy. In fact, many parents have switched their thinking from once believing punitive measures are necessary to modify children's behaviors to now seeing reflective practices as meaningful alternatives to detention.

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Use the feedback you got from working through the practice activity to work through the self-check quiz on the next page.
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7.4: Tone, Language, and Appeal

Learning Objectives

- Recognize rhetorical approaches to building common ground
- Evaluate rhetorical approaches to building common ground

You can approach your audience's needs and build common ground using three basic rhetorical approaches: **tone**, **language**, and **appeal**.

Tone

What's the difference between a formal tone and a conversational tone? What about the difference between writing that's conversational and writing that's very rigid? Of the three approaches we cover here, tone may be the most important one: if you choose the wrong tone, you may turn off your audience completely.

Take a look at this example from a student's proposal to create an infographic for senior citizens:

Real Student's Writing

Based on this senior citizen audience, simplicity and authenticity must be key characteristics of the infographic. Its message, presented mainly through visuals, must not only be clear and easy to understand, but it must also be genuine in nature. Caution must be taken to avoid seeming judgmental towards the audience members' digital skills and tendencies.

This student wants to make sure the tone of her document builds good will with her audience. If your audience is made up of senior citizens, you would want to make sure that you aren't patronizing or belittling them about their technical expertise.

Can you think of a situation where your tone didn't match the audience's expectations? As you write an essay, you have to consider the audience's potential reception of your tone. Even if the audience is hypothetical, the only way to ensure that you aren't "tone deaf" is to pay attention to your tone.

Language

Language is closely related to tone. In fact, if you misjudge the appropriate language for your audience, your tone will suffer, too. If you are writing an article for a scientific journal, obviously you would want to make sure to use the technical language appropriate to your subject.

Language has a lot to do with **discourse communities**. Imagine that you work in a car assembly plant. You know your job and enough about the process of car assembly in general to talk to anybody else in the plant about their jobs, as well. You probably have a specialized vocabulary that describes your work process. Now, imagine that you walk into an airplane manufacturing plant. Would you be able to do the same thing? Sure, many of the processes are the same, and you might be able to talk to the workers about the things you have in common. But the vocabulary is different. Workers in the airplane factory talk about different things and have different common knowledge than you do. Each factory is a **discourse community**. When you write, you are participating in a discourse community, and you should use language that matches the expectations of the audience.

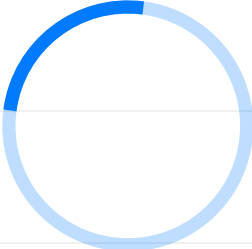
Can you think of a situation where your language didn't match the audience's expectations? If you are an audiologist, for example, you would use different language to explain how a cochlear implant works to the parents of a deaf child than you would to discuss advances in cochlear implant technology with other audiologists.

Appeals

You have already learned about the rhetorical appeals: **ethos**, **pathos**, and **logos**. Match them to their definition in the practice box below:

Review your Knowledge

Match the rhetorical appeal to its definition.

Term to match		Chosen match
Ethos		Choose a match ▼
Pathos		Choose a match ▼
Logos		Choose a match ▼

What do these appeals have to do with finding common ground with an audience? Well, the way you balance ethos, pathos, and logos can vary depending on who your audience is. Think about the scenario below:

You are a scientist who studies climate and polar bear mating habits. You have just completed and published a study that tracks the declining polar bear population with the reduction of ice caps in the Arctic Ocean. You believe the results of this study are important, and you need to explain them to three different audiences.

An audience of **scientists** is primarily interested in your credibility (ethos) and your facts (logos). They want to know more about your methods, how your data was collected, and the accuracy of your study. When you are presenting to this group, you should minimize appeals to emotion, as they could turn off your audience.

An audience of **kindergartners** is primarily interested in big, fluffy polar bears. Thus, you would want to emphasize the appeal to emotion (pathos). Your ethos, or credibility, is important, but in a different way than it is with the scientists. You must express yourself in a way that makes the children feel comfortable with you and makes them trust what you say. Facts are important in every situation, but the kindergartners aren't going to scrutinize your methods.

An audience of **climate change denialist politicians** would generally be very hostile to what you have to say. Playing up your credibility (ethos) may not be very helpful because they already reject the field in which your credibility is rooted. You have to rely heavily on facts (logos) with this audience and demonstrate that your facts are impossible to deny. You also have to rely on emotion (pathos) but in a different way than you do with the kindergartners. This hostile audience is already reacting to you with emotion, so it's important for you to receive that emotional energy and make the best of it.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

8: Research Process

[8.1: What Is Research?](#)

[8.2: Research and Other Types of Source-based Writing](#)

[8.3: The Qualities of a Good Research Question](#)

[8.4: Strategies for Narrowing a Topic](#)

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8.1: What Is Research?



Figure 8.1.1

At its most basic level, research is anything you have to do to find out something you didn't already know. That definition might seem simple and obvious, but it contains some key assumptions that might not be as obvious. Understanding these assumptions is going to be essential to your success in this course (and in your life after college), so I'm going to spell them out here.

First, research is about acquiring new information or new knowledge, which means that it always begins from a gap in your knowledge—that is, something you don't know. More importantly, research is always goal-directed: that is, it always begins from a specific question you need to answer (a specific gap in your body of information that you need to fill) in order to accomplish some particular goal. If you are a very focused, driven person, this will seem obvious to you because you are probably already quite aware of yourself as someone who goes after the information you need in order to accomplish your goals. If you tend to be more laid-back and open to whatever experiences life brings you, you may not be as conscious of yourself as a goal-directed finder of information, but I hope to help you recognize the ways in which research is already embedded in your life.

Research (definition 1) = Anything you have to do to find out something you didn't already know.

Research Question = Your one-sentence statement of the thing-you-don't-know that motivates your research.

Sometimes the answer to your question or the information needed to fill your knowledge gap already exists in exactly the form you need. For example,

1. Does Columbus, Ohio, have a commercial airport?

The answer to this turns out to be yes, and the time to find the answer is about ten seconds. A Google search of “airports in Ohio” produces as its first hit a Wikipedia entry titled “List of airports in Ohio.” A quick glance at the this document shows that Columbus does indeed have a commercial airport, and that it is one of the three largest airports in Ohio.

2. Do any airlines offer direct flights from Kansas City to Columbus?

The answer to this appears to be no, and the time to find the answer is about two minutes. Using Travelocity.com and searching for flights from MCI (Kansas City International Airport) to CMH (Port Columbus International Airport) gets the message “We’ve searched more than 400 airlines we sell and couldn’t find any flights from Kansas City (MCI) ... [to] Columbus (CMH).” Doing the same search on Expedia.com and Orbitz.com yields the same answer. There appear to be no direct flights from Kansas City to Columbus, Ohio.

Often, however, the questions we need to have answered are more complicated than this, which means that answer comes with some assembly required.

3. What’s the best way to get from Kansas City to Columbus, Ohio?

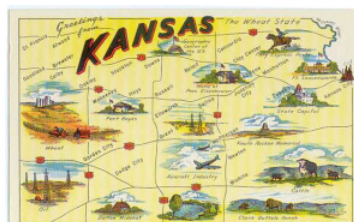


Figure 8.1.2

To answer this question requires a two stage process of gathering information about travel options and then evaluating the results based on parameters not stated in the question. We already know that it is possible to fly to Columbus, although no direct flights are available. A quick look at a map shows that is also a relatively straightforward drive of about 650 miles. That's the information gathering stage. Now we have to evaluate the results based on things like cost, time and effort required, practicality given the purpose of the trip, and the personal preferences of the traveler. For a business traveler for whom shortest possible travel time is more important than lowest cost, the final decision may be very different than for a college student with a large dog.

Although all three questions require information gathering, for the purposes of this course we are going to call questions like #1 and #2 "homework questions" (because you can find the answer just by going to a single reference source and looking it up) and save the designation "research question" for questions like #3 for which developing a fully functional answer requires both gathering relevant information and then assembling it in a meaningful way.

So for the purposes of this course, **research** (definition 2) **is the process of finding the information needed to answer your research question and then deriving or building the answer from the information you found.**

*Research (definition 2) = The physical process of **gathering information** + the mental process of **deriving the answer to your research question** from the information you gathered.*

Homework question = A question for which a definite answer exists and can easily be found by consulting the appropriate reference source.

Research question = A question that can be answered through a process of collecting relevant information and then building the answer from the relevant information.

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8.2: Research and Other Types of Source-based Writing

CAUTION

The fact that we don't have quite enough different words to express all possible variations of information-gathering tasks has created an area of potential confusion for students writing research papers for English classes. The following paragraph is designed to clear that up, so please read it carefully.



Figure 8.2.1

Some high school and first-year college writing courses use the term “research paper” or “research writing” to apply to any situation in which students use information from an outside source in writing a paper. The logic behind this is that if the writer has to go find information from a source, that action of going and finding information is similar to research, so it is convenient to call that kind of writing task a “research paper.” However, it is only true research if it starts from a QUESTION to which the writer genuinely doesn't know the answer and if the writer then develops or builds the answer to the question through gathering and processing information.

To help keep that difference in mind, this module will use “**research**” to refer to the goal-directed process of gathering information and building the answer to a research question, and “**source-based writing**” to refer to the many other types of information gathering and source-based writing one might do.



Figure 8.2.2

One important indicator of the difference between research and other source-based writing tasks is when in the process you develop the thesis (main point) of your paper. In a research project, you begin with a question, gather the data from which you will derive or build the answer to the question, build the answer, and then state your answer in a single sentence. This one-sentence statement of your answer to your research question then becomes your thesis statement and serves as the main point of your paper. In the research writing process, therefore, stating your thesis happens at the pivot point between research and writing (so roughly half or two thirds of the way through the project, depending on the amount of time spent gathering and processing information).

Any assignment for which you begin by developing your thesis and then go out and gather information to support it is indeed be a source-based writing assignment, but it is not technically research because it begins from the answer instead of the question.

Being aware of this distinction is essential to your successful completion of both research projects and other source-based writing tasks. The work processes that lead to efficiency and success with research projects are very different from the work processes you

may have used successfully for other types of source-based papers. Both offer valuable learning experiences, but it is important to understand which type of assignment you are being asked to do so that you can adjust your expectations accordingly.

Think of the most recent writing project you have done that required sources. Based on this definition, was it a research project or a source-based writing project?

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8.3: The Qualities of a Good Research Question

*Research = the physical process of **gathering information** + the mental process of **deriving the answer to your question** from the information you gathered.*

*Research writing = the process of **sharing the answer** to your research question along with the **evidence** on which your answer is based, the **sources** you used, and your own **reasoning and explanation**.*

Developing a good research question is the foundation of a successful research project, so it is worth spending time and effort understanding what makes a good question.



Figure 8.3.1

1. **A research question is a question that CAN be answered in an objective way, at least partially and at least for now.**
 - Questions that are purely values-based (such as “Should assisted suicide be legal?”) cannot be answered objectively because the answer varies depending on one’s values. Be wary of questions that include “should” or “ought” because those words often (although not always) indicate a values-based question. However, note that most values-based questions can be turned into research questions by judicious reframing. For instance, you could reframe “Should assisted suicide be legal?” as “What are the ethical implications of legalizing assisted suicide?” Using a “what are” frame turns a values-based question into a legitimate research question by moving it out of the world of debate and into the world of investigation.
2. **A good research question is one that can be answered using information that already exists or that can be collected.**
 - The question, “Does carbon-based life exist outside of Earth’s solar system?” is a perfectly good research question in the sense that it is not values-based and therefore could be answered in an objective way, IF it were possible to collect data about the presence of life outside of Earth’s solar system. That is not yet possible with current technology; therefore, this is not (yet) a research question because it’s not (now) possible to obtain the data that would be needed to answer it.
3. **A good research question is a question that hasn’t already been answered, or hasn’t been answered completely, or hasn’t been answered for your specific context.**
 - If the answer to the question is readily available in a good encyclopedia, textbook, or reference book, then it is a homework question, not a research question. It was probably a research question in the past, but if the answer is so thoroughly known that you can easily look it up and find it, then it is no longer an open question. However, it is important to remember that as new information becomes available, homework questions can sometimes be reopened as research questions. Equally important, a question may have been answered for one population or circumstance, but not for all populations or all circumstances.

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8.4: Strategies for Narrowing a Topic

Introduction



Figure 8.4.1

Once you've settled on a problem to address for a writing assignment, the next step is to narrow it down to an appropriate focus.

Narrowing a topic can be done in various ways. Most of the time you will need to use two or more of the following strategies. However, the requirements and scope of your assignment will determine which ones you use.

To narrow a topic, ask yourself the following questions.

Can you focus your project on a specific aspect of the topic?

Most issues or concepts can be subdivided into narrower issues or concepts. If you can't subdivide your topic, then, most of the time, your topic is as narrow as it can get. In addition, it is probably better suited to a short or small project than a long or substantial one.

In some cases, you might find you need to expand, rather than narrow, a topic selection.

Can you narrow your topic to a specific time period?

- Restricting your topic to a specific time period can narrow most topics. Many activities or things exist through time. Restricting yourself to that activity or thing within a specific time period reduces the amount of material you have to cover.

For example, armies and soldiers have existed from before recorded history. Restricting yourself to "Army life during World War II" or "Army life in Ancient Egypt" reduces the scope of what you need to cover.

hint

There is likely to be a lot more primary and secondary material on army life in World War II than there is on army life in ancient Egypt simply because more information from recent centuries has survived than from ancient centuries.

Can you narrow your topic to a specific geographic area?

Many topics can be limited to a specific region of the country or the world.

For example, "Wolves" can be limited to "Arctic Wolves."

Can you narrow your topic to a specific event?

Restricting your topic to a specific event is another way to narrow a topic. However, the amount of information available on a specific event will depend upon the relative importance of that event.

For example, you will find more information on the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki than you will on the bomb used by robbers to blow up the safe of a bank.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

9: Outline, Formal and Reverse

9.1: Writing for Success- Outlining

9.2: Making an Outline

9.3: Reorganizing Drafts

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9.1: Writing for Success- Outlining

Learning Objectives

- Identify the steps in constructing an outline.
- Construct a topic outline and a sentence outline.

Your prewriting activities and readings have helped you gather information for your assignment. The more you sort through the pieces of information you found, the more you will begin to see the connections between them. Patterns and gaps may begin to stand out. But only when you start to organize your ideas will you be able to translate your raw insights into a form that will communicate meaning to your audience.



Longer papers require more reading and planning than shorter papers do. Most writers discover that the more they know about a topic, the more they can write about it with intelligence and interest.

Organizing Ideas

When you write, you need to organize your ideas in an order that makes sense. The writing you complete in all your courses exposes how analytically and critically your mind works. In some courses, the only direct contact you may have with your instructor is through the assignments you write for the course. You can make a good impression by spending time ordering your ideas.

Order refers to your choice of what to present first, second, third, and so on in your writing. The order you pick closely relates to your purpose for writing that particular assignment. For example, when telling a story, it may be important to first describe the background for the action. Or you may need to first describe a 3-D movie projector or a television studio to help readers visualize the setting and scene. You may want to group your support effectively to convince readers that your point of view on an issue is well reasoned and worthy of belief.

In longer pieces of writing, you may organize different parts in different ways so that your purpose stands out clearly and all parts of the paper work together to consistently develop your main point.

Methods of Organizing Writing

The three common methods of organizing writing are chronological order, spatial order, and order of importance. You will learn more about these in Chapter 8 “Writing Essays: From Start to Finish”; however, you need to keep these methods of organization in mind as you plan how to arrange the information you have gathered in an outline. An outline is a written plan that serves as a skeleton for the paragraphs you write. Later, when you draft paragraphs in the next stage of the writing process, you will add support to create “flesh” and “muscle” for your assignment.

When you write, your goal is not only to complete an assignment but also to write for a specific purpose—perhaps to inform, to explain, to persuade, or for a combination of these purposes. Your purpose for writing should always be in the back of your mind, because it will help you decide which pieces of information belong together and how you will order them. In other words, choose the order that will most effectively fit your purpose and support your main point.

Table 7.1 “Order versus Purpose” shows the connection between order and purpose.

Table 7.1 - Order versus Purpose

Order	Purpose
Chronological Order	To explain the history of an event or a topic
	To tell a story or relate an experience
	To explain how to do or make something
	To explain the steps in a process
Spatial Order	To help readers visualize something as you want them to see it

Order	Purpose
	To create a main impression using the senses (sight, touch, taste, smell, and sound)
Order of Importance	To persuade or convince
	To rank items by their importance, benefit, or significance

Writing a Thesis Statement

One legitimate question readers always ask about a piece of writing is “What is the big idea?” (You may even ask this question when you are the reader, critically reading an assignment or another document.) Every nonfiction writing task—from the short essay to the ten-page term paper to the lengthy senior thesis—needs a big idea, or a controlling idea, as the spine for the work. The controlling idea is the main idea that you want to present and develop.

tip

For a longer piece of writing, the main idea should be broader than the main idea for a shorter piece of writing. Be sure to frame a main idea that is appropriate for the length of the assignment. Ask yourself, “How many pages will it take for me to explain and explore this main idea in detail?” Be reasonable with your estimate. Then expand or trim it to fit the required length.

The big idea, or controlling idea, you want to present in an essay is expressed in a thesis statement. A thesis statement is often one sentence long, and it states your point of view. The thesis statement is not the topic of the piece of writing but rather what you have to say about that topic and what is important to tell readers.

Table 7.2 “Topics and Thesis Statements” compares topics and thesis statements.

Table 7.2 - Topics and Thesis Statements

Topic	Thesis Statement
Music piracy	The recording industry fears that so-called music piracy will diminish profits and destroy markets, but it cannot be more wrong.
The number of consumer choices available in media gear	Everyone wants the newest and the best digital technology, but the choices are extensive, and the specifications are often confusing.
E-books and online newspapers increasing their share of the market	E-books and online newspapers will bring an end to print media as we know it.
Online education and the new media	Someday, students and teachers will send avatars to their online classrooms.

The first thesis statement you write will be a preliminary thesis statement, or a working thesis statement. You will need it when you begin to outline your assignment as a way to organize it. As you continue to develop the arrangement, you can limit your working thesis statement if it is too broad or expand it if it proves too narrow for what you want to say.

tip

You will make several attempts before you devise a working thesis statement that you think is effective. Each draft of the thesis statement will bring you closer to the wording that expresses your meaning exactly.

Writing an Outline

For an essay question on a test or a brief oral presentation in class, all you may need to prepare is a short, informal outline in which you jot down key ideas in the order you will present them. This kind of outline reminds you to stay focused in a stressful situation and to include all the good ideas that help you explain or prove your point.

For a longer assignment, like an essay or a research paper, many college instructors require students to submit a formal outline before writing a major paper as a way to be sure you are on the right track and are working in an organized manner. A formal outline is a detailed guide that shows how all your supporting ideas relate to each other. It helps you distinguish between ideas that are of equal importance and ones that are of lesser importance. You build your paper based on the framework created by the outline.

 tip

Instructors may also require you to submit an outline with your final draft to check the direction of the assignment and the logic of your final draft. If you are required to submit an outline with the final draft of a paper, remember to revise the outline to reflect any changes you made while writing the paper.

There are two types of formal outlines: the topic outline and the sentence outline. You format both types of formal outlines in the same way.

- Place your introduction and thesis statement at the beginning, under roman numeral I.
- Use roman numerals (II, III, IV, V, etc.) to identify main points that develop the thesis statement.
- Use capital letters (A, B, C, D, etc.) to divide your main points into parts.
- Use arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.) if you need to subdivide any As, Bs, or Cs into smaller parts.
- End with the final roman numeral expressing your idea for your conclusion.

Here is what the skeleton of a traditional formal outline looks like. The indentation helps clarify how the ideas are related.

1. Introduction → Thesis statement
2. Main point 1 → *becomes the topic sentence of body paragraph 1*
 1. Supporting detail → *becomes a support sentence of body paragraph 1*
 1. Subpoint
 2. Subpoint
 2. Supporting detail
 1. Subpoint
 2. Subpoint
 3. Supporting detail
 1. Subpoint
 2. Subpoint
3. Main point 2 → *becomes the topic sentence of body paragraph 2*
 1. Supporting detail
 2. Supporting detail
 3. Supporting detail
4. Main point 3 → *becomes the topic sentence of body paragraph 3*
 1. Supporting detail
 2. Supporting detail
 3. Supporting detail
5. Conclusion

 tips

In an outline, any supporting detail can be developed with subpoints. For simplicity, the model shows them only under the first main point.

Formal outlines are often quite rigid in their organization. As many instructors will specify, you cannot subdivide one point if it is only one part. For example, for every roman numeral I, there must be a For every A, there must be a B. For every arabic numeral 1, there must be a 2. See for yourself on the sample outlines that follow.

Constructing Topic Outlines

A topic outline is the same as a sentence outline except you use words or phrases instead of complete sentences. Words and phrases keep the outline short and easier to comprehend. All the headings, however, must be written in parallel structure. (For more information on parallel structure, see **“Refining Your Writing: How Do I Improve My Writing Technique?”**.)

Here is the topic outline that Mariah constructed for the essay she is developing. Her purpose is to inform, and her audience is a general audience of her fellow college students. Notice how Mariah begins with her thesis statement. She then arranges her main points and supporting details in outline form using short phrases in parallel grammatical structure.

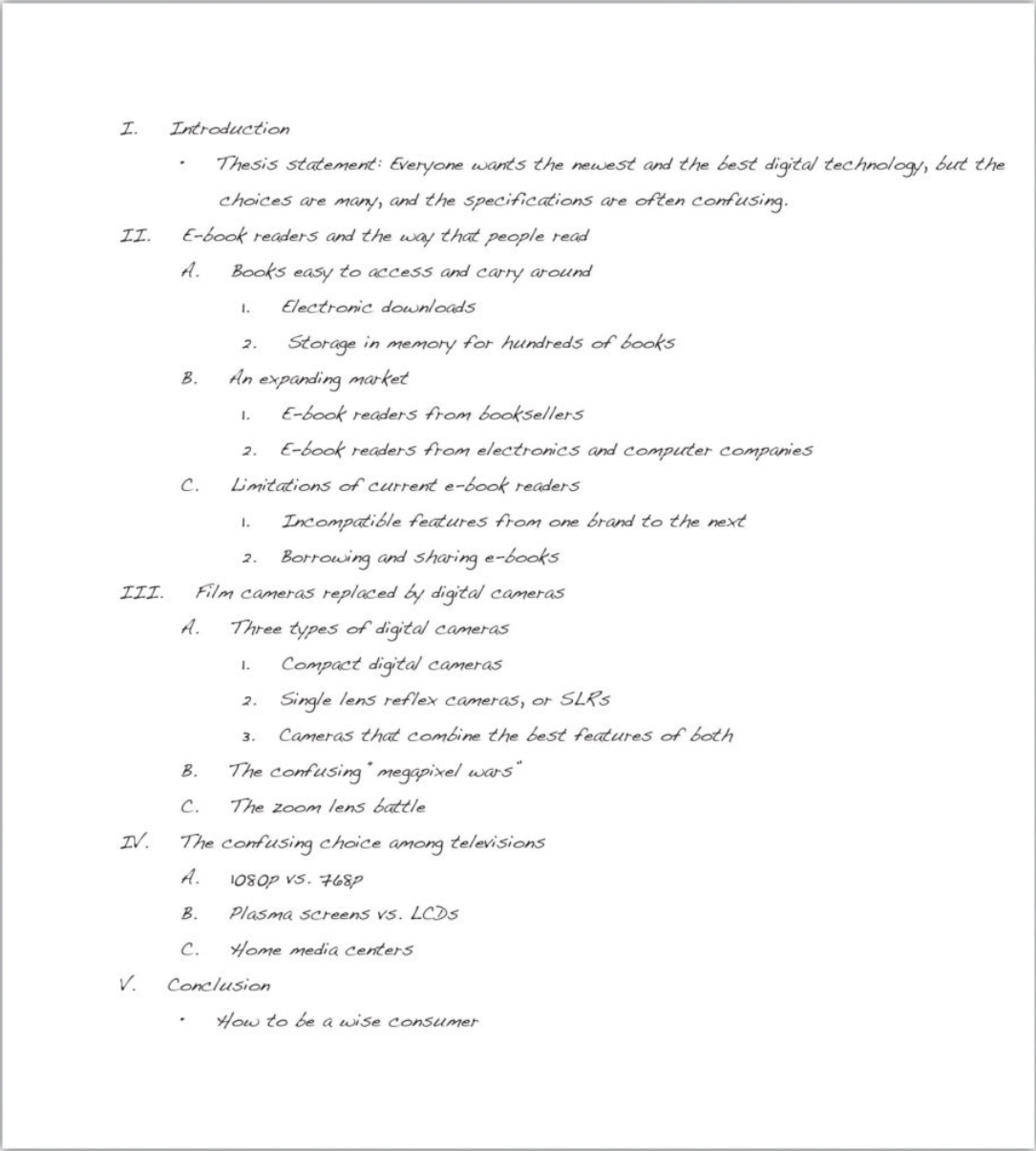
- 
- I. Introduction
 - Thesis statement: Everyone wants the newest and the best digital technology, but the choices are many, and the specifications are often confusing.
 - II. E-book readers and the way that people read
 - A. Books easy to access and carry around
 - 1. Electronic downloads
 - 2. Storage in memory for hundreds of books
 - B. An expanding market
 - 1. E-book readers from booksellers
 - 2. E-book readers from electronics and computer companies
 - C. Limitations of current e-book readers
 - 1. Incompatible features from one brand to the next
 - 2. Borrowing and sharing e-books
 - III. Film cameras replaced by digital cameras
 - A. Three types of digital cameras
 - 1. Compact digital cameras
 - 2. Single lens reflex cameras, or SLRs
 - 3. Cameras that combine the best features of both
 - B. The confusing "megapixel wars"
 - C. The zoom lens battle
 - IV. The confusing choice among televisions
 - A. 1080p vs. 768p
 - B. Plasma screens vs. LCDs
 - C. Home media centers
 - V. Conclusion
 - How to be a wise consumer

Figure 9.1.1

Checklist

Writing an Effective Topic Outline

This checklist can help you write an effective topic outline for your assignment. It will also help you discover where you may need to do additional reading or prewriting.

- Do I have a controlling idea that guides the development of the entire piece of writing?

- Do I have three or more main points that I want to make in this piece of writing? Does each main point connect to my controlling idea?
- Is my outline in the best order—chronological order, spatial order, or order of importance—for me to present my main points? Will this order help me get my main point across?
- Do I have supporting details that will help me inform, explain, or prove my main points?
- Do I need to add more support? If so, where?
- Do I need to make any adjustments in my working thesis statement before I consider it the final version?

Writing at Work

Word processing programs generally have an automatic numbering feature that can be used to prepare outlines. This feature automatically sets indents and lets you use the tab key to arrange information just as you would in an outline. Although in business this style might be acceptable, in college your instructor might have different requirements. Teach yourself how to customize the levels of outline numbering in your word-processing program to fit your instructor's preferences.

Constructing Sentence Outlines

A sentence outline is the same as a topic outline except you use complete sentences instead of words or phrases. Complete sentences create clarity and can advance you one step closer to a draft in the writing process.

Here is the sentence outline that Mariah constructed for the essay she is developing.

- I. Introduction
 - Thesis statement: Everyone wants the newest and the best digital technology, but the choices are many, and the specifications are often confusing.
- II. E-book readers are changing the way people read.
 - A. E-book 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 e-book readers.
 - 2. Electronics and computer companies also sell e-book readers.
 - C. Current e-book readers have significant limitations.
 - 1. The devices are owned by different brands and may not be compatible.
 - 2. Few programs have been made to fit the other way Americans read: by borrowing books from libraries.
- III. 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 have fewer megapixels.
 - 2. Single lens reflex cameras, or SLRs, may be large and heavy 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.
- IV. 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?
- V. Conclusion
 - The solution for many people should be to avoid buying on impulse. Consumers should think about what they really need, not what is advertised.

Figure 9.1.2



tip

The information compiled under each roman numeral will become a paragraph in your final paper. In the previous example, the outline follows the standard five-paragraph essay arrangement, but longer essays will require more paragraphs and thus more roman numerals. If you think that a paragraph might become too long or stringy, add an additional paragraph to your outline, renumbering the main points appropriately.

Writing at Work

PowerPoint presentations, used both in schools and in the workplace, are organized in a way very similar to formal outlines. PowerPoint presentations often contain information in the form of talking points that the presenter develops with more details and examples than are contained on the PowerPoint slide.

key takeaways

- Writers must put their ideas in order so the assignment makes sense. The most common orders are chronological order, spatial order, and order of importance.
- After gathering and evaluating the information you found for your essay, the next step is to write a working, or preliminary, thesis statement.
- The working thesis statement expresses the main idea that you want to develop in the entire piece of writing. It can be modified as you continue the writing process.
- Effective writers prepare a formal outline to organize their main ideas and supporting details in the order they will be presented.
- A topic outline uses words and phrases to express the ideas.
- A sentence outline uses complete sentences to express the ideas.
- The writer's thesis statement begins the outline, and the outline ends with suggestions for the concluding paragraph.

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9.2: Making an Outline

Making an outline is a very important step in writing. This is the blueprint to the text. A completed outline, meaning every sentence, or, at least, the main stuff, replaces the rough draft. An draft in outline form is always easier to read than if it is in paragraph form. Outlining is writing. As the outline is pushed out more, it is being revised. Revision is not the same as writing. Writing requires one pushes words to fit the theme, topic, and details on a page. Revision refers to the process of evaluating the text not writing it. This is different from proofreading, which focuses on the minor things (e.g., grammar, punctuation, formatting, and spelling) not ideas or details.

Outlining has several steps. It should never be completed as a short, simple list of ideas. Outlining, if done correctly, is a series of steps that the previous one builds upon.

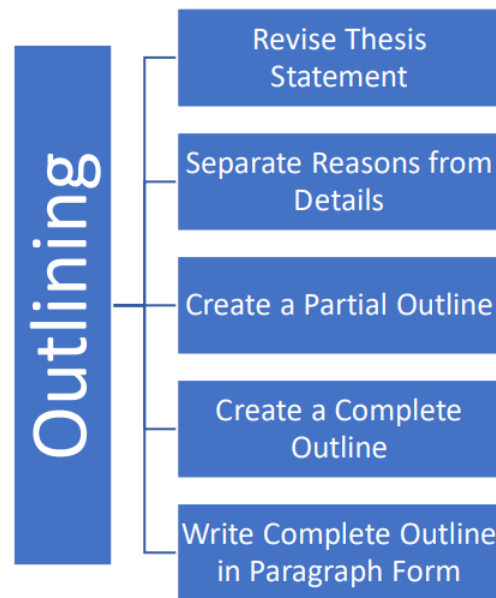


Figure 9.2.1: The steps of outlining.. (Copyright; author via source)

It all starts with a revised thesis statement, which is generated from the brainstorming. Then, everything that was written down from the brainstorming is separated into reasons and details. Reasons are broad phrases and statements while details are specific phrases and statements. The information from the brainstorming can fit in more than one place. This is normal, and it is normal to place the information in multiple places to see where things best fit.

Once the separation of details and reasons has been completed, then, the actual outline can be created. There are two types of outlines for the purposes of this book. The partial outline is the brainstorming in outline form. The complete outline refers to everything added to the partial outline, which replaces the rough draft in other books. Hence, there is no such thing as a rough draft in this book. Essentially, everything gets pushed through the outline.

For examples of partial and complete outlines, see the Assignment section. In this section, a skeletal outline shows how to make an effective outline. Outlines are required in many classes (e.g., public speaking, and composition classes). The outline that is shown here is a formal outline, which is what most professors would ask for.

Steps to Making an Outline

Outlines are best built one layer or level at a time. The basic structures come first, which are the broadest of information. Then, the information gets more specific with every level.

Step 1 in making an outline all starts with the thesis statement and the questions generated from the brainstorming. These items are the backbone of all outlines. They create the most basic outline; that is they divide the introduction, body and conclusion of the text.

Step 2 in making an outline includes the supporting reasons. Supporting reasons are statements that reinforce the thesis statement. They explain the thesis statement. Spring 2019 ENG 201A Prof. Bookman 26

Step 3 in the outline process adds the major details. Major details are necessary information for the text to make sense. Major details further explain the supporting reasons.

Step 4 of making an outline focuses on the minor details. Minor details are not necessary for the text to make sense. Minor details add emphasis and extra information to the text.

Example of Outline Process

I. Introduction

A. Background information

1. Major detail 1
 - a. Minor detail 1
 - b. Minor detail 2
2. Major detail 2
 - a. Minor detail 1

B. Thesis

II. Body

A. Question 1

1. Supporting reason 1
 - a. Major detail 1
 - i. Minor detail 1
 - ii. Minor detail 2
 - b. Major detail 2
 - i. Minor detail 1
 - ii. Minor detail 2
2. Supporting reason 2
 - a. Major detail 1
 - i. Minor detail 1
 - ii. Minor detail 2
 - b. Major detail 2
 - i. Minor detail 1
 - ii. Minor detail 2

B. Question 2

1. Supporting reason
 - a. Major detail 1
 - i. Minor detail 1
 - ii. Minor detail 2
2. Supporting reason 2
 - a. Major detail 1
 - i. Minor detail 1
 - ii. Minor detail 2

III. Conclusion

A. Question 3

1. Takeaway message 1
 - a. Major detail 1
 - i. Minor detail 1
 - ii. Minor detail 2
2. Takeaway message 2
 - a. Major detail 1
 1. Minor detail 2
3. Concluding sentence

Final Thoughts

If the text can be envisioned in the outline, then it is easily written. This is the philosophy, which revolves around the idea that skipping steps means missed information somewhere in the process. The reason it is best to put everything in outline form is that there is no mistake as to which information needs more development because it is visually clear. If everything were in paragraphs, it would be much more difficult to see.

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9.3: Reorganizing Drafts

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- <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/reorganizing-drafts/>
- Reference this support identifier:
047c50f444260bca7b5cb63305370b99323acd8e9abff3a8c1448bdfe186c66a

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

10: Cohesion and Parallel Structure

[10.1: The Perfect Paragraph](#)

[10.2: Cohesion- What do People Mean When They Say My Writing Doesn't "Flow"](#)

[10.3: Parallel Structure](#)

[10.4: Practice Activities- Parallel Structure](#)

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10.1: The Perfect Paragraph

As Michael Harvey writes, paragraphs are “in essence—a form of punctuation, and like other forms of punctuation they are meant to make written material easy to read.”^[1] Effective paragraphs are the fundamental units of academic writing; consequently, the thoughtful, multifaceted arguments that your professors expect depend on them. Without good paragraphs, you simply cannot clearly convey sequential points and their relationships to one another.

Many novice writers tend to make a sharp distinction between content and style, thinking that a paper can be strong in one and weak in the other, but focusing on organization shows how content and style converge in deliberative academic writing. Your professors will view even the most elegant prose as rambling and tedious if there isn’t a careful, coherent argument to give the text meaning. Paragraphs are the “stuff ” of academic writing and, thus, worth our attention here.

Key Sentences (a.k.a. Topic Sentences)



In academic writing, readers expect each paragraph to have a sentence or two that captures its main point. They’re often called “topic sentences,” though many writing instructors prefer to call them “key sentences.” There are at least two downsides of the phrase “topic sentence.” First, it makes it seem like the paramount job of that sentence is simply to announce the topic of the paragraph. Second, it makes it seem like the topic sentence must always be a single grammatical sentence. Calling it a “key sentence” reminds us that it expresses the central *idea* of the paragraph. And sometimes a question or a two-sentence construction functions as the key.

Key sentences in academic writing do two things. First, they establish the main point that the rest of the paragraph supports. Second, they situate each paragraph within the sequence of the argument, a task that requires transitioning from the prior paragraph. Consider these two examples:^[2]

Version A:

Now we turn to the epidemiological evidence.

Version B:

The epidemiological evidence provides compelling support for the hypothesis emerging from etiological studies.

Both versions convey a topic; it’s pretty easy to predict that the paragraph will be about epidemiological evidence, but only the second version establishes an argumentative point and puts it in context. The paragraph doesn’t just describe the epidemiological evidence; it shows how epidemiology is telling the same story as etiology. Similarly, while Version A doesn’t relate to anything in particular, Version B immediately suggests that the prior paragraph addresses the biological pathway (i.e. etiology) of a disease and that the new paragraph will bolster the emerging hypothesis with a different kind of evidence. As a reader, it’s easy to keep track of how the paragraph about cells and chemicals and such relates to the paragraph about populations in different places.

A last thing to note about key sentences is that academic readers expect them to be at the beginning of the paragraph. (The first sentence this paragraph is a good example of this in action!) This placement helps readers comprehend your argument. To see how, try this: find an academic piece (such as a textbook or scholarly article) that strikes you as well written and go through part of it reading just the first sentence of each paragraph. You should be able to easily follow the sequence of logic. When you’re writing for professors, it is especially effective to put your key sentences first because they usually convey your own original thinking. It’s a very good sign when your paragraphs are typically composed of a telling key sentence followed by evidence and explanation.

Knowing this convention of academic writing can help you both read and write more effectively. When you’re reading a complicated academic piece for the first time, you might want to go through reading only the first sentence or two of each paragraph to get the overall outline of the argument. Then you can go back and read all of it with a clearer picture of how each of the details fit in. And when you’re writing, you may also find it useful to write the first sentence of each paragraph (instead of a topic-based outline) to map out a thorough argument before getting immersed in sentence-level wordsmithing.

Cohesion and Coherence

With a key sentence established, the next task is to shape the body of your paragraph to be both cohesive and coherent. As Williams and Bizup^[3] explain, cohesion is about the “sense of flow” (how each sentence fits with the next), while coherence is about the “sense of the whole.”^[4]

For the most part, a text reads smoothly when it conveys a thoughtful and well organized argument or analysis. Focus first and most on your ideas, on crafting an ambitious analysis. The most useful guides advise you to first focus on getting your ideas on paper and then revising for organization and word choice later, refining the analysis as you go. Thus, consider the advice here as if you already have some rough text written and are in the process of smoothing out your prose to clarify your argument for both your reader and yourself.

Cohesion

Cohesion refers to the flow from sentence to sentence. For example, compare these passages:

Version A:

Granovetter begins by looking at balance theory. If an actor, A, is strongly tied to both B and C, it is extremely likely that B and C are, sooner or later, going to be tied to each other, according to balance theory (1973:1363).^[5] Bridge ties between cliques are always weak ties, Granovetter argues (1973:1364). Weak ties may not necessarily be bridges, but Granovetter argues that bridges will be weak. If two actors share a strong tie, they will draw in their other strong relations and will eventually form a clique. Only weak ties that do not have the strength to draw together all the “friends of friends” can connect people in different cliques.

Version B:

Granovetter begins by looking at balance theory. In brief, balance theory tells us that if an actor, A, is strongly tied to both B and C, it is extremely likely that B and C are, sooner or later, going to be tied to each other (1973:1363). Granovetter argues that because of this, bridge ties between cliques are always weak ties (1973:1364). Weak ties may not necessarily be bridges, but Granovetter argues that bridges will be weak. This is because if two actors share a strong tie, they will draw in their other strong relations and will eventually form a clique. The only way, therefore, that people in different cliques can be connected is through weak ties that do not have the strength to draw together all the “friends of friends.”^[6]

Version A has the exact same information as version B, but it is harder to read because it is less cohesive. Each sentence in version B begins with old information and bridges to new information.



The first sentence establishes the key idea of balance theory. The next sentence begins with balance theory and ends with social ties, which is the focus of the third sentence. The concept of weak ties connects the third and fourth sentences and concept of cliques the fifth and sixth sentences. In Version A, in contrast, the first sentence focuses on balance theory, but then the second sentence makes a new point about social ties *before* telling the reader that the point comes from balance theory. The reader has to take in a lot of unfamiliar information before learning how it fits in with familiar concepts. Version A is coherent, but the lack of cohesion makes it tedious to read.

The lesson is this: if you or others perceive a passage you’ve written to be awkward or choppy, even though the topic is consistent, try rewriting it to ensure that each sentence begins with a familiar term or concept. If your points don’t naturally daisy-chain together like the examples given here, consider numbering them. For example, you may choose to write, “Proponents of the legislation point to four major benefits.” Then you could discuss four loosely related ideas without leaving your reader wondering how they relate.

Coherence

While cohesion is about the sense of flow, coherence is about the sense of the whole . For example, here’s a passage that is cohesive (from sentence to sentence) but lacks coherence:

Your social networks and your location within them shape the kinds and amount of information that you have access to. Information is distinct from data, in that it makes some kind of generalization about a person, thing, or population. Defensible generalizations about society can be either probabilities (i.e., statistics) or patterns (often from qualitative analysis). Such probabilities and patterns can be temporal, spatial, or simultaneous.



Each sentence in the above passage starts with a familiar idea and progresses to a new one, but it lacks coherence—a sense of being about one thing. Good writers often write passages like that when they’re free-writing or using the drafting stage to cast a wide net for ideas. A writer weighing the power and limits of social network analysis may free-write something like that example and, from there, develop a more specific plan for summarizing key insights about social networks and then discussing them with reference to the core tenets of social science. As a draft, an incoherent paragraph often points to a productive line of reasoning; one just has to continue thinking it through in order to identify a clear argumentative purpose for each paragraph. With its purpose defined, each paragraph, then, becomes a lot easier to write. Coherent paragraphs aren’t just about style; they are a sign of a thoughtful, well developed analysis.

The Wind-Up

Some guides advise you to end each paragraph with a specific concluding sentence, in a sense, to treat each paragraph as a kind of mini-essay. But that’s not a widely held convention. Most well written academic pieces don’t adhere to that structure. The last sentence of the paragraph should certainly be in your own words (as in, not a quote), but as long as the paragraph succeeds in carrying out the task that it has been assigned by its key sentence, you don’t need to worry about whether that last sentence has an air of conclusiveness. For example, consider these paragraphs about the cold fusion controversy of the 1980s that appeared in a best-selling textbook :^[7]

The experiment seemed straightforward and there were plenty of scientists willing to try it. Many did. It was wonderful to have a simple laboratory experiment on fusion to try after the decades of embarrassing attempts to control hot fusion. This effort required multi-billion dollar machines whose every success seemed to be capped with an unanticipated failure. ‘Cold fusion’ seemed to provide, as Martin Fleischmann said during the course of that famous Utah press conference, ‘another route’—the route of little science.

In that example, the first and last sentences in the paragraph are somewhat symmetrical: the authors introduce the idea of accessible science, contrast it with big science, and bring it back to the phrase “little science.” Here’s an example from the same chapter of the same book that does not have any particular symmetry :^[8]

The struggle between proponents and critics in a scientific controversy is always a struggle for credibility. When scientists make claims which are literally ‘incredible’, as in the cold fusion case, they face an uphill struggle. The problem Pons and Fleischmann had to overcome was that they had credibility as electrochemists but not as nuclear physicists. And it was nuclear physics where their work was likely to have its main impact.

The last sentence of the paragraph doesn’t mirror the first, but the paragraph still works just fine. In general, every sentence of academic writing should add some unique content. Don’t trouble yourself with having the last sentence in every paragraph serve as a mini-conclusion. Instead, worry about developing each point sufficiently and making your logical sequence clear.

Conclusion: Paragraphs as Punctuation

To reiterate the initial point, it is useful to think of paragraphs as punctuation that organize your ideas in a readable way. Each paragraph should be an irreplaceable node within a coherent sequence of logic. Thinking of paragraphs as “building blocks” evokes the “five-paragraph theme” structure explained earlier : if you have identical stone blocks, it hardly matters what order they’re in. In the successful organically structured college paper, the structure and tone of each paragraph reflects its indispensable role within the overall piece. Make every bit count and have each part situated within the whole.

1. Michael Harvey, *The Nuts and Bolts of College Writing*, Second Edition (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2013), 70. ↩
2. Etiology is the cause of a disease—what’s actually happening in cells and tissues—while epidemiology is the incidence of a disease in a population. ↩
3. Joseph M. Williams and Joseph Bizup. *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace* 11th edition (New York: Longman, 2014), 68. ↩
Joseph M. Williams and Joseph Bizup. *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace* 11th edition (New York: Longman, 2014), 68. ↩
4. *Ibid.*, 71. ↩
5. The quote uses a version of an ASA-style in-text citation for Mark S. Granovetter, “The Strength of Weak Ties,” *American Journal of Sociology* 78 (1973): 1360-80. ↩
6. Guiffre. *Communities and Networks*, 98. ↩
7. Harry Collins and Trevor Pinch, *The Golem: What You Should Know About Science* 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Canto, 1998), 58. ↩
8. *Ibid.*, 74. ↩

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10.2: Cohesion- What do People Mean When They Say My Writing Doesn't "Flow"

Cohesion, or "Flow"—An Overview

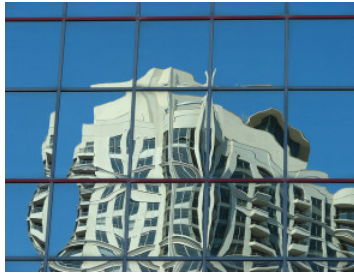


Figure 10.2.1

Many (student) writers have turned in papers only to have their readers (more often than not, their teachers) hand the papers back with comments that the writing doesn't "flow."

Unfortunately, teachers may not always be explicit about what they mean—just that it doesn't "read" or "sound" right or that the ideas don't progress from one to another. This chapter is about what "flow" actually means and how to make sure your writing does it.

By "flow," most readers mean what grammarians and linguists call **cohesion**—the property of a text to hold together at the level of sentences and paragraphs. Of course, cohesion is good in any communication medium, and each medium can present challenges for it. If you're sending text messages back and forth to a friend and the network sends them out of order, the result can be confusing: you might have written "thank GOD" in response to some piece of news, but your friend might not have gotten your message until after she texted "gotta go." Oops. If you're speaking to someone on a train or bus and something outside the window catches your attention, you might say something about it, and the other person might say, "wait—what?"

But in both those cases, you can quickly and easily clear up the confusion. Speech and texting are more or less **synchronous** media: that is, they involve people communicating at the same time and often in the same (virtual) space. Writing, however—in the traditional sense, anyway—is different, because it's **asynchronous**. It also requires an important trade-off. Writing has worked well for a long time as a communication technology because it's relatively easy to distribute. Someone using writing to communicate doesn't have to move from place to place: she may simply write something down and send it. However, to use a metaphor from very current communication technologies, writing has low bandwidth compared to other media. If someone is speaking to you, you can infer meaning from words themselves but also from vocal inflections, facial expressions, hand gestures, posture, and even from how close the other person is to you. You can't do that when you write and read. So, writers and readers can send and receive on the cheap, but they carry a burden of making their words work extraordinarily hard.

This idea has a very clear implication for your own written arguments—an important enough implication that we'd say it pretty loudly if you were standing right in front of us. But, since this is writing, we'll use boldface: **just because an argument you're making is clear in your own head, that doesn't mean it's automatically clear to people who are reading the written version of your argument.** That's one of the reasons it's a good idea to circulate the writing you do to others before you turn it in for a grade or circulate it in high-stakes situations.

Fortunately, the to-do list for "flow" is relatively short. Throughout Englishlanguage writing, it turns out that there is a small number of strategies for achieving cohesion. These strategies help writers follow a key principle for communicating with readers as effectively as possible on the assumption that they're not looking over their readers' shoulders pointing out what they *really* need to know. That principle is called **the given-new contract**. This contract implies that you as a writer will start your projected readers with something relatively familiar and then lead them to less familiar material. It's an idea that is simple to state, but it's powerful, and it works at different levels of a document. At the level of overall document design, consistent visual items on each page (page number location, headings, "white" space, fonts) help create a familiar visual field that works like a container for whatever new information is coming next. As you read earlier in this book, a lot of a writer's job in an introduction, after all, is orienting readers so that they're at least familiar with the broad topic before the writer gets specific—with an argument, for example. But the contract helps sentence-level cohesion, as well. It's very helpful to readers if you create a cycle in which you try to put "given" information at the start of sentences and shift "new" information to the ends, and then recycle the "new" information as "given"

information in sentences that come up. The principle of **end emphasis** helps here: readers tend to latch more onto how sentences end than onto how they begin. Skilled writers know this is often the case, so they'll reserve end-of-sentence slots for new or challenging information, since they know they often have a little more of their readers' attention at those spots anyway.

The given-new contract and the concept of end emphasis are a little tough to explain in abstract terms, so here's an example followed by some analysis. We've numbered the sentences to help make the analysis clear.

1 This textbook is freely circulable under the terms of a Creative Commons ("CC") license. 2 CC is a nonprofit organization that helps content creators, such as textbook authors, share their products in more diverse ways than traditional copyright allows. 3 While typical copyright restricts others from using an author's work unless they have the author's express consent, CC allows authors to pick and choose which restrictions to apply to their work by using one of several free licenses. 4 For example, this book is available via an "Attribution-NonCommercialShareAlike" agreement: adopters of the textbook may use it free of charge and may even modify it without permission, but they must agree not to try to sell it or share it with others under different licensing terms.

Each sentence in this passage shows our attempt to honor the given-new contract. Here's how:

1. The first sentence introduces the term "Creative Commons" near its end. We're assuming that you may not know (much) about CC, so we're trying to exploit end emphasis to introduce it here very early in the paragraph.
2. This sentence immediately recycles CC and defines the term more fully. The sentence ends with the important (and "new") idea that CC allows for a wider range of options than copyright.
3. Now, the passage explains in a little more detail the point it just made about copyright restrictions and goes on to clarify the contrast with CC, ending with the "new" information that CC allows authors to choose from several licenses.
4. Not surprisingly, the next sentence shows what the previous sentence introduced by giving an example of a relevant CC license.

In addition to using the principle of end emphasis, writers who honor the given-new contract frequently use several other strategies.

Stock transition words and phrases

Many writers first learn to make their writing flow by using explicit, specialpurpose transitional devices. You may hear these devices called "signposts," because they work much like highway and street signs. When steel boxes weighing 2 tons and more are rolling around at high speeds, it's important that their operators are repeatedly and clearly told exactly where and when to go with as little ambiguity as possible.

Here's a list of stock, generic, all-purpose transition words and phrases, organized by their basic functions. Keep in mind that there are differences among these that can make a difference and that determining what those differences is is beyond the scope of this book. It's a matter of experience.



Figure 10.2.2

To add or show sequence: again, also, and, and then, besides, equally important, finally, first, further, furthermore, in addition, in the first place, last, moreover, next, second, still, too

To compare: also, in the same way, likewise, similarly

To contrast: although, and yet, but, but at the same time, despite, even so, even though, for all that, however, in contrast, in spite of, nevertheless, notwithstanding, on the contrary, on the other hand, regardless, still, though, yet

To give examples or intensify: after all, an illustration of, even, for example, for instance, indeed, in fact, it is true, of course, specifically, that is, to illustrate, truly

To indicate place: above, adjacent to, below, elsewhere, farther on, here, near, nearby, on the other side, opposite to, there, to the east, to the left

To indicate time: after a while, afterward, as long as, as soon as, at last, at length, at that time, before, earlier, formerly, immediately, in the meantime, in the past, lately, later, meanwhile, now, presently, shortly, simultaneously, since, so far, soon, subsequently, then, thereafter, until, until now, when

To repeat, summarize, or conclude: all in all, altogether, in brief, in conclusion, in other words, in particular, in short, in simpler terms, in summary, on the whole, that is, to put it differently, to summarize

To show cause and effect: accordingly, as a result, because, consequently, for this purpose, hence, otherwise, since, then, therefore, thereupon, thus, to this end, with this object in mind

As we just told you, avoiding ambiguity in academic and professional writing is important. But it's not as important as avoiding it on highways, in factories, or around high-voltage equipment or explosives. In those contexts, lots of signposts with lots of redundancy are vital. In many writing situations, you can expect your readers to pick up other useful clues for cohesion, so it's somewhat less important to use a lot of these "stock" or generic transition words. In fact, if you overuse them (for instance, in an essay in which your first paragraph starts with "first," your second paragraph starts with "second," and on and on), it can get annoying.

Pronouns

If you're old enough vaguely to remember the Schoolhouse Rock series, you might remember the episode about pronouns ("he," "she," "her," "him," "you," "we," "they," "it," "one," "this," "that," and some others) and how they can stand for nouns, even if the nouns have long names. The idea is that pronouns make speaking and writing more efficient. But you may not have learned that pronouns are at least as powerful as cohesive devices. Since pronouns work by referring back to nouns that have previously been mentioned, they can help writers carry the ideas their nouns represent across sentences and paragraphs.

You may have been told to limit your use of pronouns or even avoid them altogether. This is bad advice, but it's understandable: pronouns work very well when they clearly refer to their antecedents, but they can create significant comprehension problems, misdirection, and vagueness when they don't.

Repetition

Contrary to a lot of advice novice writers get, repetition is effective. For example, as you'll learn later in this book (or now if you want to read ahead, of course), many rhetorical strategies that are thousands of years old and that exist in several languages use repetition. It's a time-honored way to signal importance, create a sense of rhythm, and help audiences remember key ideas. But repetition gets a bad reputation because it can become redundant. (Yes, that sentence used repetition to get its point across. It's no accident that it had a lot of "r"s.)



Figure 10.2.3

Repetition can involve individual words, phrases, or grammatical structures. When you repeat similar structural elements but not necessarily the words themselves, you are using **parallelism**, a special variety of repetition that not only helps cohesion but also helps you to communicate that similarly important ideas should be read together. When sentences are written using non-parallel parts, it's certainly possible for readers to understand them, but it creates work for the reader that usually isn't necessary. Compare these sentences:

Student writers should learn to start projects early, how to ask for advice from teachers and peers, and when to focus on correcting grammar.

Student writers should learn to start projects early, to ask for advice from teachers and peers, and to figure out when to focus on correcting their grammar.

See the difference? The first sentence is comprehensible: the commas, for example, let you know that you're reading a list. But the extra adverbs ("how" and "when") get in the way of the sentence's clarity. And that problem, in turn, means that it's hard to see clearly how each item in the list relates to the others. In the revised sentence, though, it's a lot clearer that each of the three items is something student writers should "learn to" do. That relationship is made clear by the repeating grammatical pattern:

Student writers should learn

- to start projects early
- to ask for advice
- to figure out when to focus on grammar

Example

Here's an example of some writing that uses a variety of cohesion strategies. We know it well because one of us wrote it. It's a short essay, written for a broad academic audience in a U publication, about the current state of the English language. To clarify the analysis that follows, we've underlined a few of the transition devices.

✓ Example 10.2.1:

Teaching (and Learning) Englishes

Jay Jordan

University Writing Program

I teach English-language writing, and I'm a native speaker of the English language. Being a native speaker might seem to be an excellent basic qualification for my job: at the very least, it should necessarily make me the model of English usage. However, it actually makes me very unusual.

According to The British Council, approximately 1.5 *billion* people around the world use English. Roughly 375 million of them are like me: they have learned English since birth, and most of them live in countries like the US, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand that are traditional English-language centers.

That still leaves over a billion English users. 375 million of *those* people live in countries that were British colonies until the middle of the last century, such as Ghana, India, Kenya, and Nigeria.

But the largest number of English speakers—50% of the global total—are in countries that were not British colonies and that don't have much of a history with English. Count China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, and South Korea among them. So, most English speakers aren't where we might expect them to be. In addition, they're not using English in ways we might expect, either, which helps explain why I'm referring to them as "users" and not "writers" or "speakers." Most people who use English around the world do so in specific circumstances in order to get very specific things done. Many Indians, for instance, might use English in publications and to transact business over the phone, Hindi in a government office, Gujarati at the store, and maybe one of several other languages at home.

What does this mean for my teaching and research? People and information move around globally more so now than ever, and that movement makes diverse uses of English feed back into the US. As students at the U (and the U is not alone) become more culturally and linguistically diverse, I often have as much to learn from them as I have to teach them.

This short example uses each of the cohesion strategies described above:

- Overall, the example attempts to honor the given-new contract. It starts on familiar territory—or at least, with an attempt to orient the reader very quickly to the writer's personal approach. And it also makes a statement about the writer that the reader likely intuitively agrees with: namely, he's a native speaker of English, which makes him well qualified to be an English teacher. But the first paragraph ends with a surprising claim: being a native English speaker means being unusual. Here, then, the writer starts with what's comfortable but then uses end emphasis to reinforce the "new" information at the end.
- The writer does use several stock transitions: in fact, one of them—"however"—helps introduce the surprising sentence at the end of the introduction by clearly signposting something different or unexpected. And, as another example, the fourth paragraph

starts with “but,” which signposts another transition to information that contradicts what comes before. (You may have been told never to start sentences with conjunctions like “but” or “and.” It turns out that it’s generally fine to do that. Just be aware of your readers’ preferences.)

- Pronouns appear to be the most common cohesion device in the essay. At the start of the third paragraph, for example, “that” stands in for the statistic in the previous paragraph, which would be hard to write out all over again. But “that” also carries forward the sense of the statistic into the next paragraph. And “those people” carries the statistic forward to the next sentence. (Really, “those” is actually an adjective that modifies “people,” but it’s enough like a pronoun that we’re handling it like one here.)
- Repetition is also common in this essay. Words are repeated—or at least, put very close to other words that are very similar in meaning. “English” and “British colonies” clearly help tie together the third and fourth paragraphs. And sentences show parallelism. See, for instance, paragraph four: “So, most English speakers aren’t where we would expect them to be. In addition, they’re not using English in ways we might expect, either.”

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10.3: Parallel Structure

What exactly is parallel structure? It's simply the practice of using the same structures or forms multiple times: making sure the parts are parallel to each other. Parallel structure can be applied to a single sentence, a paragraph, or even multiple paragraphs. Compare the two following sentences:

- Yara loves running, to swim, and biking.
- Yara loves running, swimming, and biking.



Figure 10.3.1

Was the second sentence easier to comprehend than the first? The second sentence uses parallelism—all three verbs are gerunds, whereas in the first sentence two are gerunds and one is an infinitive. While the first sentence is technically correct, it's easy to trip up over the mismatching items. The application of parallelism improves writing style and readability, and it makes sentences easier to process.

Compare the following examples:

Example 10.3.1:

- Lacking parallelism: "She likes cooking, jogging, and *to read*."
 - Parallel: "She likes cooking, jogging, and reading."
 - Parallel: "She likes to cook, jog, and read."
- Lacking parallelism: "He likes to swim and *running*."
 - Parallel: "He likes to swim and to run."
 - Parallel: "He likes swimming and running."

Once again, the examples above combine gerunds and infinitives. To make them parallel, the sentences should be rewritten with just gerunds or just infinitives. Note that the first nonparallel example, while inelegantly worded, is grammatically correct: "cooking," "jogging," and "to read" are all grammatically valid conclusions to "She likes."

- Lacking parallelism: "The dog ran across the yard, jumped over the fence, and **down the alley sprinted**."
- Grammatical but not employing parallelism: "The dog ran across the yard and jumped over the fence, and **down the alley he sprinted**."
- Parallel: "The dog ran across the yard, jumped over the fence, and **sprinted down the alley**."

The nonparallel example above is *not* grammatically correct: "down the alley sprinted" is not a grammatically valid conclusion to "The dog." The second example, which does not attempt to employ parallelism in its conclusion, is grammatically valid; "down the alley he sprinted" is an entirely separate clause.

Parallelism can also apply to names. If you're writing a research paper that includes references to several different authors, you should be consistent in your references. For example, if you talk about Jane Goodall and Henry Harlow, you should say "Goodall and Harlow," not "Jane and Harlow" or "Goodall and Henry."

You can also apply parallelism across a passage:

Manuel painted eight paintings in the last week. Jennifer sculpted five statues in the last month. Zama wrote fifteen songs in the last two months.

Each of the sentences in the preceding paragraph has the same structure: Name + *-ed* verb + number of things + *in the* past time period. When using parallelism across multiple sentences, be sure that you're using it well. If you aren't careful, you can stray into

being repetitive. Unfortunately, really the only way to test this is by re-reading the passage and seeing if it “feels right.” While this test doesn’t have any rules to it, it can often help.

Exercise 10.3.1

Read the following passage. Correct any errors in parallelism that you find. Remember, non-parallel things are typically grammatically correct, but making things parallel will improve your writing style. Type your correct answer in the text frame below:

“The Bone Wars” refers to a period of intense fossil speculation and discovery in American history (1872–1892). The wars were marked by a heated rivalry between Edward Drinker Cope and Othniel Charles Marsh. At one time, Edward and Marsh were amicable: they even named species after each other. Over time, however, their relationship soured, likely due in part to their strong personalities. Cope was known to be pugnacious and possessed a quick temper. Marsh was slower, more methodical, and introverted. Eventually, each of the two paleontologists would resort to underhanded methods to try to out-compete the other in the field, resorting to bribery, theft, and destroying bones.

By the end of the Bone Wars, both Cope and Marsh were financially and socially ruined by their attempts to disgrace each other, but their contributions to science and the field of paleontology were massive. Several of Cope’s and Marsh’s discoveries are the most well-known of dinosaurs: Triceratops, Allosaurus, Diplodocus, and Stegosaurus. Their cumulative discoveries defined the then-emerging field of paleontology. Before Cope’s and Marsh’s discoveries, there were only nine named species of dinosaur in North America. Judging by pure numbers, Marsh “won” the Bone Wars: Cope discovered a total of 56 new dinosaur species, but Marsh had found 80.

Answer

Here are the sentences that have issues with parallelism, as well as suggestions for their revision.

1. At one time, **Edward** and **Marsh** were amicable: they even named species after each other.
 - In this sentence, there is both a first name and a last name used to identify different people. Unless one person commonly goes by their last name while the other goes by their first, you should use first or last names; not a mix of the two: “Cope and Marsh were. . . “
2. Cope was known **to be pugnacious** and **possessed** a quick temper.
 - “Was known to be” and “possessed” are both past-tense verbs, but one is a perfect tense (known) while the other isn’t. To make the sentence more parallel, you would change it to something like “Cope was known to be pugnacious and to possess a quick temper” or “Cope was pugnacious and possessed a quick temper.”
3. Marsh was **slower, more methodical, and introverted**.
 - The first two adjectives are comparatives, while *introverted* is not. A more parallel version of the sentence would read: “Marsh was slower, more methodical, and more introverted.”
4. Eventually, each of the two paleontologists would resort to underhanded methods to try to out-compete the other in the field, resorting to **bribery, theft, and destroying** bones.
 - *Bribery* and *theft* are both nouns, while *destroying* is a gerund. Changing *destroying* to a noun will make the sentence more parallel: “bribery, theft, and the destruction of bones.”
5. Judging by pure numbers, Marsh “won” the Bone Wars: Cope **discovered** a total of 56 new dinosaur species, but Marsh **had found** 80.
 - Saying “Marsh discovered 80” instead of using *had found* is a better fit for parallel structure.

RHETORIC AND PARALLELISM

Parallelism can also involve repeated words or repeated phrases. These uses are part of “rhetoric” (a field that focuses on persuading readers) Here are a few examples of repetition:

- “**The inherent vice** of capitalism is the unequal sharing of blessings; **the inherent virtue** of socialism is the equal sharing of miseries.” —Winston Churchill

- “Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall **pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe** to assure the survival and the success of liberty.” —John F. Kennedy
- “And that government **of the people, by the people, for the people**, shall not perish from the earth.” —Abraham Lincoln, *Gettysburg Address*

When used this way, parallelism makes your writing or speaking much stronger. These repeated phrases seem to bind the work together and make it more powerful—and more inspiring.

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10.4: Practice Activities- Parallel Structure

Parallelism

Read the following passage. Correct any errors in parallelism that you find. Remember, non-parallel things are typically grammatically correct, but making things parallel will improve your writing style. Type your correct answer in the text frame below:

“The Bone Wars” refers to a period of intense fossil speculation and discovery in American history (1872–1892). The wars were marked by a heated rivalry between Edward Drinker Cope and Othniel Charles Marsh. At one time, Edward and Marsh were amicable: they even named species after each other. Over time, however, their relationship soured, likely due in part to their strong personalities. Cope was known to be pugnacious and possessed a quick temper. Marsh was slower, more methodical, and introverted. Eventually, each of the two paleontologists would resort to underhanded methods to try to out-compete the other in the field, resorting to bribery, theft, and destroying bones.

By the end of the Bone Wars, both Cope and Marsh were financially and socially ruined by their attempts to disgrace each other, but their contributions to science and the field of paleontology were massive. Several of Cope’s and Marsh’s discoveries are the most well-known of dinosaurs: Triceratops, Allosaurus, Diplodocus, and Stegosaurus. Their cumulative discoveries defined the then-emerging field of paleontology. Before Cope’s and Marsh’s discoveries, there were only nine named species of dinosaur in North America. Judging by pure numbers, Marsh “won” the Bone Wars: Cope discovered a total of 56 new dinosaur species, but Marsh had found 80.

? Exercise 10.4.1

Enter your answer here...

Answer

At one time, **Edward** and **Marsh** were amicable: they even named species after each other.

- In this sentence, there is both a first name and a last name used to identify different people. Unless one person commonly goes by their last name while the other goes by their first, you should use first or last names; not a mix of the two: “Cope and Marsh were. . . “

Cope was known to **be pugnacious** and **possessed** a quick temper.

- “Was known to be” and “possessed” are both past-tense verbs, but one is a perfect tense (known) while the other isn’t. To make the sentence more parallel, you would change it to something like “Cope was known to be pugnacious and to possess a quick temper” or “Cope was pugnacious and possessed a quick temper.”

Marsh was **slower, more methodical, and introverted**.

- The first two adjectives are comparatives, while *introverted* is not. A more parallel version of the sentence would read: “Marsh was slower, more methodical, and more introverted.”

Eventually, each of the two paleontologists would resort to underhanded methods to try to out-compete the other in the field, resorting to **bribery, theft, and destroying** bones.

- *Bribery* and *theft* are both nouns, while *destroying* is a gerund. Changing *destroying* to a noun will make the sentence more parallel: “bribery, theft, and the destruction of bones.”

Judging by pure numbers, Marsh “won” the Bone Wars: Cope **discovered** a total of 56 new dinosaur species, but Marsh **had found** 80.

- Saying “Marsh discovered 80” instead of using *had found* is a better fit for parallel structure.

Academic Sentences

Look at the following items. Identify and address any issues with parallelism.

1. Low self-esteem can manifest itself in various behaviors. Some individuals may become paralyzed at the prospect of making a decision. Other individuals may bend their wills to others' in order to keep the peace. Yet another symptom is the retreat from society as a whole—to become isolated.
2. The influence of genetics on human behavior has been shown through studies of twins who were separated at birth. Not only do these sets of individuals share many physical characteristics, but they also tend to have the same sort of interests and biases and utilize similar mental processes.
3. *Nocturne in Black and Gold (The Falling Rocket)* by James Abbott McNeil Whistler is very emblematic of the impressionist movement: its dark colors, contrast, and lack of definite form reflect the attitudes of the day.

? Exercise 10.4.2

Enter your answer here...

Answer

The first two sentences that identify behaviors of low self-esteem both start with the construction adjective + *individuals* + *may* verb. Changing the third sentence to match this construction will create a stronger introduction to the paper:

- Low self-esteem can manifest itself in various behaviors. Some individuals may become paralyzed at the prospect of making a decision. Other individuals may bend their wills to others' in order to keep the peace. Yet other individuals may retreat from society as a whole and become isolated.

The ending clause “they also tend to have the same sort of interests and biases and utilize similar mental processes” could be more parallel (and more succinct) than it currently is. You could revise it to something like these:

- they also tend to have the same sort of interests, biases, and mental processes
- they also tend to have similar interests, biases, and mental processes

If you wanted to make the whole sentence more parallel, you may want to adjust the sentence to match the structure of the phrase “Not only do these sets of individuals share many physical characteristics”:

- Not only do these sets of individuals share many physical characteristics, but they also share similar interests, biases, and mental processes.

The items in “its dark colors, contrast, and lack of definite form” don’t quite match up. While they are all nouns, each item has a different structure (adjective noun, noun, noun + *of* + adjective noun). Here are a couple suggestions for more parallel items:

- Its depth of color, intensity of contrast, and lack of form reflect the attitudes of the day.
- Its dark colors, intense contrast, and lax forms reflect the attitudes of the day.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

11: Argument and Rhetorical Fallacies

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11.1: Argument

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11.2: Introduction to Logical Fallacies

What you'll learn to do: evaluate logical fallacies in argument

Fallacies are errors or tricks of reasoning. We call it an *error* of reasoning if the fallacy occurs accidentally; we call it a *trick of reasoning* if a speaker or writer uses the fallacy in order to deceive or manipulate his or her audience. The following are reasons to avoid logical fallacies in your writing:

- Logical fallacies can ruin an otherwise effective argument.
- Logical fallacies can damage your *ethos*, or credibility, as a writer.
- Logical fallacies can distract from the purpose of the argument.

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11.3: Manipulative Appeals to Logos

Learning Objectives

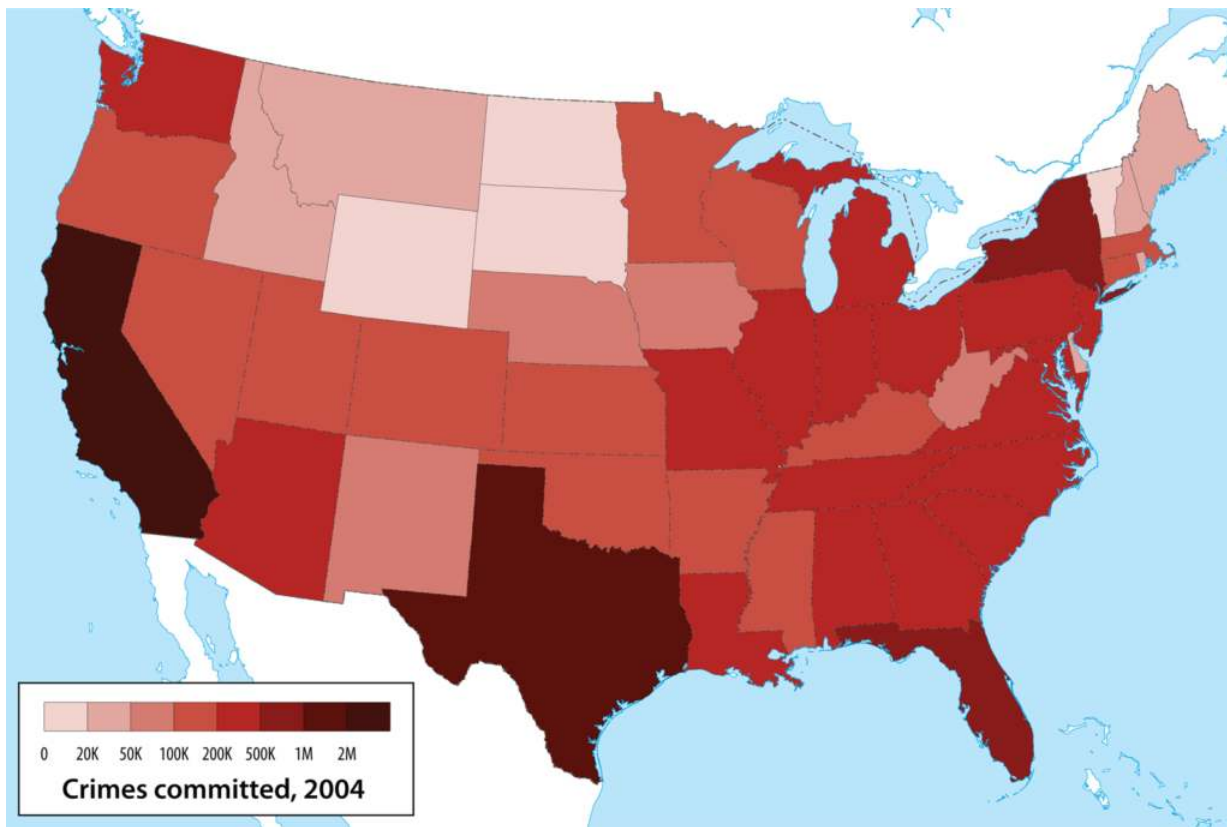
- Recognize appeals to logos
- Evaluate appeals to logos

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

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

Practice

Study the mapped visualization of crime in the U.S. below and answer the questions about how it appeals to logos.



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The misrepresentation of information or data is often accompanied by logical fallacies. Below are some fallacies that misuse appeals to logos or attempt to manipulate the logic of an argument:

Fallacy	Description	Example
Hasty generalization	jumping to conclusions based upon an unrepresentative sample or insufficient evidence.	“10 of the last 14 National Spelling Bee Champions have been Indian American. Indian Americans must all be great spellers!”
Appeal to ignorance—true believer’s form	arguing along the lines that if an opponent can’t prove something isn’t the case, then it is reasonable to believe that it is the case; transfers the burden of proof away from the person making the claim (the proponent).	“You can’t prove that extraterrestrials haven’t visited earth, so it is reasonable to believe that they have visited earth.”
Appeal to ignorance—skeptic’s form	confusing absence of evidence with evidence of absence; assumes that if you cannot now prove something exists, then it is shown that it doesn’t exist.	“There’s no proof that starting classes later in the day will improve the performance of our high school students; therefore, this change in schedule will not work.”
Begging the question	circular argument because the premise is the same as the claim that you are trying to prove.	“This legislation is sinful because it is the wrong thing to do.”

False dilemma	misuse of the either/or argument; presenting only two options when other choices exist	“Either we pass this ordinance or there will be rioting in the streets.”
Post hoc ergo propter hoc	Latin phrase meaning “after this, therefore because of this”; confuses correlation with causation by concluding that an event preceding a second event must be the cause of that second event.	“My child was diagnosed with autism after receiving vaccinations. That is proof that vaccines are to blame.”
Non sequitur	Latin for “does not follow”; the conclusion cannot be inferred from the premises because there is a break in the logical connection between a claim and the premises that are meant to support it, either because a premise is untrue (or missing) or because the relationship between premises does not support the deduction stated in the claim.	“If she is a Radford student, she is a member of a sorority. She is a Radford student. Therefore she is a member of a sorority.”
Smoke screen	avoiding the real issue or a tough question by introducing an unrelated topic as a distraction; sometimes called a red herring.	“My opponent says I am weak on crime, but I have been one of the most reliable participants in city council meetings.”
Straw man	pretending to criticize an opponent’s position but actually misrepresenting his or her view as simpler and/or more extreme than it is and therefore easier to refute than the original or actual position; unfairly undermines credibility of claim if not source of claim.	“Senator Smith says we should cut back the Defense budget. His position is that we should let down our defenses and just trust our enemies not to attack us!”

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11.4: Manipulative Appeals to Pathos

Learning Objectives

- Recognize appeals to pathos
- Evaluate appeals to pathos

Up to a certain point, an appeal to pathos can be a legitimate part of an argument. For example, a writer or speaker may begin with an anecdote showing the effect of a law on an individual. This anecdote will be a means of gaining an audience's attention for an argument using evidence and reason to present the full case as to why the law should/should not be repealed or amended. In such a context, engaging the emotions, values, or beliefs of the audience is a legitimate tool being used effectively.

An appropriate appeal to pathos is different than trying to unfairly play upon the audience's feelings and emotions through fallacious, misleading, or excessively emotional appeals. Such a manipulative use of pathos may alienate the audience or cause them to tune out. An example would be the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) commercials featuring the song "In the Arms on an Angel" and footage of abused animals. Even Sarah McLachlan, the singer and spokesperson featured in the commercials, admits that she changes the channel because they are too depressing (Brekke, 2014).

Even if an appeal to pathos is not manipulative, such an appeal should complement rather than replace reason and evidence-based argument. In addition to making use of pathos, authors must establish credibility (ethos) and must supply reasons and evidence (logos) in support of their positions. An author who essentially replaces logos and ethos with pathos alone is risking losing his or her audience.

See below for the most common fallacies that misuse appeals to pathos:

Fallacy	Description	Example
Appeal to fear:	using scare tactics; emphasizing threats or exaggerating possible dangers.	"Without this additional insurance, you could find yourself broke and homeless."
Appeal to guilt/appeal to pity	trying to evoke an emotional reaction that will cause the audience to behave sympathetically even if it means disregarding the issue at hand.	"I know I missed assignments, but if you fail me, I will lose my financial aid and have to drop out."
Appeal to popularity	urging audience to follow a course of action because "everyone does it."	"Nine out of ten shoppers have switched to Blindingly-Bright-Smile Toothpaste."
Slippery Slope	making an unsupported or inadequately supported claim that "One thing inevitably leads to another." This may be considered a fallacy of logos as well as pathos but is placed in this section because it often is used to evoke the emotion of fear.	"We can't legalize marijuana; if we do, then the next thing you know people will be strung out on heroin."
Appeal to the People	also called stirring symbols fallacy; the communicator distracts the readers or listeners with symbols that are very meaningful to them, with strong associations or connotations.	This fallacy is referred to in the sentence "That politician always wraps himself in the flag."

Appeal to Tradition	people have been done it a certain way for a long time; assumes that what has been customary in past is correct and proper.	“A boy always serves as student-body president; a girl always serves as secretary.”
Loaded-Language and other emotionally charged uses of language	using slanted or biased language, including God terms, devil terms, euphemisms, and dysphemisms.	Example: In the sentence “Cutting access to food stamps would encourage personal responsibility,” the god term is “personal responsibility.” It might seem as if it would be hard to argue against “personal responsibility” or related god terms such as “independence” and “self-reliance.” However, it would require a definition of “personal responsibility,” combined with evidence from studies of people’s behavior in the face of food stamp or other benefit reductions, to argue that cutting access to food stamps would lead to the intended results.

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11.5: Manipulative Appeals to Ethos

Learning Objective

- Recognize appeals to ethos

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

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

Beyond lying about their own credentials, authors may employ a number of tricks or fallacies to lure you to their point of view. Some of the more common techniques appear in the chart below. When you recognize these fallacies being committed you should question the credibility of the speaker and the legitimacy of the argument.

Fallacy	Description	Example
Ad Hominem	Attacking the person making an argument rather than the argument itself.	Of course that doctor advocates vaccination—he probably owns stock in a pharmaceutical company.
False Authority	Relying on claims of expertise when the claimed expert (a) lacks adequate background/credentials in the relevant field, (b) departs in major ways from the consensus in the field, or (c) is biased, e.g., has a financial stake in the outcome.	Dr. X is an engineer, and he doesn't believe in global warming.
Guilt by Association	Linking the person making an argument to an unpopular person or group.	My opponent is a card-carrying member of the K.K.K.
Poisoning the Well	Undermining an opponent's credibility before he or she gets a chance to speak.	The prosecution is going to bring up a series of so-called experts who are getting a lot of money to testify here today.
Transfer Fallacy	Associating the argument with someone or something popular or respected; hoping that the positive associations will "rub off" onto the argument.	In politics, decorating a stage with red, white, and blue flags and bunting.
Name-Calling	Labeling an opponent with words that have negative connotations in an effort to undermine the opponent's credibility.	He's just a dumb jock.
Plain Folk	Presenting yourself as (or associating your position with) ordinary people with whom you hope your audience will identify; arguers imply that they or their supporters are trustworthy because they are "common people" rather than members of the elite.	Who would you vote for—someone raised in a working-class neighborhood who has the support of Joe the Plumber or some elitist whose daddy sent him to a fancy school?
Testimonial	Inserting an endorsement of the argument by someone who is popular or respected but who lacks expertise or authority in the area under discussion	Eat this cereal because Beyonce eats it, too.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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12.1: Toulmin's Argument Model

Stephen Toulmin, an English philosopher and logician, identified elements of a persuasive argument. These give useful categories by which an argument may be analyzed.

Claim

A claim is a statement that you are asking the other person to accept. This includes information you are asking them to accept as true or actions you want them to accept and enact.

✓ Example 12.1.1:

You should use a hearing aid.

Many people start with a claim, but then find that it is challenged. If you just ask me to do something, I will not simply agree with what you want. I will ask why I should agree with you. I will ask you to prove your claim. This is where grounds become important.

Grounds

The grounds (or data) is the basis of real persuasion and is made up of data and hard facts, plus the reasoning behind the claim. It is the 'truth' on which the claim is based. Grounds may also include proof of expertise and the basic premises on which the rest of the argument is built.



Figure 12.1.1

The actual truth of the data may be less than 100%, as much data are ultimately based on perception. We assume what we measure is true, but there may be problems in this measurement, ranging from a faulty measurement instrument to biased sampling.

It is critical to the argument that the grounds are not challenged because, if they are, they may become a claim, which you will need to prove with even deeper information and further argument.

✓ Example 12.1.2:

Over 70% of all people over 65 years have a hearing difficulty.

Information is usually a very powerful element of persuasion, although it does affect people differently. Those who are dogmatic, logical or rational will more likely to be persuaded by factual data. Those who argue emotionally and who are highly invested in their own position will challenge it or otherwise try to ignore it. It is often a useful test to give something factual to the other person that disproves their argument, and watch how they handle it. Some will accept it without question. Some will dismiss it out of hand. Others will dig deeper, requiring more explanation. This is where the warrant comes into its own.

Warrant

A warrant links data and other grounds to a claim, legitimizing the claim by showing the grounds to be relevant. The warrant may be explicit or unspoken and implicit. It answers the question 'Why does that data mean your claim is true?'

✓ Example 12.1.3:

A hearing aid helps most people to hear better.

The warrant may be simple and it may also be a longer argument, with additional sub-elements including those described below.

Warrants may be based on *logos*, *ethos* or *pathos*, or values that are assumed to be shared with the listener.

In many arguments, warrants are often implicit and hence unstated. This gives space for the other person to question and expose the warrant, perhaps to show it is weak or unfounded.

Backing

The backing (or support) for an argument gives additional support to the warrant by answering different questions.

✓ Example 12.1.4:

Hearing aids are available locally.

Qualifier

The qualifier (or modal qualifier) indicates the strength of the leap from the data to the warrant and may limit how universally the claim applies. They include words such as 'most', 'usually', 'always' or 'sometimes'. Arguments may hence range from strong assertions to generally quite floppy with vague and often rather uncertain kinds of statement.

✓ Example 12.1.5:

Hearing aids help most people.

Another variant is the reservation, which may give the possibility of the claim being incorrect. Unless there is evidence to the contrary, hearing aids do no harm to ears.

Qualifiers and reservations are much used by advertisers who are constrained not to lie. Thus they slip 'usually', 'virtually', 'unless' and so on into their claims.

Rebuttal

Despite the careful construction of the argument, there may still be counter-arguments that can be used. These may be rebutted either through a continued dialogue, or by pre-empting the counter-argument by giving the rebuttal during the initial presentation of the argument.

✓ Example 12.1.6:

There is a support desk that deals with technical problems.

Any rebuttal is an argument in itself, and thus may include a claim, warrant, backing and so on. It also, of course can have a rebuttal. Thus if you are presenting an argument, you can seek to understand both possible rebuttals and also rebuttals to the rebuttals.

See also:

Arrangement, Use of Language

Toulmin, S. (1969). *The Uses of Argument*, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press

<http://changingminds.org/disciplines/argument/making_argument/toulmin.htm > [accessed April 2011]

See more at: www.designmethodsandprocesses....dwkAUTvh.dpuf

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12.2: Toulmin's Schema

Stephen Edelston Toulmin (born March 25, 1922) is a British philosopher, author, and educator. Influenced by the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, Toulmin devoted his works to the analysis of moral reasoning. Throughout his writings, he seeks to develop practical arguments which can be used effectively in evaluating the ethics behind moral issues. The Toulmin Model of Argumentation, a diagram containing six interrelated components used for analyzing arguments, was considered his most influential work, particularly in the field of rhetoric and communication, and in computer science.

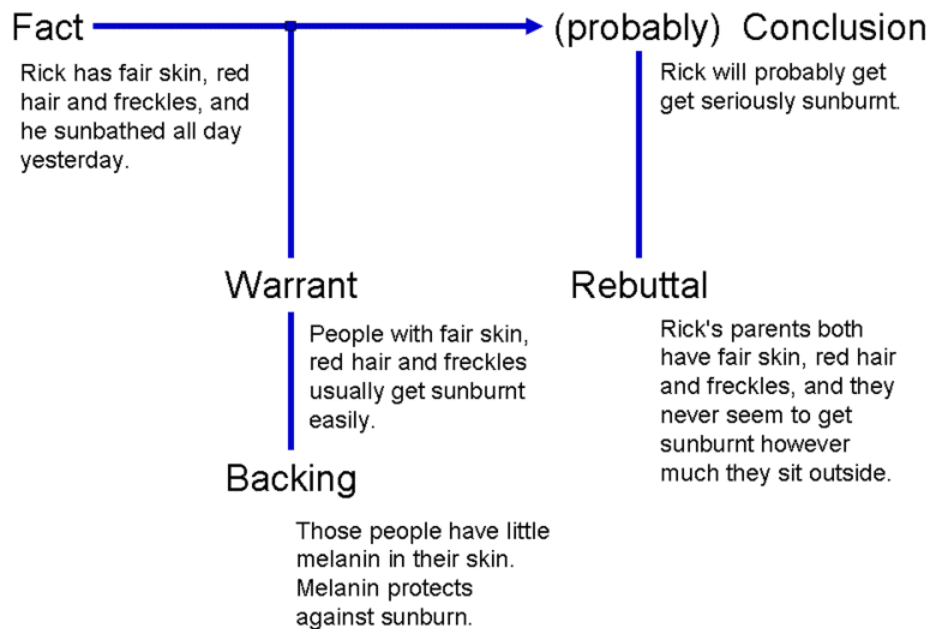


Figure 12.2.1

Stephen Toulmin is a British philosopher and educator who devoted to analyzing moral reasoning. Throughout his writings, he seeks to develop practical arguments which can be used effectively in evaluating the ethics behind moral issues. His most famous work was his Model of Argumentation (sometimes called "Toulmin's Schema," which is a method of analyzing an argument by breaking it down into six parts. Once an argument is broken down and examined, weaknesses in the argument can be found and addressed.

Toulmin's Schema:

1. Claim: conclusions whose merit must be established. For example, if a person tries to convince a listener that he is a British citizen, the claim would be "I am a British citizen."
2. Data: the facts appealed to as a foundation for the claim. For example, the person introduced in 1 can support his claim with the supporting data "I was born in Bermuda."
3. Warrant: the statement authorizing the movement from the data to the claim. In order to move from the data established in 2, "I was born in Bermuda," to the claim in 1, "I am a British citizen," the person must supply a warrant to bridge the gap between 1 & 2 with the statement "A man born in Bermuda will legally be a British Citizen." Toulmin stated that an argument is only as strong as its weakest warrant and if a warrant isn't valid, then the whole argument collapses. Therefore, it is important to have strong, valid warrants.
4. Backing: facts that give credibility to the statement expressed in the warrant; backing must be introduced when the warrant itself is not convincing enough to the readers or the listeners. For example, if the listener does not deem the warrant as credible, the speaker would supply legal documents as backing statement to show that it is true that "A man born in Bermuda will legally be a British Citizen."
5. Rebuttal: statements recognizing the restrictions to which the claim may legitimately be applied. The rebuttal is exemplified as follows, "A man born in Bermuda will legally be a British citizen, unless he has betrayed Britain and become a spy of another

country.”

6. Qualifier: words or phrases expressing how certain the author/speaker is concerning the claim. Such words or phrases include “possible,” “probably,” “impossible,” “certainly,” “presumably,” “as far as the evidence goes,” or “necessarily.” The claim “I am definitely a British citizen” has a greater degree of force than the claim “I am a British citizen, presumably.”
7. The first three elements “claim,” “data,” and “warrant” are considered as the essential components of practical arguments, while the 4-6 “Qualifier,” “Backing,” and “Rebuttal” may not be needed in some arguments. When first proposed, this layout of argumentation is based on legal arguments and intended to be used to analyze arguments typically found in the courtroom; in fact, Toulmin did not realize that this layout would be applicable to the field of rhetoric and communication until later. 1

Here are a few more examples of Toulmin’s Schema:

Suppose you see a one of those commercials for a product that promises to give you whiter teeth. Here are the basic parts of the argument behind the commercial:



Figure 12.2.2

1. Claim: You should buy our tooth-whitening product.
2. Data: Studies show that teeth are 50% whiter after using the product for a specified time.
3. Warrant: People want whiter teeth.
4. Backing: Celebrities want whiter teeth.
5. Rebuttal: Commercial says “unless you don’t want to attract guys.”
6. Qualifier: Fine print says “product must be used six weeks for results.”

Notice that those commercials don’t usually bother trying to convince you that you want whiter teeth; instead, they assume that you have bought into the value our culture places on whiter teeth. When an assumption—a warrant in Toulmin’s terms—is unstated, it’s called an implicit warrant. Sometimes, however, the warrant may need to be stated because it is a powerful part of the argument. When the warrant is stated, it’s called an explicit warrant. 2

✓ **Example 12.2.1:**

1. Claim: People should probably own a gun.
2. Data: Studies show that people who own a gun are less likely to be mugged.
3. Warrant: People want to be safe.
4. Backing: May not be necessary. In this case, it is common sense that people want to be safe.
5. Rebuttal: Not everyone should own a gun. Children and those with mental disorders/problems should not own a gun.
6. Qualifier: The word “probably” in the claim.

✓ **Example 12.2.2:**

1. Claim: Flag burning should be unconstitutional in most cases.
2. Data: A national poll says that 60% of Americans want flag burning unconstitutional.
3. Warrant: People want to respect the flag.
4. Backing: Official government procedures for the disposal of flags.
5. Rebuttal: Not everyone in the U.S. respects the flag.
6. Qualifier: The phrase “in most cases”

Toulmin says that the weakest part of any argument is its weakest warrant. Remember that the warrant is the link between the data and the claim. If the warrant isn’t valid, the argument collapses. 2

Sources

1. [Stephen Toulmin](#)
2. **Toulmin's Analysis**

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12.3: Working Thesis Statement

Parts of a Thesis Sentence

The thesis sentence is the key to most academic writing. This is important and worth repeating: **The thesis sentence is the key to most academic writing.**

The purpose of academic writing is to offer your own insights, analyses, and ideas—to show not only that you understand the concepts you’re studying, but also that you have thought about those concepts in your own way, agreed or disagreed, or developed your own unique ideas as a result of your analysis. The thesis sentence is the one sentence that encapsulates the result of your thinking, as it offers your main insight or argument in condensed form.

A basic thesis sentence has two main parts:

1. **Topic:** What you’re writing about
2. **Angle:** What your main idea is about that topic

Thesis: A regular exercise regime leads to multiple benefits, both physical and emotional.

Topic: Regular exercise regime

Angle: Leads to multiple benefits

Thesis Angles

Most writers can easily create a topic: television viewing, the Patriot Act, Shakespeare’s Hamlet. The more difficult part is creating an angle. But the angle is necessary as a means of creating interest and as a means of indicating the type and organization of the information to follow.

Click on each of the thesis angles in the box below that you want to learn more about.

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

So what about this thesis sentence? **Adult college students have different experiences than traditionally-aged college students.**

As a reader, you understand intuitively that the information to come will deal with the different types of experiences that adult college students have. But you don’t quite know if the information will deal only with adults, or if it will compare adults’ experiences with those of typical college students. And you don’t quite know what type of information will come first, second, third, etc.

Realize that a thesis sentence offers a range of possibilities for specificity and organization. As a writer, you may opt to pique reader interest by being very specific or not fully specific in your thesis sentence. The point here is that there’s no one standard way to write a thesis sentence.

Sometimes a writer is more or less specific depending on the reading audience and the effect the writer wants to create. Sometimes a writer puts the angle first and the topic last in the sentence, or sometimes the angle is even implied. You need to gauge your reading audience and you need to understand your own style as a writer. The only basic requirements are that the thesis sentence needs a topic and an angle. The rest is up to you.

Common Problems

Although you have creative control over your thesis sentence, you still should try to avoid the following problems, not for stylistic reasons, but because they indicate a problem in the thinking that underlies the thesis sentence.

Thesis Sentence too Broad

Hospice workers need support.

The sentence above actually is a thesis sentence; it has a topic (hospice workers) and an angle (need support). But the angle is very broad. When the angle in a thesis sentence is too broad, the writer may not have carefully thought through the specific support for the rest of the writing. A thesis angle that’s too broad makes it easy to fall into the trap of offering information that deviates from that angle.

Thesis Sentence too Narrow

Hospice workers have a 55% turnover rate compared to the general health care population's 25% turnover rate.

The above sentence really isn't a thesis sentence at all, because there's no angle idea to support. A narrow statistic, or a narrow statement of fact, doesn't offer the writer's own ideas or analysis about a topic. A clearer example of a thesis statement with an angle of development would be the following:

The high turnover rate in hospice workers (55 percent) compared to the general health care population (25 percent) indicates a need to develop support systems to reverse this trend.

Where to Place a Thesis?

In the U.S., it's customary for most academic writers to put the thesis sentence somewhere toward the start of the essay or research paper. The focus here is on offering the main results of your own thinking in your thesis angle and then providing evidence in the writing to support your thinking.

A legal comparison might help to understand thesis placement. If you have seen television shows or movies with courtroom scenes, the lawyer usually starts out by saying, "My client is innocent!" to set the scene, and then provides different types of evidence to support that argument. Academic writing in the U.S. is similar; your thesis sentence provides your main assertion to set the scene of the writing, and then the details and evidence in the rest of the writing support the assertion in the thesis sentence.

NOTE: Although the usual pattern is "thesis sentence toward the start," there may be reasons to place the thesis elsewhere in the writing. You may decide to place the thesis sentence at the end of the writing if your purpose is to gradually induce a reading audience to understand and accept your assertion. You may decide to place the thesis sentence in the middle of the writing if you think you need to provide relatively complicated background information to your readers before they can understand the assertion in your thesis.

As a writer, you have the option of placing the thesis anywhere in the writing. But, as a writer, you also have the obligation to make the thesis sentence idea clear to your readers. Beginning writers usually stick with "thesis sentence toward the start," as it makes the thesis prominent in the writing and also reminds them that they need to stick with providing evidence directly related to that thesis sentence's angle.

Thesis Creation

At what point do you write a thesis sentence? Of course, this varies from writer to writer and from writing assignment to writing assignment. You'll usually do some preliminary idea development first, before a thesis idea emerges. And you'll usually have a working thesis before you do the bulk of your research, or before you fully create the supporting details for your writing.

Think of the thesis as the mid-point of an hourglass.

You develop ideas for writing and prewriting, using various strategies, until a main idea or assertion emerges. This main idea or assertion becomes your point to prove—your working thesis sentence.

Once you have a working thesis sentence with your main idea, you can then develop more support for that idea, but in a more focused way that deepens your thinking about the thesis angle.

Realize that a thesis is really a working thesis until you finalize the writing. As you do more focused research, or develop more focused support, your thesis may change a bit. Just make sure that you retain the basic thesis characteristics of topic and angle.

Thesis Checklist

When you draft a working thesis, it can be helpful to review the guidelines for a strong thesis. The following checklist is a helpful tool you can use to check your thesis once you have it drafted.

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12.4: Argumentative Thesis Statements

Learning Objective

- Recognize an arguable thesis

Below are some of the key features of an argumentative thesis statement.

An argumentative thesis is . . .

Debatable

An argumentative thesis must make a claim about which reasonable people can disagree. Statements of fact or areas of general agreement cannot be argumentative theses because few people disagree about them.

Example

Junk food is bad for your health is not a debatable thesis. Most people would agree that junk food is bad for your health.

Because junk food is bad for your health, the size of sodas offered at fast-food restaurants should be regulated by the federal government is a debatable thesis. Reasonable people could agree or disagree with the statement.

Assertive

An argumentative thesis takes a position, asserting the writer's stance. Questions, vague statements, or quotations from others are not argumentative theses because they do not assert the writer's viewpoint.

Example

Federal immigration law is a tough issue about which many people disagree is not an arguable thesis because it does not assert a position.

Federal immigration enforcement law needs to be overhauled because it puts undue constraints on state and local police is an argumentative thesis because it asserts a position that immigration enforcement law needs to be changed.

Reasonable

An argumentative thesis must make a claim that is logical and possible. Claims that are outrageous or impossible are not argumentative theses.

Example

City council members stink and should be thrown in jail is not an argumentative thesis. City council members' ineffectiveness is not a reason to send them to jail.

City council members should be term limited to prevent one group or party from maintaining control indefinitely is an arguable thesis because term limits are possible, and shared political control is a reasonable goal.

Evidence Based

An argumentative thesis must be able to be supported by evidence. Claims that presuppose value systems, morals, or religious beliefs cannot be supported with evidence and therefore are not argumentative theses.

Example

Individuals convicted of murder will go to hell when they die is not an argumentative thesis because its support rests on religious beliefs or values rather than evidence.

Rehabilitation programs for individuals serving life sentences should be funded because these programs reduce violence within prisons is an argumentative thesis because evidence such as case studies and statistics can be used to support it.

Focused

An argumentative thesis must be focused and narrow. A focused, narrow claim is clearer, more able to be supported with evidence, and more persuasive than a broad, general claim.

Example

The federal government should overhaul the U.S. tax code is not an effective argumentative thesis because it is too general (What part of the government? Which tax codes? What sections of those tax codes?) and would require an overwhelming amount of evidence to be fully supported.

The U.S. House of Representative should vote to repeal the federal estate tax because the revenue generated by that tax is negligible is an effective argumentative thesis because it identifies a specific actor and action and can be fully supported with evidence about the amount of revenue the estate tax generates.

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12.5: Practice- Argumentative Thesis Statements

Learning Objectives

- Recognize an argumentative thesis
- Evaluate an argumentative thesis

In the practice exercises below, you will use the information you learned in the previous reading to help you recognize and evaluate argumentative thesis statements. Keep in mind that a sound argumentative thesis should be debatable, assertive, reasonable, evidence based, and focused.

Practice: Argumentative Thesis Statements



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12.6: Formula for Refutation and Rebuttal

Learning Objective

- Recognize strategies for rebuttal and refutation of counterargument

Though writers may handle rebuttal and refutation in different ways, there is a formula for success in academic argument. Here are the key parts of that formula:

Accurately represent opposing viewpoints

If you don't accurately and thoroughly represent opposing viewpoints in your own writing, some of your potential audience will automatically be turned off. Good rebuttal and refutation begins with a solid understanding of all possible points of view on your topic. That may mean you even need to acknowledge and accommodate opposing points of view. Acknowledging other views shows you are aware of ideas that run counter to your claims. You will almost always be expected to at least acknowledge such views in your work. You may also, though, need to accommodate opposing views, especially if many people see them as reasonable. If, for example, you were writing a piece arguing that students should take a gap year between high school and college, it would benefit your work to acknowledge that a gap year isn't realistic for or even desired by all students. You may further accommodate this other view by explaining how some students may thrive in the structure that school provides and would gain by going directly from high school to college. Remember that even if you cannot prove positions that counter your own are wrong, you can still use rebuttal and refutation to show why they might be problematic, flawed, or just not as good as another possible position for some people.

Use a respectful, non-incendiary tone

It doesn't help the writer's cause to offend, upset, or alienate potential readers, even those who hold differing views. Treating all potential readers with respect and avoiding words or phrases that belittle people and/or their views will help you get your points across more effectively. For example, if you are writing a paper on why America would benefit from a third viable major political party, it will not help your cause to write that "Republicans are dumb, and Democrats are whiny." First, those claims are too general. But even if they weren't, they won't help your cause. If you choose to break down the perceived problems with members of political parties, you must do so in a way that is as respectful as possible. Calling someone a name or insulting them (directly or indirectly) is very rarely a successful strategy in argument.

Use reliable information in your rebuttal/refutation

Always be sure to carefully check the ideas or claims you make in rebutting a counterargument. The brain is not an infallible computer, and there are instances when we think we know information is accurate but it isn't. Sometimes we know a lot about a particular subject but we get information confused or time has changed things a bit. Additionally, we may be tempted to use a source that backs up our ideas perfectly, but it might not be the most reputable, credible, or up-to-date place for information. Don't assume you just have all of the information to shoot down counterarguments. Use your knowledge, but also do thorough research, double- and triple-check information, and look for sources that are likely to carry weight with readers. For example, it is widely assumed that bulls are attracted to the color red; however, in reality, bulls are colorblind, so what many people assume as fact is incorrect. Be thorough so you have confidence in your claims when you are rebutting/refuting and likewise when you are attempting to prevent yourself from being open to rebuttal/refutation.

Use qualifying words when applicable to help you be more accurate and to avoid locking you into an absolute claim

Qualifying words are terms such as "many," "most," "some," "might," "rarely," "doubtful," "often," etc. You get the point. These are words that don't lock you into a claim that could be easily refuted and that can help you more easily rebut counterarguments. For example, if someone says "Nobody dies of tuberculosis anymore" we might get the point that it isn't as common as it used to be. Still, it isn't an accurate statement, and a more precise way to phrase such a claim would be to qualify it: "Not many people die each year in America from tuberculosis." You might not always need to use qualifying terms. If you are making a point that is absolute, feel free to make it strongly; however, if there is a need to give your claim more flexibility, use qualifying words to help you.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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13.1: Visual Elements- Play, Use, and Design

So far you have examined how primarily written arguments work rhetorically. But visuals (symbols, paintings, photographs, advertisements, cartoons, etc.) also work rhetorically, and their meaning changes from context to context. Here's an example:

Imagine two straight lines intersecting each other at right angles. One line runs from north to south. The other from east to west. Now think about the meanings that this sign evokes.

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What came to mind as you pondered this sign? Crossroads? A first aid sign? The Swiss flag? Your little brother making a cross sign with his forefingers that signals “step away from the hallowed ground that is my bedroom”?

Now think of a circle around those lines so that the ends of the lines hit, or cross over, the circumference of the circle. What is the image's purpose now?

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What did you come up with? The Celtic cross? A surveyor's target? A pizza cut into really generous sizes?

Did you know that this symbol is also the symbol for our planet Earth? And it's the symbol for the Norse god, Odin. Furthermore, a quick web search will also tell you that John Dalton, a British chemist who led the way in atomic theory and died in 1844, used this exact same symbol to indicate the element sulfur.¹⁷

Recently, however, the symbol became the subject of a fiery political controversy. Former Alaska governor (and former vice-presidential candidate) Sarah Palin's marketing team placed several of these symbols—the lines crossed over the circumference of the circle in this case—on a map of the United States. The symbols indicated where the Republican Party had to concentrate their campaign because these two seemingly innocuous lines encompassed by a circle evoked, in this context, the symbol for crosshairs—which itself invokes a myriad of meanings that range from “focus” to “target.”

However, after the shooting of Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords in Arizona in January 2011, the symbol, and the image it was mapped onto, sparked a vehement nationwide debate about its connotative meaning. Clearly, the image's rhetorical effectiveness had transformed into something that some considered offensive. Palin's team withdrew the image from her website.¹⁸

How we understand symbols rhetorically, and indeed all images, depends on how the symbols work with the words they accompany, and on how we understand and read the image's context, or the social “landscape” within which the image is situated. As you have learned from earlier chapters, much of this contextual knowledge in persuasive situations is tacit, or unspoken.

Like writing, how we use images has real implications in the world. So when we examine visuals in rhetorical circumstances, we need to uncover this tacit knowledge. Even a seemingly innocuous symbol, like the one above, can denote a huge variety of meanings, and these meanings can become culturally loaded. The same is true for more complex images—something we will examine at length below.

In this chapter, then, we will explore how context—as well as purpose, audience, and design—render symbols and images rhetorically effective. The political anecdote above may seem shocking but, nevertheless, it indicates how persuasively potent visuals are, especially when they enhance the meaning of a text's words or vice versa. Our goal for this chapter, then, is to come to terms with the basics of visual analysis, which can encompass the analysis of words working with images or the analysis of images alone. When you compose your own arguments, you can put to use what you discover in this chapter when you select or consider creating visuals to accompany your own work.

Visual Analysis

Let's start with by reviewing what we mean by analysis. Imagine that your old car has broken down and your Uncle Bob has announced that he will fix it for you. The next day, you go to Uncle Bob's garage and find the engine of your car in pieces all over the driveway; you are further greeted with a vision of your hapless uncle greasily jabbing at the radiator with a screwdriver. Uncle Bob (whom you may never speak to again) has broken the car engine down into its component parts to try and figure out how your poor old car works and what is wrong with it.

Happy days are ahead, however. Despite the shock and horror that the scene above inspires, there is a method to Uncle Bob's madness. Amid the wreckage, he finds out how your car works and what is wrong with it so he can fix it and put it back together.

Analyzing, then, entails breaking down a text or an image into component parts (like your engine). And while analyzing doesn't entail *fixing* per se, it does allow you to figure out how a text or image works to convey the message it is trying to communicate. What constitutes the component parts of an image? How might we analyze a visual? What should we be looking for? To a certain extent we can analyze visuals in the same way we analyze written language; we break down a written text into component parts to figure out just *what* the creator's agenda might be and what effect the text might have on its readers.

When we analyze visuals we do take into account the same sorts of things we do when we analyze written texts, with some added features. We thus analyze visuals in terms of the following concepts—concepts that count for our component parts. Some of them you may recognize.

Genre

Genres that use visuals tell us a lot about what we can and can't do with them. Coming to terms with genre is rather like learning a new dance—certain moves, or conventions, are expected that dictate what kind of dance you have to learn. If you're asked to moonwalk, for instance, you know you have to glide backwards across the floor like Michael Jackson. It's sort of the same with visuals and texts; certain moves, or conventions, are expected that dictate what the genre allows and doesn't allow.

Below is a wonderful old bumper sticker from the 1960s 19. A bumper sticker, as we will discover, is a genre that involves specific conventions.



Figure 13.1.1

Bumper stickers today look quite a bit different, but the amount of space that a sticker's creator has to work with hasn't really changed. Bumper stickers demand that their creators come up with short phrases that are contextually understandable and accompanied by images that are easily readable—a photograph of an oil painting trying to squeeze itself on a bumper sticker would just be incomprehensible. In short, bumper stickers are an argument in a rush!

A bumper sticker calls for an analysis of images *and* words working together to create an argument. As for their rhetorical content, bumper stickers can demand that we vote a certain way, pay attention to a problem, act as part of a solution, or even recognize the affiliations of the driver of the car the sticker is stuck to. But their very success, given that their content is minimal, depends wholly on our understanding of the words and the symbols that accompany them in context.

Context/The Big Picture

Thinking about context is crucial when we are analyzing visuals, as it is with analyzing writing. We need to understand the political, social, economic, or historical situations from which the visual emerges. Moreover, we have to remember that the meaning of images change as time passes. For instance, what do we have to understand about the context from which the Kennedy sticker emerged in order to grasp its meaning? Furthermore, how has its meaning changed in the past 50 years?

First, to read the bumper sticker at face value, we have to know that a man named Kennedy is running for president. But president of what? Maybe that's obvious, but then again, how many know who the Australian prime minister was 50 years ago, or, for that matter, the leading official in China? Of course, we should know that the face on the bumper sticker belongs to John F. Kennedy, a US Democrat, who ran against the Republican nominee Richard Nixon, and who won the US presidential election in 1960. (We hope you know that anyway.)

Now think how someone seeing this bumper sticker, and the image of Kennedy on it, today would react differently than someone in 1960 would have. Since his election, JFK's status has transformed from American president into an icon of American history. We remember his historic debate with Nixon, the first televised presidential debate. (One wonders how much of a role this event played in his election given that the TV [a visual medium] turned a political underdog into a celebrity.²⁰) We also remember Kennedy for his part in the Cuban missile crisis, his integral role in the Civil Rights Movement and, tragically, we remember his assassination in 1963. In other words, after the passage of 50 years, we might read the face on the bumper sticker quite differently than we did in 1960.

While we examine this "text" from 50 years ago, it reminds us that the images we are surrounded by now change in meaning all the time. For instance, we are all familiar with the Apple logo. The image itself, on its own terms, is simply a silhouette of an apple

with a bite taken out of it. But, the visual does not now evoke the nourishment of a Granny Smith or a Golden Delicious. Instead, the logo is globally recognized as an icon of computer technology.

Purpose

Words and images can work together to present a point of view. But, in terms of visuals, that point of view often relies on what isn't explicit—what, as we noted above, is tacit.

The words on the sticker say quite simply “Kennedy For President.” We know now that this simple statement reveals that John F. Kennedy ran for president in 1960. But what was its rhetorical value back then? What did the bumper sticker want us to *do* with its message? After all, taken literally, it doesn't really tell us to *do* anything.

For now, let's cheat and jump the gun and guess that the bumper sticker's argument in 1960 was “Vote to Elect John F Kennedy for United States President.”

Okay. So knowing what we know from history, we can accept that the sticker is urging us to vote for Kennedy. It's trying to persuade us to do something. And the reason we know what we know about it is because we know how to read its genre and we comprehend its social, political, and historical context. But in order to be persuaded by its purpose, we need to know *why* voting for JFK is a good thing. We need to understand that its underlying message, “Vote for JFK,” is that to vote for JFK is a good thing for the future of the United States.

So, to be persuaded by the bumper sticker, we must agree with the reasons why voting for JFK is a good thing. But the bumper sticker doesn't give us any. Instead, it relies on what we are supposed to know about why we should vote for Kennedy. (JFK campaigned on a platform of liberal reform as well as increased spending for the military and space travel technology.²¹); Moreover, we should be aware of the evidence for why we should vote that way.²² Consequently, if we voted for JFK, we accepted the above claim, reasons, and evidence driving the bumper sticker's purpose without being told any of it by the bumper sticker. The claim, reasons and evidence are all tacit.

What about the image itself? How does that further the bumper sticker's purpose? We see that the image of JFK's smiling face is projected on top of the words “Kennedy for President.” The image is not placed off to the side; it is right in the middle of the bumper sticker. So for this bumper sticker to be visually persuasive, we need to agree that JFK, here represented by his smiling face, located right in the middle of the bumper sticker, on a backdrop of red, white, and blue, signifies a person we can trust to run the country.

Nowadays, JFK's face on the bumper sticker—or in any other genre for that matter —might underscore a different purpose. It might encompass nostalgia for an era gone by or it might be used as a resemblance argument, in order to compare President Kennedy with President Obama for example.²³

Overall then, when we see a visual used for rhetorical purposes, we must first determine the argument (claim, reasons, evidence) from which the visual is situated and then try to grasp why the visual is being used to further its purpose.

Audience and Medium

In their book *Picturing Texts*, Lester Faigley et al²⁴ claim that, when determining the audience for a visual, we must “think about how an author might expect the audience to receive the work” (104). Medium, then, dominates an audience's reception of an image. (So does **modality**. See below.) For instance, Faigley states that readers will most likely accept a photograph in a newspaper as news—unless of course one thinks that pictures in the tabloids of alien babies impersonating Elvis constitute news. Alien babies aside, readers of the news would expect that the picture on the front page of the *New York Times*, for instance, is a “faithful representation of something that actually happened” (105). An audience for a political cartoon in the newspaper, on the other hand, would know that the pictures they see in cartoons are not faithful representations of the news but opinions about current events and their participants, caricatured by a cartoonist. The expectations of the audience in terms of medium, then, determine much about how the visual is received.

As for our bumper sticker then, we might argue that the image of JFK speeding down the highway on the bumper of a spiffy new Ford Falcon would be persuasive to those who put their faith in the efficacy of bumper stickers, as well as the image of the man on the bumper sticker. Moreover, given that the Falcon is speeding by, we might assume that the bumper sticker would mostly appeal to those folks who are already thinking of voting for JFK—otherwise there's a chance that the Falcon's driver would be the recipient of some 1960s-style road rage.

Today, the audience for our bumper sticker has changed considerably. We might find it in a library collection. Indeed, Kansas University has a considerable collection of bumper stickers.²⁵ Or we might find it collecting bids on eBay. Once again, the audience for this example of images and words working together rhetorically depends largely on its contextual landscape.

Design

Design actually involves several factors.

Arrangement

Designers are trained to emphasize certain features of a visual text. And they are also trained to compose images that are balanced and harmonized. Faigley et al suggest that we look at a text that uses images (with or without words) and think about where our eyes are drawn first (34).²⁶ Moreover, in Western cultures, we are trained to read from left to right and top to bottom—a pattern that often has an impact on what text or image is accentuated in a visual arrangement.

Other arrangements that Faigley et al discuss are **closed and open forms** (105).²⁷ A closed-form image means that, like our bumper sticker, everything we need to know about the image is enclosed within its frame. An open form, on the other hand, suggests that the visual's narrative continues outside the frame of the visual. Many sports ads employ open-frame visuals that suggest the dynamic of physical movement.

Another method of arrangement that is well known to designers is the **rule of thirds**. Here's an example of that rule in action²⁸:

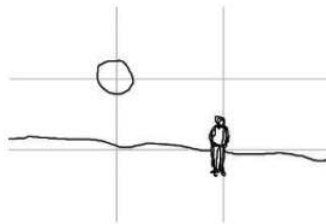


Figure 13.1.2

Note how the illustration above has been cordoned off into 9 sections. The drawings of the sun and the person, as well as the horizon, coincide with those lines. The rule of thirds dictates that this compositional method allows for an interesting and dynamic arrangement as opposed to one that is static. Now, unfortunately, our bumper sticker above doesn't really obey that rule. Nevertheless, our eye is still drawn to the image of JFK's head. Many modern bumper stickers do, however, obey the rule of thirds. Next time you see a bumper sticker on a parked car, check if the artist has paid attention to this rule. Or, seek out some landscape photography. The rule of thirds is the golden rule in landscape art and photography and is more or less a comprehensive way to analyze arrangement in design circles because of its focus on where one's eye is drawn.

Rhetorically speaking, what is accentuated in a visual is the most important thing to remember about arrangement. As far as professional design is concerned, it is never haphazard. Even a great photo, which might be seen to be the result of serendipity, can be cropped to highlight what a newspaper editor, for instance, wants highlighted.

Texts and Image in Play

Is the visual supported by words? *How* do the words support the visual? What is gained by the words and what would be lost if they weren't in accompaniment? What if we were to remove the words "Kennedy for President" from our bumper sticker? Would the sticker have the same rhetorical effect?

Moreover, when examining visual rhetoric, we should pinpoint how font emphasizes language. How does font render things more or less important, for instance? Is the font playful, like Comic Sans MS, or formal, like Arial? Is the font blocked, large, or small? What difference does the font make to the overall meaning of the visual? Imagine that our JFK bumper sticker was composed with a swirly- curly font. It probably wouldn't send the desired message. Why not, do you think?

Alternately, think about the default font in Microsoft Word. What does it look like and why? What happens to the font if it is bolded or enlarged? Does it maintain a sense of continuity with the rest of the text? If you scroll through the different fonts available to you on your computer, which do you think are most appropriate for essay writing, website design, or the poster you may have to compose?

Lastly, even the use of **white (or negative) space** in relation to text deserves attention in terms of arrangement. The mismanagement of the relation of space to text and/or visual can result in visual overload! For instance, in an essay, double spacing is often advised because it is easier on the reader's eye. In other words, the blank spaces between the lines of text render reading more manageable than would dense bricks of text. Similarly, one might arrange text and image against the blank space to create a balanced arrangement of both.

While in some situations the arrangement of text and visual (or white space) might not seem rhetorical (in an essay, for example), one could make the argument that cluttering one's work is not especially rhetorically effective. After all, if you are trying to persuade your instructor to give you an 'A', making your essay effortlessly readable seems like a good place to start.

Visual Figures

Faigley et al also ask us to consider the use of figures in a visual argument (32). Figurative language is highly rhetorical, as are figurative images. For instance, visual metaphors abound in visual rhetoric, especially advertising (32). A visual metaphor is at play when you encounter an image that signifies something other than its literal meaning. For instance, think of your favorite cereal: which cartoon character on the cereal box makes you salivate in anticipation of breakfast time? Next time, when you see a cartoon gnome and your tummy start to rumble in anticipation of chocolate-covered rice puffs, you'll know that the design folks down at ACME cereals have done their job. Let's hope, however, that you don't want to chow down on the nearest short fat fellow in a red cap that comes your way.

Visual rhetoric also relies on synecdoche, a trope in which a *part* of something represents the *whole*. In England, for instance, a crown is used to represent the British monarchy. The image of JFK's face on the bumper sticker, then, might suggest his competency to *head up* the country.

Color

Colors are loaded with rhetorical meaning, both in terms of the values and emotions associated with them and their contextual background. Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen²⁹ show how the use of color is as contextually bound as writing and images themselves. For instance, they write, "red is for danger, green for hope. In most parts of Europe, black is for mourning, though in northern parts of Portugal, and perhaps elsewhere in Europe as well, brides wear black gowns for their wedding day. In China, and other parts of East Asia, white is the color of mourning; in most of Europe it is the color of purity, worn by the bride at her wedding. Contrasts like these shake our confidence in the security of meaning of colour and colour terms" (343).

So what colors have seemingly unshakeable meaning in the US? How about red, white, and blue? Red and blue are two out of the three primary colors. They evoke a sense of sturdiness. After all, they are the base colors from which others are formed.

The combined colors of the American flag have come to signal patriotism and American values. But even American values, reflected in the appearance of the red, white, and blue, change in different contexts. To prompt further thought, Faigley shows us that the flag has been used to lend different meaning to a variety of magazine covers—from *American Vogue* (fashion) to *Fortune* magazine (money) (91). An image of the red, white and blue on the cover lends a particularly American flavor to each magazine. And this can change the theme of each magazine? For instance, with what would you acquaint a picture of the American flag on the cover of *Bon Appétit* or *Rolling Stone*? Hot dogs and Bruce Springsteen perhaps?

What then does the red, white, and blue lend our bumper sticker? A distinctly patriotic flavor, for sure. Politically patriotic. And that can mean different things for different people. Thus, given that meanings change in a variety of contexts, we can see that the meaning of color can actually be more fluid than we might have originally thought.

Alternately, if our JFK sticker colors were anything other than red, white, and blue, we might read it very differently; indeed, it might seem extremely odd to us.

Modality

Kress and Van Leeuwen ask us to consider the modality in which an image is composed. Very simply, this means, how "real" does the image look? And what does this "realness" contribute to its persuasiveness? They write, "visuals can represent people, places, and things as though they are real, as though they actually exist in this way . . . or as though they do not" (161).³⁰ As noted above in the "Audience and Medium" section, photographs are thus considered a more naturalistic representation of the world than clip art, for instance. We expect photographs to give us a representation of reality. Thus, when a photograph is manipulated to signify something fantastic, like a unicorn or a dinosaur, we marvel at its ability to construct something that looks "real." And when a visual shifts from one modality to another, it takes on additional meaning.

For instance, how might we read a cartoon version of JFK compared to the photograph that we see on our bumper sticker? Would the cartoon render the bumper sticker less formal? Less significant perhaps? Would a cartoon, given its associative meanings, somehow lessen the authenticity of the sticker's purpose? Or the authority of its subject?

Perspective/Point of View

Imagine standing beneath a wind turbine. Intimidating? Impressive Overwhelming? Now envision that you are flying over it in airplane. That very enormous thing seems rather insignificant now—a wind turbine in Toyland.

Now imagine the same proportions depicted in a photograph. One might get the same sense of power if the photo was taken from the bottom of the turbine, the lens pointed heavenward. Then again, an aerial photograph might offer us a different perspective. If the landscape presents us with an endless array of turbines stretching into the distance, we might get a sense that they are infinite—as infinite as wind energy.

Our Kennedy sticker offers neither of the above-described senses of perspective. Coming face to face with Kennedy, we neither feel overwhelmed nor superior. In fact, it's as if Kennedy's gaze is meeting ours at our own level. The artist is still using his powers of perspective; it's just that our gaze meets Kennedy's face to face. Consequently, Kennedy is portrayed as friendly and approachable.

Differently, a photo that artist Shepherd Fairey manipulated into the now iconic “Hope” poster from a 2006 Associated Press photograph of our current president (and got into all sorts of copyright infringement trouble for), makes subtle use of perspective: the visual positions the viewer slightly beneath Obama's gaze. As a result of Fairey's use of perspective, and as Joshua Bearman puts it, Obama is portrayed with “the distant, upward gaze of a visionary leader.”³¹

Social distance

Kress and Van Leeuwen include **social distance** in the components of design. Social distance accounts for the “psychology of people's use of space” (Van Leeuwen and Jewitt, 29).³² In short, a visual artist can exploit social distance to create a certain psychological effect between a person in an image and the image's audience.

To illustrate, imagine a photograph of a handsome man, head and shoulders only, smiling straight at you with warm eyes. He advertises chocolate, cigars, expensive cologne. A beautiful woman tosses her hair, smiling seductively at the camera. She looks straight at you. “Look at me,” both seem to say, “buy this product; we invite you.” Likewise, Kennedy smiles into the camera. “Vote for me,” he encourages. “I'm a nice guy.” Depicting head and shoulders only, we are given a sense of what Van Leeuwen and Carey Jewitt call “Close Personal Distance.”³³ The result is one of intimacy.

Alternately, a visual of several people, or a crowd, would suggest far less intimacy.

Mood and Lighting

Have you ever put a flashlight under your chin and lit your face from underneath? Maybe we aren't all budding scary movie makers, but jump out of the closet on a dark night with all the lights turned off and the flashlight propped under your chin and you're sure to give at least the cat a fright. What you have experimented with is mood and lighting. In short, the lighting as described eerily captures facial features that aren't usually accentuated. It can be quite offputting. Thus the position of the light has created a creepy face; it's created a visual **mood**. And, the mood combines with other elements of the visual to create an effect, which of course is rhetorical.

The next time you watch a movie, note how the filmmaker has played with lighting to create a mood. In the illustration below, we can see how *Film Noir*, for instance, capitalizes on techniques of mood and lighting to create an uncanny effect.³⁴



Figure 13.1.3

Finally

In this chapter, we have introduced the basics of rhetoric and visual analysis. During the course of your semester, and throughout your academic career, you might be asked to use visuals in support of your own writing. For instance, you may be asked to construct a web page, a poster, or a pamphlet.

You may also be asked to represent data with graphs and charts. Lisa Ede offers a selection of visuals (as well as a description of their purpose) that you might need to include in some of your academic compositions. These do not include pictures, but arrange text visually to convey information specifically:

1. A **table** arranges text visually, in columns for example, to compare information.
2. A **pie chart** arranges text within a circle to show relationships of quantity, for instance.
3. A **bar graph** is typically used to show changes in data over a period of time.
4. A **map** calls attention to “spatial relationships and locations.”³⁵

Whatever the type of visual you use, whether it is a pie chart or a photograph, it is vital that you interrogate the *genre*, *purpose*, *audience* and *design conventions* suitable to the context within which you are working. Understanding these components will help you select the appropriate visual that works rhetorically in this context. In other words, and as an illustration, if you are working in the sciences and compiling visual data in a line graph, you need to be aware of all of the above in order to meet the expectations of your professor and your academic community. In short, even the most seemingly innocuous choices are rhetorical given the expectations of your audience. The components of the analysis listed above, then, offer a set of guidelines to think about when we are composing with visuals.

To Do

1. Can you think of any bumper stickers you have seen lately that capitalize on your external knowledge of an issue? What do you have to know for instance to be able to read and understand a peace sign on a bumper sticker? Or a picture of a cell phone with the words “Hang Up and Drive” next to it? What cultural, unspoken or tacit knowledge do these symbols demand that you have?
2. Go to your favorite search engine and type in the words “political cartoons.” Choose a website and browse through the cartoons. You might notice that some of them you will laugh at, some of them you will grimace at, and for some of them, you may stop and think, “huh?” Pick a cartoon that makes you go “Huh?” In other words, pick a cartoon for which you don’t get the punch line. Research the political context to which the cartoon refers. After your research, think about the tacit knowledge the cartoon taps into. Now how do you react? Why?
3. Can you think of how audiences have changed with regards to a particular image—like the Apple image? A further illustration might help: my students and I looked at an ad for a particular brand of jeans recently, and they told me that “no one wore those jeans anymore” and that they “were for old people.” I was shocked and amazed (and emptied my closet of those jeans). Recently, the brand has been targeting a teen demographic, which leads me to marvel at the company’s rhetorical astuteness—as well as to wonder exactly what jeans one should be wearing nowadays.
4. Find an image using your favorite search engine. Analyze it in terms of the elements of design listed above. How does a corroboration of these elements work in favor of the image’s overall effect?

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13.3: APA Citation Guide (7th Edition) - Figures and Tables

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Figures and Tables

Note: This guide reflects the latest version of the APA Publication Manual (i.e., APA 7).

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General Rules

Figures and tables enable authors to present a large amount of information efficiently and to make

Figures

Figures Defined

Any type of illustration or image other than a table is referred to as a figure. A figure may be a chart, a graph, a photograph, a drawing, an infographic, etc.

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13.4: Textual References to Figures and Tables

When integrating references to figures and tables within your text, follow these guidelines:

- Number figures and tables consecutively in the text, beginning with the number 1. Be sure to number figures and tables separately from each other.
- Capitalize the "t" in "table" and the "f" in "figure" when you refer to a specific table or figure created in your text. (Some journals do not follow this convention, but most do.)
- "Table 3 and 4" is incorrect because each table is a separate entity. If you refer to more than one table or figure at a time, pluralize the reference. "Tables 3 and 4" is correct.
- Introduce figures and tables in your text in logical places and in logical ways. In some cases, it may simply be appropriate to write "see Figure 7" in parentheses at the end of a paragraph that prepared the reader to view the figure; in other cases, it is appropriate to introduce a figure or table at the beginning of the paragraph and build the entire paragraph around it.
- In your body text, always spell out the point that you want your reader to get from your figure or table. Example:

As Figure 8 indicates, the modulus of the transverse direction was always equal to or greater than the modulus of the machine direction.

- Use some of your body text to interpret a table or figure, but only to a sensible degree, and after it is introduced rather than before. When interpreting, avoid needless redundancy. If your pie chart shows percentages for the market distribution of platinum, say, there is no point in your repeating all these percentages in your body text unless you have something meaningful to say about them.
- When a reference to a table or a figure is a sentence subject, match it with an interpretive verb to describe the work that the table or figure performs. Examples:

Figure 2 illustrates the predominant orientation of acicular particles in magnetic storage material.

Figure 5 compares two magnetization curves for hard and soft magnetic materials.

- "Show" is generally a safe verb to use to describe a table or figure, but beware of overusing it or using it too loosely. Good alternatives to "show" include "display," "demonstrate," "illustrate," "depict" (for figures), and "list" (for tables). As always, search for the *best* verb to describe your figure or table. For ideas on active verbs you can use to refer to figures and tables, see the handy table on the "[Using Active Verbs](#)" page in chapter 1 of this manual.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

14: APA Style

[14.1: APA Headings and Subheadings](#)

[14.2: APA In-Text Citations](#)

[14.3: APA Block Quotations](#)

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14.1: APA Headings and Subheadings

How should section and subsection headings be formatted in APA style?

A research paper written in APA style should be organized into sections and subsections using the five levels of APA headings. APA recommends using subheadings **only when the paper has at least two subsections within a larger section**. Notice how sections contain at least two smaller subsections in the example below:

Method

Design

Participants

Demographic.

Characteristics.

Starting with the first level of heading, the subsections of the paper should progressively use the next level(s) of heading without skipping any levels. Major sections of the paper's main body, including the Method, Results, and Discussion sections, should always be formatted with the first level of heading. However, keep in mind that the Introduction section, which is preceded by the full title of the paper, should be presented in plain type. Any subsections that fall under the major sections are formatted with the next level of heading.

Note that all paragraphs of the main body, including those that fall under subsections of a larger section, still maintain the pattern of indentation, use Times New Roman font, 12 pt., and are double-spaced. There are no extra lines or spaces between paragraphs and headings.

How are the five levels of APA-style headings formatted?

Format each of the five levels of APA-style headings as demonstrated in the example below. Note that while the example features headings titled "First Level," "Second Level," and so on, each heading in your paper should be named according to the section it describes.

First Level

The first level of heading is bolded and centered, and the first letter of each word in the heading is capitalized. The paragraph text should be typed on the following line and indented five spaces from the left.

Second Level

The second level of heading is bolded and situated flush left, and the first letter of each word in the heading is capitalized. The paragraph text should be typed on the following line and indented five spaces from the left.

Third level

The third level of heading is bolded, indented five spaces from the left, and followed by a period. Capitalize only the first letter of the first word in the heading and of proper nouns. The first paragraph following this heading should be typed on the same line as the heading.

Fourth level

The fourth level of heading is bolded, italicized, indented five spaces from the left, and followed by a period. Capitalize only the first letter of the first word in the heading and of proper nouns. The first paragraph following this heading should be typed on the same line as the heading.

Fifth level

The fifth level of heading is italicized, indented five spaces from the left, and followed by a period. Capitalize only the first letter of the first word in the heading and of proper nouns. The first paragraph following this heading should be typed on the same line as the heading.

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14.2: APA In-Text Citations

An essential component of a research paper, in-text citations are a way of acknowledging the ideas of the author(s) of a particular work.

Each source that appears as an in-text citation should have a corresponding detailed entry in the References list at the end of the paper. Including the required elements in every citation allows other researchers to easily track the references used in a paper and locate those resources themselves.

There are three pieces of information that should be included in a citation after quoting another writer's work: the author's last name, the year of publication, and the page number(s) of the quoted material, all of which are separated by commas. The page number should follow a lower-case letter 'p' and a period.

- Basic structure: (Author, Year of Publication, p. 142)
 - **Example** : (Kutner, 2003, p. 451) [1]

If the quoted material was taken from more than one page, use two lower-case letter 'p' s.

- Basic structure: (Author, Year, of Publication, pp. 194-196)
 - **Example** : (Kutner, 2003, pp. 451-452) [1]

How should multiple authors of a single source be cited?

There are a few guidelines to follow when citing multiple authors for a single source. Separate the names of the source's authors by using commas. Depending on the location and instance of the citation, an ampersand(&), the word *and*, or the term *et al.* may also need to be used.

When should an ampersand be used?

Ampersands (&) should only be used in parenthetical in-text citations. An ampersand separates the last and second to last author of a cited work.

- **Example:** Research has demonstrated that “synesthesia appears quite stable over time, and synesthetes are typically surprised to discover that other people do not share their experiences” (Niccolai, Jennes, Stoerig, & Van Leeuwen, 2012, p. 81). [1]

When should the word *and* be used?

The word *and* should only be used in a sentence or paragraph; do not use it in a parenthetical in-text citation. The last and second to last author of a cited work are separated by the word *and*.

- **Example:** Niccolai, Jennes, Stoerig, and Van Leeuwen (2012) observed that “synesthesia appears quite stable over time, and synesthetes are typically surprised to discover that other people do not share their experiences” (p. 81). [1]

When should the term *et al.* be used?

When citing a single work with many authors, you may need to substitute some of the authors' names with the term *et al.* The term *et al.* should not be italicized in your paper, and a period should be placed after the word *al* as it is an abbreviated term. Follow these guidelines regarding the usage of *et al.*:

Use *et al.*:

- The first time and every time you cite a source with at least six authors.
 - **Example:** The in-text citation of *Zoonoses: Infectious diseases transmissible from animals to humans*, a book authored by Krauss, Weber, Appel, Enders, Isenberg, Schiefer, Slenczka, von Graevenitz, and Zahner, would appear as follows: [2]
 - (Krauss et al., 2003, p. 91)
 - As Krauss et al. (2003) observed, ...
- Every following time (after the first instance) that you cite a source with at least three authors.
 - **Example:** Citing the article “Modality and variability of synesthetic experience” by Niccolai, Jennes, Stoerig, & Van Leeuwen would appear as follows: [1]
 - The first instance: (Niccolai, Jennes, Stoerig, & Van Leeuwen, 2012, p. 81)

- Every following instance: (Niccolai et al., 2012)

Avoid using *et al.*:

- The first time you cite a source with up to five authors.
 - Instead, list all of the authors at their first mentioning.
- To cite a work that only has two authors.
 - Instead, always list the two authors' names in every citation (separated by either an ampersand or the word and, depending on the location)

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14.3: APA Block Quotations

When should a block quotation be used?

A block quotation is an extract consisting of more than 40 words from another author's work. Block quotations should be used in moderation, typically when using another writer's words is a more effective way of illustrating an idea. Avoid using block quotations excessively as this practice gives the reader the impression that you are inexperienced in the subject or are simply filling pages to meet a word count requirement.

How should a block quotation be formatted?

While a short quotation is enclosed in quotation marks and integrated into the surrounding paragraph, a block quotation is an independent paragraph that is indented five spaces from the left margin. This type of quotation should be double-spaced like the rest of the paper, but it should not be enclosed in quotation marks. In a block quotation, the parenthetical in-text citation should follow directly after the end punctuation of the final sentence. Note the placement order of the quotation marks, parentheses, and period.

Let's look at two examples:

One researcher outlines the viewpoints of both parties:

Freedom of research is undoubtedly a cherished ideal in our society. In that respect research has an interest in being free, independent and unrestricted. Such interests weigh against regulations. On the other hand, research should also be valid, verifiable, and unbiased, to attain the overarching goal of gaining obtaining [sic] generalisable knowledge. (Simonsen, 2012, p. 46)

Note that although the block quotation is formatted as a separate block of text, it is preceded by an introductory phrase or sentence(s) followed by a colon. If the author's name and the year of publication appear in the introductory sentence, the parenthetical in-text citation at the end of the paragraph should simply include the page number(s) of the original text, as shown in this example:

Simonsen (2012) outlines the two opposing viewpoints:

Freedom of research is undoubtedly a cherished ideal in our society. In that respect research has an interest in being free, independent and unrestricted. Such interests weigh against regulations. On the other hand, research should also be valid, verifiable, and unbiased, to attain the overarching goal of gaining obtaining [sic] generalisable knowledge. (p. 46)

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14.4: Inclusive Language Guidelines

The American Psychological Association has created a guide to help writers use inclusive language. It is available on the APA website: [Inclusive language in writing](#).

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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[15.1: Introductions and Conclusions](#)

[15.2: Lower Order Concerns for Proofreading](#)

[15.3: Fragments and Run-ons](#)

[15.4: Hyphens and Dashes](#)

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15.1: Introductions and Conclusions

A key piece of advice many writers either do not ever get or don't believe is that **it's not necessary to write introductions first or to write conclusions last**. Just because the introduction appears first and the conclusion appears last doesn't mean they have to be written that way. Here's a really tired metaphor to help explain: just because you walk into a building through the door doesn't mean the door was built first. The foundation went in first, even though you rarely if ever see that part. And lots of imperfections in the foundation and the walls were covered up before you even moved in, so you can't see those either unless you look closely.

Introductions

Even though a nearly infinite number of topics and arrangements is possible in English prose, introductions generally follow one of several patterns. If you're writing a children's story, you'd probably start with "once upon a time" or something similar. If you're writing a research article in biomechanical engineering, you'd probably start with a statement about how previous research has examined the problem of loading soldiers with daypacks on various surfaces, including sand, concrete, and railroad ballast. These examples are poles apart, but their introductions share very similar purposes: they orient their imagined readers to the topic, time, and place.

In working toward the overall goal of orienting readers, introductions may

- Provide background about a topic.
- Locate readers in a specific time and/or place.
- Start with a compelling quotation or statistic—something concrete.
- Include an ethical appeal, with which you (explicitly or implicitly) show that you've done your homework and are credible.
- Articulate a main claim/thesis.
- Lay out the stakes for the piece of writing—that is, why the reader should bother reading on.

The following video addresses how to do several of these things, starting with the very first sentence of your introduction.



Conclusions

Conclusions usually

- Summarize the argument (especially in longer pieces of writing)
- "Bookend" a story that started in the introduction
- Include an emotional appeal, with which you (explicitly or implicitly) connect the "logic" of the argument to a more passionate reason intended to sway the reader
- Issue a call to action

Ideally, a conclusion will work in tandem with an introduction, having some kind of "call back" element to remind your reader of the powerful opening you provided. Additional advice for conclusions is found in the following video.



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15.2: Lower Order Concerns for Proofreading

Previously we examined higher order concerns (HOCs) as part of the revision stage of the writing process. Once we move to the proofreading stage, it's time to consider the lower order concerns (LOCs). The difference is simple: HOCs are global issues, or issues that affect how a reader understands the entire paper; LOCs are issues that don't *necessarily* interrupt understanding of the writing by themselves.

HOCs	LOCs
Audience	Grammar
Thesis statement	Punctuation
Organization	Citation
Focus	Spelling
Development of ideas	Sentence structure

You may find yourself thinking, “Well, it depends,” or, “But what if...?” You're absolutely right to think so. These lists are just guidelines; every writer will have a different hierarchy of concerns. Always try to think in terms of, “Does this affect my understanding of the writing?”

Are HOCs More Important than LOCs?

No, not necessarily. HOCs tend to interrupt a reader's understanding of the writing, and that's why they need to be addressed first. However, if a LOC becomes a major obstacle, then it naturally becomes a higher priority.

Think of an example of how a Lower Order Concern could become a Higher Order Concern.

Here are some other issues you might face. These may be more difficult to categorize, and they may largely depend on the writing. If you think, “It depends,” make notes about the circumstances under which these issues could be a HOC or a LOC.

- Evaluating sources
- citation method
- style
- paragraph structure
- active vs. passive voice
- format

How to Address LOCs



Analyze your use of source material. Check any paraphrases and quotations against the original texts. Quotations should replicate the original author's words, while paraphrases should maintain the original author's meaning but have altered language and sentence structures. For each source, confirm that you have adhered to the preferred style guide for the target journal or other venue.

Consider individual sentences in terms of grammar, mechanics, and punctuation. Many LOCs can be revised by isolating and examining different elements of the text. Read the text sentence by sentence, considering the grammar and sentence structure. Remember, a sentence may be grammatically correct and still confuse readers. If you notice a pattern—say, a tendency to misplace modifiers or add unnecessary commas—read the paper looking only for that error. Read the document backwards, word for word, looking for spelling errors. Throughout the writing process and especially at this stage of revision, keep a dictionary, a thesaurus, and a writing handbook nearby.

Strategies such as reading aloud and seeking feedback are useful at all points in the revision process. Reading aloud will give you distance from the text and prevent you from skimming over what is actually written on the page. This strategy will help you to identify both HOCs, such as missing concepts, and LOCs, such as typos. Additionally, seeking feedback will allow you to test your ideas and writing on real readers. Seek feedback from readers both inside and outside of your target audience in order to gain different perspectives.

Proofreading Advice

The following video features two student tutors from the Writing and Reading Center at Fresno City College. In addition to great guidance about proofreading strategies, they also offer insights about what to expect when working with Writing Center tutors.



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15.3: Fragments and Run-ons

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15.4: Hyphens and Dashes

Hyphens



The Oxford Manual of Style once stated, “If you take hyphens seriously you will surely go mad.” Hyphens belong to that category of punctuation marks that will hurt your brain if you think about them too hard, and, like commas, people disagree about their use in certain situations. Nevertheless, you will have to use them regularly because of the nature of academic and professional writing. If you learn to use hyphens properly, they help you to write efficiently and concretely.

The Hyphen’s Function

Fundamentally, the hyphen is a joiner. It can join several different types of things:

- two nouns to make one complete word (kilogram-meter)
- an adjective and a noun to make a compound word (accident-prone)
- two words that, when linked, describe a noun (agreed-upon sum, two-dimensional object)
- a prefix with a noun (un-American)
- double numbers (twenty-four)
- numbers and units describing a noun (1000-foot face; a 10-meter difference)
- “self” words (self-employed, self-esteem)
- new word blends (cancer-causing, cost-effective)
- prefixes and suffixes to words, in particular when the writer wants to avoid doubling a vowel or tripling a consonant (anti-inflammatory; shell-like)
- multiple adjectives with the same noun (blue- and yellow-green beads; four- and five-year-olds)

A rule of thumb for the hyphen is that the resulting word must act as one unit; therefore, the hyphen creates a new word that has a single meaning. Usually, you can tell whether a hyphen is necessary by applying common sense and mentally excluding one of the words in question, testing how the words would work together without the hyphen. For example, the phrases “high-pressure system,” “water-repellent surface,” and “fuel-efficient car” would not make sense without hyphens, because you would not refer to a “high system,” a “water surface,” or a “fuel car.” As your ears and eyes become attuned to proper hyphenation practices, you will recognize that both meaning and convention dictate where hyphens fit best.

Examples of Properly Used Hyphens

Some examples of properly used hyphens follow. Note how the hyphenated word acts as a single unit carrying a meaning that the words being joined would not have individually.

small-scale study	two-prong plug	strength-to-weight ratio	high-velocity flow	frost-free lawn
self-employed worker	one-third majority	coarse-grained wood	decision-making process	blue-green algae
air-ice interface	silver-stained cells	protein-calorie malnutrition	membrane-bound vesicles	phase-contrast microscope
long-term-payment loan	cost-effective program	time-dependent variable	radiation-sensitive sample	long-chain fatty acid

When Hyphens Are Not Needed

By convention, hyphens are not used after words ending in *-ly*, nor when the words are so commonly used in combination that no ambiguity results. In these examples, no hyphens are needed:

finely tuned engine	blood pressure	sea level
---------------------	----------------	-----------

real estate	census taker	atomic energy
civil rights law	public utility plant	carbon dioxide

Note: Phrases like containing the word *well* like *well known* are contested. *Well* is an adverb, and thus many fall into the school of thought that a hyphen is unnecessary. However, others say that leaving out the hyphen may cause confusion and therefore include it (*well-known*). The standard in MLA is as follows: When it appears before the noun, *well known* should be hyphenated. When it follows the noun, no hyphenation is needed.

- She is a **well-known** person.
- She is **well known**.

Prefixes and Suffixes

Most prefixes do not need to be hyphenated; they are simply added in front of a noun, with no spaces and no joining punctuation necessary. The following is a list of common prefixes that do not require hyphenation when added to a noun:

after	anti	bi	bio	co
cyber	di	down	hetero	homo
infra	inter	macro	micro	mini
nano	photo	poly	stereo	thermo

Note: The prefix *re* generally doesn't require a hyphen. However, when leaving out a hyphen will cause confusion, one should be added. Look at the following word pairs, for example:

- *resign* (leave a position) v. *re-sign* (sign the paper again)
- *recreation* (an activity of leisure) v. *re-creation* (create something again)

Common suffixes also do not require hyphenation, assuming no ambiguities of spelling or pronunciation arise. Typically, you do not need to hyphenate words ending in the following suffixes:

able	less	fold	like	wise
------	------	------	------	------

Commonly Used Word Blends

Also, especially in technical fields, some words commonly used in succession become joined into one. The resulting word's meaning is readily understood by technical readers, and no hyphen is necessary. Here are some examples of such word blends, typically written as single words:

blackbody	groundwater	airship
downdraft	longwall	upload
setup	runoff	blowout

? Practice

1. No one believed Hikaru when he said he was (self taught/self-taught) because his skills necessitated the presence of a teacher.
2. Jean promised to drop the boys off at the (railroad/rail-road) station.
3. Roy and Riza were very tired after the (three hour-long/three-hour-long/three-hour long) PTA meeting.
4. Eli was pleased to see that he still had a (four or five-point/four- or five-point) lead on his opponent.

[reveal-answer q="326425"]**Show Answers**[/reveal-answer]

[hidden-answer a="326425"]

1. No one believed Hikaru when he said he was **self-taught** because his skills necessitated the presence of a teacher.

2. Jean promised to drop the boys off at the **railroad** station.
3. Roy and Riza were very tired after the **three-hour-long** PTA meeting.
4. Eli was pleased to see that he still had a **four- or five-point** lead on his opponent.

[/hidden-answer]

Dashes



The dash functions almost as a colon does in that it adds to the preceding material, but with extra emphasis. Like a caesura (a timely pause) in music, a dash indicates a strong pause, then gives emphasis to material following the pause. In effect, a dash allows you to *redefine* what was just written, making it more explicit. You can also use a dash to frame an interruptive or parenthetical comment that you do not want to de-emphasize.

- Jill Emery confirms that Muslim populations have typically been ruled by non-Muslims—specifically Americans, Russians, Israelis, and the French.
- The dissolution took 20 minutes—much longer than anticipated—but measurements were begun as soon as the process was completed.

There is no “dash” button on a computer keyboard. Instead, create it by typing the hyphen button twice in a row; or use the “symbol” option in your word processor; or use the Mac shortcut option + shift + —.

? Practice

Is the dash used correctly in the following sentences?

1. Fifty people will be coming to the potluck on Thursday—at least that’s what the survey said—so we should be sure to bring a lot of sandwiches.
2. A balanced meal should always include—proteins, vegetables, and carbohydrates.
3. I know I missed the last several meetings, but I won’t sleep through this one—honestly!
4. We convinced our teacher that we needed a field trip—who knows how—so we’re all going to a publishing company on Thursday.

[reveal-answer q="624972"]Show Answers[/reveal-answer]

[hidden-answer a="624972"]

1. Correct. This dash marks a sudden break in thought.
2. Incorrect. The examples should be preceded by a noun: A balanced meal includes several different food groups—proteins, vegetables, and carbohydrates.
3. Correct. This dash connects an affirmation to the initial thought.
4. Correct. This is another break in thought, and is still correct even though the comment is not very strongly related to the rest of the sentence.

[/hidden-answer]



The dash we typically use is technically called the “em dash,” and it is significantly longer than the hyphen. There is also an “en dash”—whose length is between that of the hyphen and the em dash, and its best usage is to indicate inclusive dates and numbers:

- July 6–September 17
 - The date range began on July 6 and ended on September 17.
- Barack Obama (1961–)
 - This indicates the year a person was born, as well as the fact that he or she is still alive.
- pp. 148–56
 - This indicates pages 148 through 156. With number ranges, you can remove the first digit of the second number if it's the same as the first number's.

It can also be used for flight or train routes.

- The London–Paris train will be running thirty minutes late today.

Like the em dash, the en dash is not on the standard computer keyboard. Select it from word processor's symbol map (or if you have a Mac, you can type **option** + –), or it may even be inserted automatically by your word processor when you type inclusive numbers or dates with a hyphen between them. In most contexts, a hyphen can serve as an en dash, but in professional publications—especially in the humanities—an en dash is correct.

When you type the hyphen, en dash, and em dash, no spaces should appear on either side of the punctuation mark.

? Practice

Read the following passage. Identify any errors with hyphens or dashes. Type the corrected version of the passage in the text frame below:

John Milton Cage Jr. (1912-1992) was an American composer, music theorist, writer, and artist. A pioneer of indeterminacy in music and the non-standard use of musical instruments, Cage was one of the leading figures of the post—war avant-garde. Critics have lauded him as one of the most influential American composers of the twentieth-century.

Cage is perhaps best known for his 1952 composition 4'33" a performance of the absence of deliberate sound. Musicians who present this piece do nothing aside from being present for the duration specified by the title. The content of the composition is not “four minutes and 33 seconds of silence”—as is often assumed, but rather the sounds of the environment heard by the audience during performance.

[practice-area rows="4"][/practice-area]

[reveal-answer q="162096"]Show Answer[/reveal-answer]

[hidden-answer a="162096"]Here are the corrections:

1. The hyphen in between 1912 and 1992 should be an en-dash: 1912–1992
2. The word *non-standard* doesn't need a hyphen. It should be spelled nonstandard.
3. The em dash in *post—war* should be a hyphen. The correct phrase would be “post-war avant-garde.”
4. *The twentieth century* doesn't need a hyphen.
5. Some type of punctuation is needed after “his 1952 composition 4'33”.” An em dash would be a good option here:
 - Cage is perhaps best known for his 1952 composition 4'33”—a performance of the absence of deliberate sound.
6. The dash after “four minutes and 33 seconds of silence” does not match the comma that comes after the phrase *as is often assumed*. Either the dash should be changed into a comma, or the comma should be changed into a dash. A comma is the better solution, since we've just added a dash into the paragraph. Too many dashes in one place can start to be overwhelming.
 - The content of the composition is not “four minutes and 33 seconds of silence,” as is often assumed, but rather the sounds of the environment heard by the audience during performance.

[/hidden-answer]

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16: Accessible Content for 5.1- MLA In - Text Citations

The following description is available for anyone who needs a screen-readable description of the flow-chart image contained in [section 5.1: MLA In-Text Citations](#). It can also be viewed and printed in an accessible PDF: [MLA Citation Flowchart](#)

When and How to Create MLA In-Text Citations

Step 1: Is this your own original idea or information?

If this is your own original idea or information, no citation is needed.

If this isn't your own original idea or information, proceed to Step 2.

Step 2: Does your source have an author?

There are three options for this step:

Option 1: Yes, and you have already mentioned the author.

If the source has an author and you have already mentioned the author's name in the sentence already (ex: According to Dr Wilson,...), then there is no need to mention the author inside the parentheses again. Now, proceed to Step 3.

Option 2: Yes, but you haven't mentioned the author yet.

If the source has an author, and you haven't already mentioned the author's name in the sentence already, you will need to write the author's last name in parentheses at the end of the sentence, for example (Wilson). Now, proceed to Step 3.

Option 3: No author.

If the source doesn't have an author, include the title of the source, or the first two words of the title, in parentheses at the end of the sentence (unless you already mentioned the title in this sentence), for example ("Beyond Pandemic"). Now proceed to Step 3.

Step 3: Does your source have page numbers?

This step has two options:

Option 1: Source has no page numbers

If your source has no page numbers and it is a media source, cite the relevant time range in parentheses, for example (CSI" 00:11-1:15). Your citation is now complete.

Option 2: Source has page numbers

If your source has page numbers, and you have already mentioned the author or title already in the sentence, then add the page number/s in parentheses at the end of the sentence. For example: According to Dr. Wilson, it's cold (25).

If your source has page numbers, but you have not mentioned the author or title already in the sentence, then put the page number/s after the authors name or title in parentheses at the end of the sentence. Ex: It's cold (Wilson 25).

Your citation is now complete.

Next Steps:

Repeat this process for each quote, paraphrase, and summary you include from other sources. Remember that in-text citations typically include the author's last name and page number. Example: (Johnson 121).

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