COLLEGE WRITING AND BEYOND

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College Writing and Beyond

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Detailed Licensing

Detailed Licensing

Licensing

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

1: Part I- The Writing Process

Welcome to ENG 001A, your gateway to mastering the art of reading and composition at the college level! This course is designed to not only sharpen your reading and writing skills but also to empower you to engage with the world around you through thoughtful, persuasive, and well-researched arguments.

In ENG 001A, you'll explore the building blocks of effective writing, such as narration, description, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect. But the real focus of this course is on how to combine these elements to craft compelling argumentative essays. Whether you're tackling pro/con debates, evaluating complex topics, or proposing new ideas, you'll learn how to structure your thoughts in a way that captivates and convinces your readers.

As you progress, you'll dive into current research methods, equipping you with the tools to find and evaluate credible sources that support your arguments. You'll also get hands-on experience with MLA formatting, a crucial skill for any academic writer. By the end of the course, you'll have completed either one 10-page research paper or two 5-page papers—an achievement that will showcase your growth as a writer and a critical thinker.

ENG 001A is more than just a writing class; it's an opportunity to develop your voice, refine your ideas, and prepare yourself for the challenges of academic and professional communication. Let's get started on this journey together!

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SECTION OVERVIEW

1.1: Introduction to the Writing Process

Topic hierarchy

1.1.1: Introduction

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1.1.1: Introduction

The writing process is often considered complicated, and often seems loosely defined. According to Webster's, writing is "the way you use written words to express your ideas or opinions." Although we may think of it as little more than arranging letters and words on a page, a few moments' reflection reveals that it is much more than that. On the one hand, writing is an art—we don't say Shakespeare's language is "correct" but rather that it is creative, unique, and artful. On the other hand, writing is a science—we want the instructions that came with our Blu-Ray player to be accurate, precise, and easy to understand.

Then there is the matter of what makes writing "good writing." Although we might say that both an instruction manual and a play are "well written," we appreciate them for different reasons. A play written in the clear, unambiguous language of an instruction manual would not be a hit on Broadway. In other words, writing must be judged according to its context—what is its purpose and audience? Finally, even readers with a great deal in common may not agree about the quality of any particular text, just as people's opinions differ about which bands are really great. We really don't know why people have such preferences and can't make accurate predictions about what they will like or dislike. Simply put, writing isn't simple.

If writing is so complicated and mysterious, can it be taught? Since Aristotle, great teachers have taught complex processes by breaking them into smaller, more understandable processes. Aristotle thought that effective communication skills, like good math skills, can be learned and taught. Math teachers don't teach trigonometry to their elementary students; instead, they begin with addition and subtraction. Everything else builds on those simple processes. No one is born a mathematician. Similarly, while luck certainly plays a role in any successful writer's career, successful writers (or speakers) are not just born into the role—and everyone else is not just fated to flunk English. You can learn to write with substance and style. It takes work, but it is within your power. You have already taken the first step.

Most of what we know about writing is also true of speaking. Aristotle wrote a famous treatise on the subject of effective communication called "The Rhetoric." This book is meant for speakers; however, teachers and students also have long used it to polish their writing. "The Rhetoric" is still widely read and applied today by people desiring to learn how to speak and write more convincingly to an audience. Your first-year composition course may even have the word "rhetoric" or "rhetorical" as part of its title. Aristotle taught us that rhetoric isn't just about winning arguments. Instead, rhetoric is the ability to choose from all the available means of persuasion at our disposal. Ultimately, it's up to you to determine the best course of action, but rhetoric helps you make this a more educated process.

Compared to speaking, writing is a much more recent phenomenon, and for many centuries it was assumed that the best way to learn to write well was either to pray, entreat the muses, or carefully imitate writings that were already considered great. Eventually, as more people wanted to write, teachers created rules to help them write "correctly." Often, this heavy emphasis on correctness and writing with a narrow set of rules did little to improve student writing. Simply knowing how to write grammatically correct prose is important, but it is not enough, by itself, to make writing effective or persuasive. Indeed, too much attention to correctness can result in unintentionally rigid or even comical writing.

Since the 1970s, writing instructors have been teaching writing not as the following of fixed rules but rather as a dynamic process: a series of steps that writers follow to produce texts. Before the '70s, these steps were taught as a somewhat rigid sequence. Now, however, writing teachers emphasize "recursivity"—moving forward through some steps and then circling back to redo previous steps—as the more natural way that many successful writers work. In other words, while we still think of writing as a process taking place in a series of steps, we now understand that good writers tend to switch frequently among the different steps as they work. An insight gained while editing one chapter might convince the writer that an additional chapter is needed; as a result, she might start another drafting phase—or even decide to divide one chapter into two or three, and begin reorganizing and developing new drafts. Likewise, failure to satisfy a publisher—whether it is your boss looking at a pamphlet you've written or a book publisher deciding whether to print and sell your book—might lead the author all the way back to the idea-development or organizing stages. In short, while it is very useful to think of writing as a process, the process is not a clear, always-the-same series of steps. Instead, it is a sometimes messy, forward-and-backward process in which you strive for simplicity but try to appeal to your audience, create but also organize, enjoy yourself if possible but also follow some rules, and eventually create a product that works.

If this sounds difficult, it's not—at least, not if you learn a few lessons this book can teach you—and you practice, practice, practice. The more real writing you do, the more of a real writer you will become. If you are reading this book, then your first goal

likely is to do well in a college (or upper-level high school) “composition” or “rhetoric” class. In short, you want to learn how to write a good academic paper. There are a large number of tips and methods this book can show you. They will work best if, like the writing process itself, you go back and forth between reading this book and doing some actual writing: try some of these lessons out by writing. And eventually, your goal is to write for your work—for your future profession.

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1.1.2: Five Evaluation Criteria

There are five criteria we can use to evaluate any piece of writing. These criteria are Focus, Development, Organization, Style, and Conventions.

Focus. What are you writing about? What claim or thesis are you defending? This criterion is the broadest, concerned with the context, purpose, and coherence of a piece of writing. Is your topic appropriate for an assignment? Do you stay on that topic or drift off on unhelpful tangents? Have you focused too minutely or too widely? For instance, an essay about the American Civil War in general is probably too broad for most college essays. You might be better off writing about a particular battle, general, or incident.

Development. Development is concerned with details and evidence. Do you provide enough supporting material to satisfy the expectations of your readers? A proper research paper, for instance, usually includes many references and quotations to many other relevant works of scholarship. A description of a painting would probably include details about its appearance, composition, and maybe even biographical information about the artist who painted it. Deciding what details to include depends on the intended audience of a piece. An article about cancer intended for young children would look quite different than one written for senior citizens.

Organization. Organization, often called “arrangement,” concerns the order and layout of a paper. Traditionally, a paper is divided into an introduction, body, and conclusion. Paragraphs are focused on a single main idea or topic (unity), and transitions between sentences and paragraphs are smooth and logical. A poorly organized paper rambles, drifting among unrelated topics in a haphazard and confusing fashion.

Style. Style is traditionally concerned with clarity, elegance, and precision. An effective stylist is not only able to write clearly for an audience, but can also please them with evocative language, metaphors, rhythm, or figures of speech. Effective stylists take pains not just to make a point but to make it well.

Conventions. This criterion covers grammar, mechanics, punctuation, formatting, and other issues that are dictated by convention or rules. Although many students struggle with conventions, the knowledge of where to place a comma in a sentence is usually not as important as whether that sentence was worth writing in the first place. Nevertheless, excessive errors can make even a brilliant writer seem careless or ignorant, qualities that will seldom impress one’s readers.

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1.1.3: Stages of the Writing Process

Although we've mentioned that writers often work recursively—that is, frequently switching between drafting, editing, proofreading, and so on—it is useful to break the writing process into different functions or activities. To that end, we have divided it into eight smaller processes: Planning and Prewriting, Collaborating, Researching, Drafting, Editing, Reviewing, Revising, and Publishing.

Prewriting and Organizing

Writers generally plan their documents in advance. This stage, often called "prewriting," includes everything from making a tentative outline, brainstorming, or chatting with friends or peers about the topic. For some writers, the prewriting stage is mostly mental—they think about their projects, but do not write until they are ready to start the actual document. Others plan extensively and map out exactly how they want their document to look when it's finished.

This chapter describes common planning and prewriting strategies and should help you "hit the ground running" when starting out your writing projects.

Researching

Writers frequently require reliable information to support their documents. A writer's personal opinions and experience are sufficient evidence for many types of documents, but audiences will often demand more. Seeking out the information required to support your writing is called "research," and it comes in many forms.

One form of research is the interview, in which you call up or meet with someone who has information on the topic you are pursuing. Another type, "field research," involves travel to places where the topic can be studied first-hand. You might also circulate a survey. These three examples are all part of what is called "primary research"—research you conduct yourself.

While many writing teachers assign primary research to their students in the process of writing a "research paper," much of the research that writing at the college level asks you to do is "secondary research"—exploring other people's writing in the form of books, scholarly journals, newspapers, magazines, websites, and government documents.

This chapter describes different research strategies and provides you with the tools you'll need to properly back up the claims you make in your writing.

Drafting

Drafting means writing or adding to a piece of writing—composing it. It may seem like a straightforward process but can often be made difficult by writer's block or other anxieties.

Revising and Editing

Revising is making the changes you or your reviewers determine are necessary during the writing process. Revising is hard work, but it's probably some of the most valuable work you can do to become a better writer. Dive into the task with the willingness to wrestle with your writing and bring out the best in it, and you will learn why revising is often considered the "meat" of the writing process.

You can't edit what hasn't been written. That's why editing comes after drafting. For our purposes, it's important to distinguish between deciding what needs to be improved and actually making the changes. We'll call the decision-making process "editing" and making the changes the "revising" process. Unlike publishers, who hire professional editors to work with their writers, student writers do most of their own editing, with occasional help from peer reviewers.

This chapter examines the revision and editing process and identifies some strategies that will help you improve your documents and reduce the likelihood of creating even bigger problems. This chapter will also cover proofreading, or carefully scanning a document for typos and other simple errors and provides strategies for improving your text.

Reviewing

Having other people review your writing is essential to producing the best piece you possibly can. We often don't make the best readers of our own work because we are so close to it. Reviewers, on the other hand, bring valuable perspective we can't get any other way. A reviewer is anyone who is willing to look at your work and provide feedback. You're a reviewer, too—of others' texts.

This chapter explains how to successfully review a document as well as how to make the most of the feedback you receive from other reviewers.

Publishing

What's the point of writing if no one will ever read it? Though some of us are content to write diaries or notes to ourselves, most writers desire for others to read and hopefully enjoy or benefit from their documents. This is where publishers come in: They help connect writers to readers. The Internet has introduced countless new ways for writers to publish their own documents electronically, but print publishing is still the preferred avenue for most professional writers. Of course, getting your documents accepted for publication can be a long and frustrating ordeal. We've all heard the stories of now-famous novelists who were rejected time and time again by unimaginative or overly-cautious publishers. In lower-level college classes, "publishing" is most likely to be in the form of submission to instructors. At the graduate level, however, many students do seek to publish their theses and dissertations.

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1.2.1: Introduction to Prewriting Strategies

> "The role of a writer is not to say what we all can say, but what we are unable to say." —Anaïs Nin

This chapter begins with some prewriting strategies to help you generate ideas and pick a topic. In addition to learning ways to overcome writing anxiety (writers' block), you will also learn how to craft an outline to keep your ideas on course, organize your draft, and tailor it to your audience. Before you actually begin writing, ask yourself the following questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? Which?

For instance, you might ask yourself:

1. Why am I writing?
2. What is my subject?
3. Which subject has the most potential to attract readers?
4. Who is my audience?
5. Where does my background information come from?
6. How can I persuade my readers?

Keeping these questions in mind before, and during, the writing process will help you identify and develop ideas. If you experience difficulties, seek your instructor's advice to steer you back on course.

How Do I Pick a Topic?

Have you ever been stressed out because you can't think of a good topic for an important writing assignment? You're not alone. As a student, you'd probably prefer it if professors would just assign topics rather than leave you to find one on your own. However, professors aren't vague because they want to punish you; they usually just don't want to constrain your creativity or discourage you from writing about topics that truly interest you. Professors also want to be surprised by their students' ingenuity, and very few teachers want to read a big stack of essays all on the same stale topic. Unfortunately, just being told to "be creative" is unlikely to calm you down when you have a major paper due next week and still haven't found a topic to write about.

Imagine that you are in an introductory literature course. The professor has assigned a 3-5 page essay on a Shakespearean play that requires multiple sources. You try asking the professor to be more specific or offer some suggestions. The professor responds, "No, it's up to you. Surprise me." What do you do?

One smart option is to go to the library and look for scholarly journals that cover Shakespearean studies. In today's environment, much of these journals are housed electronically in databases your college library subscribes to. You might also try scholarly books about Shakespeare and his plays. Browsing these sources should give you some ideas about the aspects of Shakespeare and his plays that scholars have found worth writing about. You might find that an idea that you thought was "totally original" has already been done. However, you shouldn't let this worry you. If every essay or book had to be 100% original, we'd have precious few to read.

If you keep reading and skimming articles and books, you will find many different discussions and possibilities for writing topics. One way to do this is to write a list of binaries, a list of opposing ideas that may represent larger discussions about the topic at hand. Choosing from these opposing ideas in the text will lead you to ideas for a more specific argument. Scholars frequently engage in complex and long-lasting arguments that span across different journal articles and books. Professor X's article on climate change will be mentioned, discussed, or challenged by Professor Y in a book and Professor Z in another article. None of them are worried about saying things that have never been said before; the key is just to say them differently and perhaps better.

You will always have one advantage over any other scholar you read—their articles and books cannot take advantage of all the relevant scholarship that appeared after their publication date. Don't be afraid to freshen up an old article with new supporting evidence—or challenge one whose conclusions are called into question by subsequent research.

You should also look for an issue that you can reasonably cover given the time and space (page count) you have available. After that it's a simple matter of supporting your argument by bringing in relevant quotations from those who agree with you. You should also identify the counter-arguments and provide pertinent background information.

In essence, the easiest way to find a topic to write about is to see what other writers are writing about and join their "conversation." The conversation metaphor is a very useful way to understand what scholarship is all about. Rather than thinking of essays or books as isolated units of scholarship, try envisioning them as the fruits of a massive network of scholars who converse with each other via scholarly documents, conference presentations, e-mail, phone calls, and other forms of communication. Research *what* is available and *where* you can make the most valuable contribution.

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1.2.2: What Are Some Other Ways to Get Ideas?

> “The best time for planning a book is while you're doing the dishes.” —Agatha Christie

Still stuck even after pouring over all those books and journals? Don’t worry. There are plenty of other ways to stimulate your brain.

In general, though, remember that good ideas may arise anytime and anywhere. You might be struck by a brilliant insight as you’re running on the treadmill or even while dreaming. Always be prepared to record new ideas. Carry a small notepad with you or use your cell phone to record a voice memo. You might even try writing the idea on a napkin and taking a picture of it. The important thing is to get it down quickly because you’re all too likely to forget all about it by the time you’re ready to write.

Another good way to generate ideas is to read and listen actively. Your texts and professors will discuss relevant issues in the field, and they might make comparisons to related ideas and other thinkers. A professor might say, “There is still work to be done in this area,” or “there is great controversy over this issue.” Be alert to these sources for good ideas. The biggest mistake a novice writer can make is to rely solely on “inspiration.” As a scholar, you are never alone—don’t be afraid to listen and respond to the work of others instead of always trying to be original or profound.

Even chatting with your classmates might help you think of a good topic. You can also check with your college or university’s writing center. Many of them have tutors who can help you find and hone a great topic for your paper.

Let’s look now at three other techniques for getting those brain juices flowing: brainstorming, clustering, and freewriting.

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1.2.3: What Is Brainstorming?

Brainstorming allows you to quickly generate a large number of ideas. You can brainstorm with others or you can brainstorm by yourself, which sometimes turns into freewriting. To effectively brainstorm, write down whatever ideas come to mind. Sometimes it works better to write down each idea on a separate piece of paper. It also helps to ask yourself some questions:

1. What do I care about or what am I interested in?
2. What do I know that I could teach others?
3. What irritates me?

In order to capture more of your thoughts, you may want to brainstorm a few times until you have enough ideas to start writing.

Examples

Imagine you are in a class. Your instructor says you will have to write a paper on your favorite freetime activity, and that you must also persuade your reader to try it.

First ask yourself, *What do I care about?* or *What am I interested in?*

It is easiest to write about a topic that you are interested in. This could be anything from gardening to ice skating, or from writing poetry to playing the piano. Your list, in this example, would then read:

1. gardening
2. ice skating
3. writing poetry
4. playing the piano

At this stage, every idea is good because you are trying to come up with as many ideas as possible. Second, ask yourself, *What do I know that I could teach others?*

***Figure* 1.2.3.1** - *Photo credit: molossus, who says Life Imitates Doodles via VisualHunt.com / CC BY-NC-N*

You may be able to teach someone else something that you really enjoy. Good for you. If you cannot, don't worry; you are still just brainstorming. Perhaps you teach swimming lessons or t-ball, or maybe you bake really well and are able to offer some of your insights. Your list, in this example, would then read:

1. swimming lessons
2. t-ball
3. baking

Anything is fine. You are still brainstorming.

Let's think of another example. How about the common situation in which the instructor wants you to write about "something you care about" or an "issue you have"?

Again start by asking yourself a question. Ask yourself, *What irritates me?*

Everyone has things that irritate them, some small and others large. An example of something small that's irritating could be people in your dorm who leave trails of toothpaste by the sink and never clean up after themselves. A personal example can be useful as a

bridge to a larger issue that will be your topic—in this case it could be community living and personal responsibility.

In academic writing with a less personal slant, the source of irritation is often another writer/theorist with whom you disagree. Your "irritation" then would lead to an effective piece about why you have a better conception of what's really going on. A less direct version of this would be a writer/theorist who makes some good points but lacks something in his/her argument that you can add to the "conversation."

A majority of academic writing begins with brainstorming. Go ahead! Try one or many of the ideas for brainstorming either by yourself or in a group. Working together to come up with ideas means that there are more ideas coming from many different minds.

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1.2.4: What is Clustering?

Clustering is a process in which you take your main subject idea and draw a circle around it. You then draw lines out from the circle that connect topics that relate to the main subject in the circle. Clustering helps ensure that all aspects of the main topic are covered.

Example

After using the brainstorm example, let's say you decided on swimming lessons as your topic. Your main idea of swimming lessons would be circled in the center of your page. Anything else that you want to say about swimming lessons you would connect to the circle with lines. You can also add more lines to extend the ideas that relate to thoughts around the circle. When finished, your clustering might look like the following:

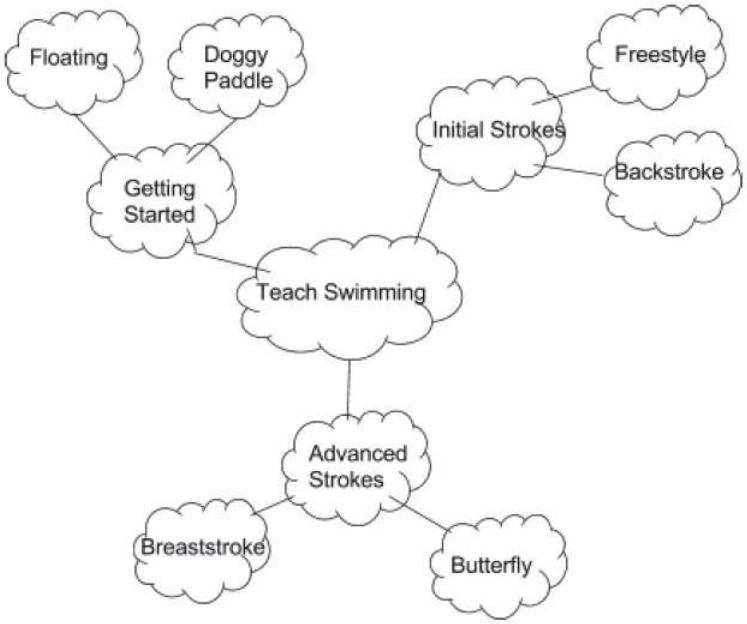

Figure 1.2.4.1

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1.2.5: What is Freewriting?

Freewriting helps generate ideas and set them in motion. To begin, start writing without worrying about spelling or grammatical errors. You should write your ideas naturally and spontaneously so that you can record many ideas quickly. Do not look back at what you wrote until you are satisfied that you have written enough. An easy way to freewrite is to set a time limit and then begin writing. You can write anything at all, and in the end, you will often find some quality ideas scattered throughout your writing.

Example

1. I set my kitchen timer for a specific amount of time. Let's say 5 minutes.
2. I just begin writing without worrying about what I am putting onto the page.

   Things I like to do. Watching TV is a great way to unwind after a long day. Playing video games is too. I like talking to my friend Steph on the phone, but I get annoyed when she doesn't call me back. I like shopping. My favorite store is Target. They have everything that you need there. I can buy clothing, luggage, things I need for my kitchen, wall coverings. I love that store. I like going to the theater. Last year, I saw The West Side Story. It was amazing. For some reason, I always look forward to fall and spring yard work. I don't know if it is the sense of accomplishment I feel when the yard is ready for the season or what, but I really do enjoy it. There are so many things that need to be done each year too. In the spring, you need to be sure to fertilize before…
3. The timer goes off, so I stop writing.
4. At this point, I review what I have written and decide which point(s) to elaborate on.

With these simple writing tips, you should be able to find a topic and begin the process of writing the assigned paper. Established authors use brainstorming, clustering, and freewriting, so you're in good company when you use these techniques to help you overcome writer's block or writing anxiety. After all, your indecision is only a question, and to quote the popular college text *Writing Analytically*, "learning to write is largely a matter of learning how to frame questions." If none of these work for you, try to come up with your own strategy. What works for someone else may not work for you. After all, these prewriting strategies are just ways to put your ideas on the paper so you can develop them at a later time. Try to enjoy the process of writing instead of seeing writing only as the chore of finishing an assignment your instructor has given you. Done this way, writing might become a pleasure that can also improve your critical thinking ability.

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1.2.6: Starting with a Thesis Statement

Most students like to write their thesis statement before they begin actually drafting their essays. Consider this “thesis statement” a working thesis that can be modified and changed based on the needs of the essay as it develops.

Thesis statements vary based on the rhetorical strategy of the essay and are described in detail in each rhetorical chapter, but thesis statements share the following characteristics:

- Presents the main idea
- Most often is one sentence
- Tells the reader what to expect
- Is a formal summary of your essay topic
- Usually worded to have an argumentative edge
- Uses third person point of view

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1.2.7: How Do I Make an Outline?

Developing an outline, such as the examples below, can be helpful because you can keep an overview of what you want to say, check whether you have covered everything, and find what is out of scope and should be excluded. The outline can grow during the writing process as new points come to mind.

outline Example 1.2.7.1:

I. Introduction and Thesis
   a. Brief description of issues that arise when reading Hamlet

II. Issues of feminism uncovered through reading Hamlet
   a. What other scholars have discovered about feminism in Hamlet
   b. Which of these discoveries was most evident to me and how
   c. Ideas of feminism that I uncovered on my own

III. How uncovering ideas of feminism in Hamlet has led me to better understand what Shakespeare thought of the role women played in society

IV. Conclusion

outline Example 1.2.7.2:

I. Mixed marriages State this issue briefly, why I am interested in exploring this, and whether this issue exists in my culture

II. Issues of mixed marriage within your culture
   a. Is it acceptable to get married to a person who is a different religion?
   b. Is it acceptable to get married to a person who is a different race?
   c. What are the advantages or disadvantages of mixed marriages?

III. Personal experiences
   a. An example from my own life or my family.
   b. An example from the news.

IV. Conclusion

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SECTION OVERVIEW

1.3: Researching

Research can be an intimidating but rewarding process. It allows you to gain additional knowledge on a topic, assemble outside support, and provide credibility for your assertions. Think about research as a treasure hunt: be patient and curious, the two primary qualities of a good researcher.

Creating a research paper can be divided into three main steps: finding sources, evaluating sources, and integrating sources. This section will provide instruction on each of these steps, along with additional links and information to guide you through the research process.

Topic hierarchy

1.3.1: Determine the Role of Research in Your Writing

1.3.2: Finding Scholarly Sources

1.3.3: Evaluating Sources

1.3.4: Consider Your Project

1.3.5: Consult Source Evaluation Criteria

1.3.6: Integrating Scholarly Sources

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1.3.1: Determine the Role of Research in Your Writing

Depending upon the purpose of the assignment, research can be used to accomplish many things. Whether you are writing to inform, persuade, or critique, research should be used in conjunction with your own ideas to support your thesis and your purpose. Do not let the research speak for itself. You, the writer of the document, are the most important voice. You are using outside sources to support your thesis. Therefore, let your comments, connections, objections, etc. play the strongest role in your paper. When you quote or paraphrase an outside source, provide appropriate in-text citations. Following the citation, you must comment on this information: its significance, relevance, or even failure of the information as it relates to the thesis of your essay. Avoid stacking together quote after quote without showing your audience the purpose of the information. Always bring the paper back to your thoughts.

It is essential to use outside sources that are going to back up your argument. In many cases, researching will reveal evidence that might relate to the topic but does not support your position or “side” of the argument. Many assignments will ask you to acknowledge the other sides of the argument, so be sure to research your topic thoroughly and from many angles. Don’t just find sources that agree with your view. Remember that most issues are complex and have multiple “sides” or perspectives; a simple pro-con may not help you address the nuances or complexities of issues. Listen to and understand the variety of perspectives offered.

For some assignments, outside research may not be necessary. Thus, in determining the necessary amount of research needed, first evaluate the topic of the assignment. For example, a paper that is based solely on one’s opinion will likely require much less research than one that covers a highly scientific subject. To be sure, always ask your instructor for specific instructions.

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1.3.2: Finding Scholarly Sources

Before you begin your search, it is important to know that sources are divided into two categories: primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include original documents created by an author or group of authors such as historical documents, literary works, or lab reports. They also include any field research you conduct on your own such as interviews, experiments, or surveys. Secondary sources are sources written about primary sources and include scholarly books and articles, reviews, biographies, and textbooks.

Most often in academic writing, you will want to consult secondary sources along with any primary sources available. A popular source is meant for a general audience. Popular sources include newspaper and magazine articles, your Yahoo or Google newsfeed, and blogs. A scholarly source would be one that has been written by a professional in the field; the author may hold a doctoral degree or have a great amount of expertise in the field you are studying. Oftentimes, an author's credentials will be listed as a footnote within the source, but if not, an Internet search may reveal whether the writer can be determined to be a scholarly author or one that has done a vast amount of research on the topic. The author of the source will always be an important consideration, as your view of the quality of the article may change depending upon the author's credibility. In addition, you must ask yourself whether your source is popular or scholarly, and be sure to meet any requirements the project demands regarding source types.

In many fields, there will be a number of academic journals, periodicals and organizations that publish scholarly articles related to the subject. By discovering and accessing these journals, you can be sure that the piece from which you are quoting is a scholarly source. Many colleges and universities pay fees in order to provide their students with access to these journals in their electronic form, and an even greater number of university libraries will shelve current and back issues of these journals.

Furthermore, conducting an Internet search of these journals and articles may prove fruitful. Search engines such as Google offer the option of searching "Google Scholar" in order to access only these scholarly articles. Finding these sources online, depending on the journal and the site, may require that you pay a fee to view the article. This is where university libraries come in handy, as they offer free access to the same materials. If you cannot access a university library, some clever hunting of the Internet may still yield what you are looking for at no cost.

Popular scholarly databases include:

- Academic Search Premier
- Academic OneFile
- JSTOR
- Opposing Viewpoints in Context
- CQ Researcher
- PsychINFO
- ProQuest

...and a large number of other options depending on your field of study.

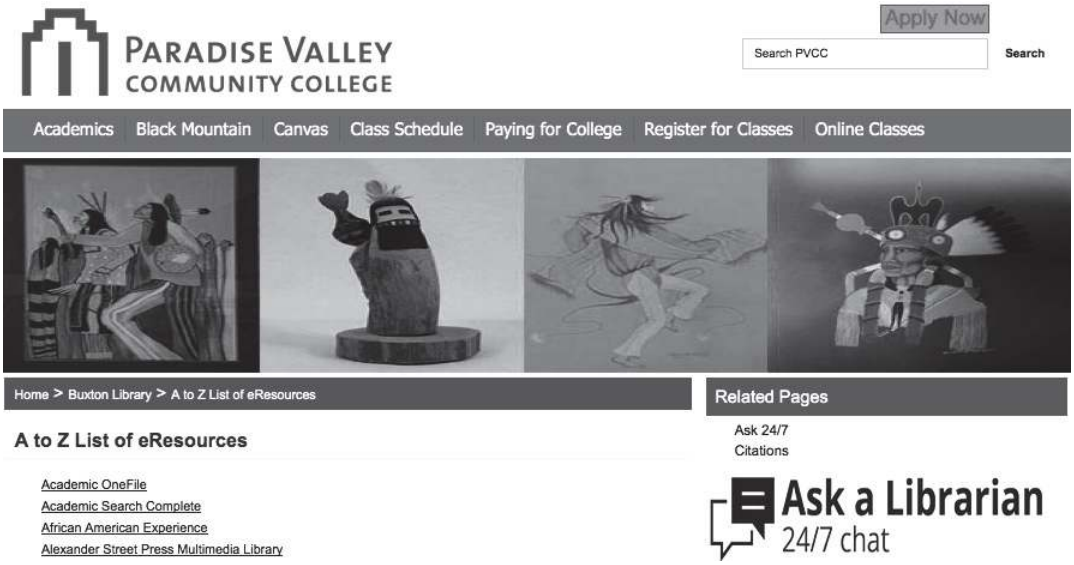

Figure 1.3.2.1

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1.3.3: Evaluating Sources

Now that you have found your sources, you must evaluate them. Evaluating sources becomes a major component of researching because the materials chosen will reflect upon your reputation. Aside from being able to find informative sources, a good researcher is also able to quickly assess the credibility of information. Through practice, this skill will come.

When setting out to write a research paper, there is a vast pool of information available, including books, newspapers, periodicals, reference works, and government documents. Included in this can be your own empirical data, obtained in interviews and surveys, but you will probably not need to use it all. As important as it is to be able to find sources specific to your topic, it is equally vital to be able to correctly assess each source's credibility—that is, how trustworthy, accurate, and verifiable the sources are. Due to the vast amount of information available on the Internet, it presents an especially interesting challenge in determining the credibility of sources. However, even when evaluating print sources, the same criticism should be maintained.

You must also be aware of the author's possible bias. Even the most credible sources may exhibit forms of bias, as most authors' past experiences will come into play. Bias is most likely to occur in controversial topics but is still likely to be present whenever an opinion is voiced. The author's beliefs and experiences can thus affect the objectivity of the text. Another case may be when the author or publisher has ties to a special interest group that may allow him or her to see only one side of the issue. Lastly, make sure to evaluate how fairly the author treats the opposing viewpoints. Complete objectivity is very difficult to attain in writing, but try to find sources that are not incredibly subjective. Nonetheless, the most important thing is simply to be aware of possible biases so that you are not misled.

Here are four approaches to assessing the credibility of the sources you find.

Evaluating Print Sources

The fact that it's in print doesn't automatically make it a reliable source. When evaluating print sources ask yourself these questions:

Book

- **How old is it?** Research projects will have different requirements as to how old your sources can be. For example, when dealing with contemporary issues or a current controversy, using outdated sources will likely provide inaccurate information. For example, a book on euthanasia published in 1978 probably isn't the best choice. While the book may contain useful information for other projects, it does not make sense to use it when there are more current materials available.
- **Who is the publisher?** Books published by a university press undergo significant editing and review to increase their validity and accuracy. When assessing a book published by a commercial publisher, be aware of vanity presses (companies that authors pay to publish their works, rather than vice versa). Also be cautious about using books labeled as "self-published" or books that are published by specific organizations (such as a corporation or a nonprofit group).
- **Is the author objective?** Check biographical information included in the book, as well as other sources, to gather information about the author's background as a way of determining his or her stance on a particular issue. In addition, find out about his or her previous works, past professional experience, affiliations with groups or movements, current employment, and degrees or other credentials.

Periodical

- **Is it a scholarly journal or a magazine?** Scholarly journals are almost always characterized by no advertisements, longer articles, and the requirement that authors cite the sources they use in writing their articles. Articles submitted to scholarly journals undergo substantial scrutiny by other professionals as a way to increase the clarity and accuracy of the information contained in them. Most scholarly journals are not sold on newsstands, but rather are circulated primarily among the academic community. In contrast, magazines are available for purchase; they tend to contain shorter articles, generally don't require writers to cite their sources, and contain advertising. Therefore, while magazines may contain relevant information, the content may not always be entirely accurate.
- **How old is it?** As noted above, dated material can sometimes be inaccurate. Always ask your instructor if you're uncertain about how old is too old.

- **Newspaper article**: **What do you know about the paper that publishes it?** Some newspapers have a discernible political slant, which can often be found by skimming through the headlines or by seeing how others regard the newspaper. For example, The Los Angeles Times is considered a more progressive news source, while its neighbor, The Orange County Register, is considered to have a libertarian slant.

Evaluating Web Sources

For most academic research, teachers will require that students use a mix of popular and scholarly sources. For this there are a number of academic databases that will always provide credible sources. These sites generally require some form of a subscription in order to access them; however, many colleges provide complimentary access to students. Once logged into the site, users are able to search and sort the articles by criterion such as date, subject, author, and more importantly, whether or not they have been peer reviewed and are scholarly. Examples of these sites include, but are not limited to: Academic Search Premier, JSTOR, and ProQuest. Links to these "gated websites" can generally be found on your school's web page. Nevertheless, always ask what databases are available to you as a student.

While the rest of the Internet has a wide range of easily accessible and useful information, discretion must be maintained. Because anyone can put information on the Internet, make it your first priority to know who is behind the sites you find. Individuals? Nonprofit groups? Corporations? Academics? Advocacy groups? Federal, state, or local government? Small businesses or single vendors? Depending on your topic, you may want to avoid .com web sites; for many, their primary purpose is commerce, and that can significantly affect what they publish. Of course, other websites can also have agendas including .org sites. This can lead to false or misleading information. Therefore, it is best to consult a number of sources so that those with agendas will stand out.

A note about Wikipedia: Wikipedia is often the first resource both students and the general public look for information about any given topic, and it's a great place to start. In scholastic research, however, Wikipedia is generally not qualified as a reliable source because of the interactive nature of the site, among other reasons. Good researchers follow the links that Wikipedia articles provide and evaluate those leads as they would any source selected for academic and scholastic work.

Ask yourself:

- **By whom was the website created?** Be cautious if there is no author. Try looking for "about this site" or check the homepage. Does the website discuss the qualifications of the author(s)? Does it give contact information such as an email address or telephone number?
- **By whom is the website sponsored?** Determine whether the website is sponsored by a special interest group. By learning about the affiliated groups, much can be ascertained about the credibility of the author and web site. Also look at the domain name. This will tell you by whom the site is sponsored. For example: educational (.edu), commercial (.com), nonprofit (.org), military (.mil), or network (.net).
- **Is the website relevant?** Decide whether the information is something that can actually be used in the paper or, at the very least, gives a helpful background. If what is found cannot be used, move on to something else.
- **Does the website contain any errors?** Can the definitions, figures, dates, and other facts presented on the website be verified in other sources? Look for grammar, spelling, punctuation, and content errors. If there appears to be more than one or two content errors, move on.
- **Is the website relatively unbiased?** As it is noted above, carefully examining the source behind the website can lead to clues as to what kind of bias and agenda the site may contain. Once the source has been deemed valid, continue to remain alert, especially if the topic is controversial. Look for websites that discuss multiple points of view. Take note of the language used, and avoid sites that seem to exhibit characteristics of bias and/or inaccurate information.
- **Are there advertisements on the Web page?** Do these particular advertisements reflect a possible bias toward the subject matter?
- **What appears to be the website's purpose?** Think about why the site was created. Is its purpose to inform, persuade, or sell a product to the reader? For whom was the site created? Who is the intended audience? If you are not included in the intended audience, carefully consider whether or not the information is relevant to your research.
- **Is the website comprehensive?** A valuable website will cover a topic in-depth and lead to additional sources.
- **Does the website provide references?** Determine whether the references themselves are authoritative.

- **How old is the website?** A website that has remained on the Internet a long time may be better trusted than one that was added a month ago. Make sure that the information is not outdated. When was the site last updated? Credible websites will garner ongoing attention by their creators to make sure that the content is as up-to-date as possible.
- **Has the website received any awards?** Websites that have received awards may have better reputations.
- **Is the website user-friendly?** Does the website download quickly? Can you read all the text? Does any text appear too small, in strange characters, or in a font that is illegible? How easy is it to navigate through the website? Is the content accessible? The information presented should be clear, precise, and easy to understand. Avoid using sites that make use of overly scientific and/or technological terms that are difficult to understand. If it cannot be clearly understood, it may lead to misinterpretation and thus incorrect information in your work.

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1.3.4: Consider Your Project

How you evaluate a source will differ depending on the project you're working on. When determining whether a source is credible, biased, or relevant, it is equally important to consider how the source will be used.

For example, Phillip Morris has a website that touts the company's programs to curb smoking among young people. Obviously, information from a tobacco company and cigarette marketing giant can be considered biased. You must ask yourself whether their program is effective and whether the content of the site can be trusted and in what context.

Should you never use that source? You might want to if you were writing a paper that examined the smoking rates of 10-13 year olds. What role might the Phillip Morris site play in your paper? Does the site display information that contradicts the company's advertising campaigns? Would the campaign website be effective in your argument? It all depends on what side of the argument is going to be supported in your research project.

Audience. Purpose. Argument. These intents should be considered since they affect how sources should be evaluated.

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1.3.5: Consult Source Evaluation Criteria

When faced with assessing a large number of sources in a short period of time, the quickest way to cover the essential points is to remember an acronym. Multiple acronyms exist, and you should use the one your instructor designates. An example of a good acronym is CARBS:

C currency. How current is the article and why does it matter/not matter?

A authority. Who is the author (or authoring agency) and how is this author uniquely qualified to write on the topic?

R relevancy. What information is unique to this article? How does it increase your credibility as a researcher?

B bias. What is the purpose of the article (to inform, entertain, persuade)? Is the bias limited to inference or does it cross into judgment?

S scholarly. How would you rate this article in terms of scholarly information (1-10, 10 being very scholarly)? Does it use facts? Does it cite sources? Or is it meant for general consumption/a more popular appeal?

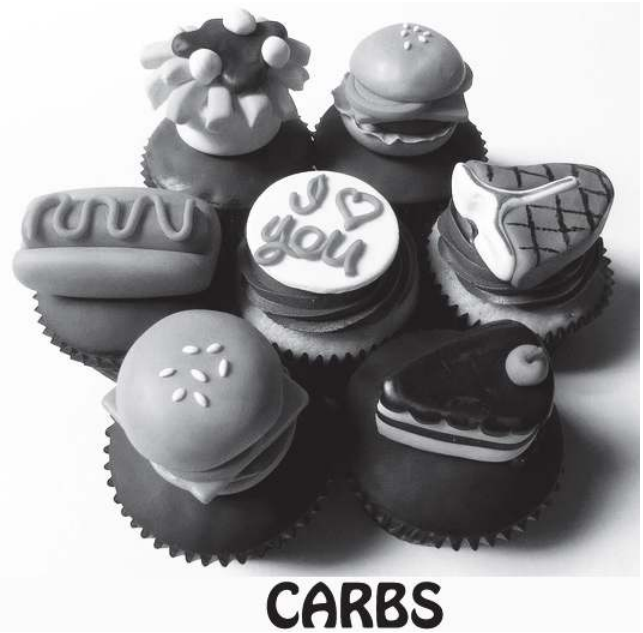

Figure **1.3.5.1** - *Photo credit: clevercupcakes via Visual Hunt/CC BY*

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1.3.6: Integrating Scholarly Sources

To better understand the process of researching, it should be recognized that there are sources of information all around us. We commonly use them in situations ranging from a conversation with a friend to an online discussion. The difference in academic research is that this “casual conversation” turns into a discussion with the readers of your paper. Therefore, it may help to think of doing research and using sources of information as just another way to enhance your conversation with the audience.

Sources Are Other Voices

Even before you learn the rules of citation, recognize that you already know quite a bit about how to work with sources. It can be helpful here to think of sources as “other voices.” Sources are used when you reference an idea that was heard in a conversation. They are used when considering what to buy— whether the source is an advertisement, a slogan you can’t get out of your head, the fact that a friend recommended a product, or that you've looked up price quotes and shopped around. You become knowledgeable about making decisions by piecing together the information from many sources. Sources are part of our lives; they are all around us and are a part of how we breathe life into the words that express what we think.

In research writing, it is similar in the sense that the same act of interacting with other voices is present, and only another layer is added. Because writing is being done, you’re also presenting the sources in an organized way, so that your sources are used in a way that supports your point of view. This means that any and all sources that remotely relate to the topic can’t be thrown in; instead, pick and choose the best sources for your purposes, and use them strategically for effect.

Purposes of Sources

Sources are capable of playing a variety of roles in your writing. Sometimes sources are used as examples; sometimes they present evidence. Sources can also be used to present a counter-argument. Other times, they are used only to be built upon and refined.

This is nothing new. To relate this to an everyday situation, try this: Spend a week paying attention to the conversations and discussions you have. Listen for sources used and try to discern for what reasons they were used. You’ll often hear people cite the news or refer to a game when talking about sports. You’ll hear friends quote conversations they’ve had with other friends. You will hear people discussing important issues with the participants in that discussion providing reasons (evidence)— facts and opinions, but often a mix of the two—for why they feel the way they do.

In writing, the natural act of conversing with and referring to others is taken one step further. Knowing in advance that you’ll be writing for an audience, sources (other voices) will be looked at while exploring an idea and planning how to appeal to those readers, using terms and conventions that they will recognize. However, do not let this part of the research process get in the way of doing what comes naturally. Research is about curiosity and interest. It is about having something to say and finding the evidence to support it. That is the basis of research and working with sources. Thus, the technicalities and rules of research, while important, should not discourage you from doing research and effectively using sources.

Cite Sources to Avoid Plagiarism

After using other sources to gain information for a report or paper, you might decide to use that information in your paper. If the ideas expressed in your paper are not your original thoughts, you must cite where you obtained that information. If you do not cite where you obtained your information, you are plagiarizing. Plagiarizing is an extreme offense. In college, plagiarism usually results in a failing grade on the assignment, if not in the entire course. You could also risk being expelled from school and having the record of your offense entered in your official transcript; the offense will then surface any time a prospective employer asks for official college transcripts as part of the application process or background check. If you are caught plagiarizing in the workplace, it could likely end up costing you your job. If you are a researcher and plagiarize in a scientific paper, your university may lose funding. To avoid the risk of plagiarism, make sure that you cite copied information. The most common forms of citation are direct quotations, summarizing, or paraphrasing. After a direct quote or at the end of a summarized or paraphrased thought, you should cite the author and page number of your source. If you are using other sources in your report and are unsure whether or not you need to use citations, it is better to be safe than sorry, so cite the information.

The two most common standards for citing are MLA (Modern Language Association) and APA (American Psychological Association). Each is specific to the field in which the research is done. For example, if you are researching for a psychology class,

it is most likely going to be cited in APA format. On the other hand, MLA is used in the liberal arts and humanities fields. Nonetheless, check with the teacher, group, or organization for which the research is being done to find out which method you are expected to use.

Using and correctly citing outside sources is hugely important to the ethical portrayal of you as a writer. It shows that you have done your homework, literally. It also shows that you are a thoughtful writer who takes this work or subject seriously, who respects the hard work of others, and who truly contemplates the intricacies of research and discovering truth in writing.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

1.4: Drafting

> "Close the door. Write with no one looking over your shoulder. Don't try to figure out what other people want to hear from you; figure out what you have to say. It's the one and only thing you have to offer." —Barbara Kingsolver

Drafting is essential to the organization and flow of your paper. Drafting includes prewriting, editing, and reviewing. Once your general ideas are down on paper, writing out specific ideas and quotations can make the final writing process much easier. Each step of drafting brings the process a little closer to the final product. Always write down any ideas you have in the drafting process. It is much easier to cut content from your paper than it is to work on adding content. If you collect all your resources, quotations, facts, ideas, and come up with a thesis during the drafting process, your paper will show it. The idea is to provide yourself with as much information as possible in order to create a solid and well thought-out piece. Do less worrying and more writing.

Topic hierarchy

1.4.1: Drafting- The Process

1.4.2: During the Drafting Process

1.4.3: Titling your Essay

1.4.4: Final Thoughts on Drafting

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1.4.1: Drafting- The Process

> “Fiction is based on reality unless you're a fairy-tale artist. You have to get your knowledge of life from somewhere. You have to know the material you're writing about before you alter it.” —Hunter S. Thompson

The Thesis

It is not advisable to begin drafting without a thesis. The thesis statement is a roadmap for your essay, and at the drafting phase, it will help keep you on track. Make sure that you begin with a statement (not a question) that articulates (a) your topic, (b) what you plan to say about that topic, and that at least implies (c) why what you plan to say is significant enough to be worth writing about. What causes students the most trouble is (b) what you plan to say about the topic. What you plan to say must be debatable. You should not plan to say something people already know or can easily find somewhere else. What you plan to say about your topic must be something that a reader could question, but might not after reading the essay that will follow.

The First Draft

Prewriting will help you with drafting. Additionally, try writing in full sentences, try finding the best possible quotations, try mindmapping, or try writing out all of the data you have gathered. Weave these things together, and you may end up with a nice framework for your paper. Don’t worry about being complete in your drafting. Disorganization and choppiness are fine here; you can smooth that out in later drafts. Drafts are **not** perfect. Drafts may contain grammatical and spelling errors and may lack detail. Rephrasing and expanding ideas may be a part of later drafts.

The Second Draft

The second draft is about organizing your information logically and effectively. If you created a thorough first draft, this should be easy. Organize the main points that you plan to make, find supporting evidence for each point, and spend a few sentences explaining what conclusions you are able to draw from the information. Don’t be afraid to show off. Professors like it when students are able to draw conclusions on their own. Sometimes it weakens your argument to use softeners like “might” “I think” and “maybe,” so keep an eye out for these.

You will want to come up with an overall organizational strategy and stick to it. Parallelism is very attractive in a paper. However, there is also no quick and easy format that works for every topic. You may want to organize things chronologically, with fact and then opinion, or by order of importance.

The Third Draft and More

The third and any subsequent drafts are really about finesse. These are the drafts that will hook your reader and earn you an “A.” Try to write an attention-grabbing introduction as well as a conclusion that leaves the reader thinking about your paper. If you are still struggling with the overall flow of your paper, go back to your first draft and start rewriting. Often your main point will change by the time you get to this draft, and that is fine. However, you may need to go back to your first draft when this happens.

The elusive “show, don’t tell” expression comes into play in this draft. Your audience wants to be entertained, and they want more than just facts. You need to show the professor that you can think for yourself, that you know what you’re talking about, and that you can write in an engaging style. If you are bored reading the paper, chances are the audience will be, too. Add action verbs, remove passive ones, and use examples. Pretty soon you’ll be ready for a final draft.

Be sure to follow a timeline. Make sure that you start early to have enough time to go through many drafts. If you wait until the day before, you will have time for only one draft.

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1.4.2: During the Drafting Process

Many writers often narrow—or expand—the topic as they write. Overly broad topics can be difficult to manage and can lead to summarization rather than descriptive explanation. Narrowing your topic will provide you with a more workable idea to focus on. Asking questions about what you want to know regarding your topic and what you want your readers to know will help focus your writing. If you choose to narrow your topic, first try to picture a larger context into which your thesis fits. Make a claim which forecasts the main point(s) of your thesis, then deliver the source which supports the argument. During this stage, scan for grammatically weak areas and unsupported claims. You may always add background information, term definitions, literature review, reasons for your assumptions, and counter-arguments to strengthen your own argument.

> "My starting point [in writing] is always a feeling of partisanship, a sense of injustice . . . I write because there is some lie that I want to expose, some fact to which I wish to draw attention, and my initial concern is to get a hearing." —George Orwell

Sometimes you will find that it is easier to write the introduction after you have written the body of your paper. Consider waiting to write the introduction until you have a definite sense of what direction you want your paper to take. Many times, if you write an introduction first, it can limit the information or collaboration of ideas for the bulk of the paper. If you do decide to save the introduction for later, go over what you have written and identify the main point, or points, of your paper. Next, craft an introduction with a thesis statement that forecasts what will follow. Be aware that you need to rework some of the body after you write the introduction. No matter what you choose to write first, it is important to stay on track. Emphasize several points that are related to your thesis by adding more information and going deeper into detail. It is important to gather sufficient information to support your thesis. You may be required to provide a reference or in-text citation, or you may find that you do not yet know enough about your topic, and more research is required. Research may be necessary for multiple reasons: to learn more about the topic, to provide examples for your thesis, or to use as support for your thoughts, opinions, and the overall direction of your paper.

Let it Flow

As you draft, do not stop to edit or look up small pieces of information; there will be time for precision later. Luke Sullivan, author of *Hey Whipple, Squeeze This*, suggests that you must "write hot and edit cold." In other words, write off the top of your head and allow your thoughts to be spontaneous. You never want to leave a good idea out. However, when it comes to polishing the final product, become critical by taking out unnecessary words or ideas that stray from the main message. Do not keep text that distracts or causes misunderstandings. If you have a question, place it in brackets or make a note of it and refer back to it later. First, just get your ideas out without worrying about punctuation or spelling. Similarly, if you notice a big gap which requires more research, skip it and work on other sections. The important thing is to let your ideas keep coming and make progress on the page. No matter how irrelevant your words may appear, keep writing. If you have to stop, be sure to end in a place where it will be easy to pick up from later. Don't get distracted when your initial drafts aren't "A" quality work. That's the reason they are drafts. The important thing is to get your ideas down on paper. You can spend time evaluating them later on.

> "Write 1,000 words a day. That's only about four pages, but force yourself to do it. Put your finger down your throat and throw up. That's what writing's all about." —Ray Bradbury

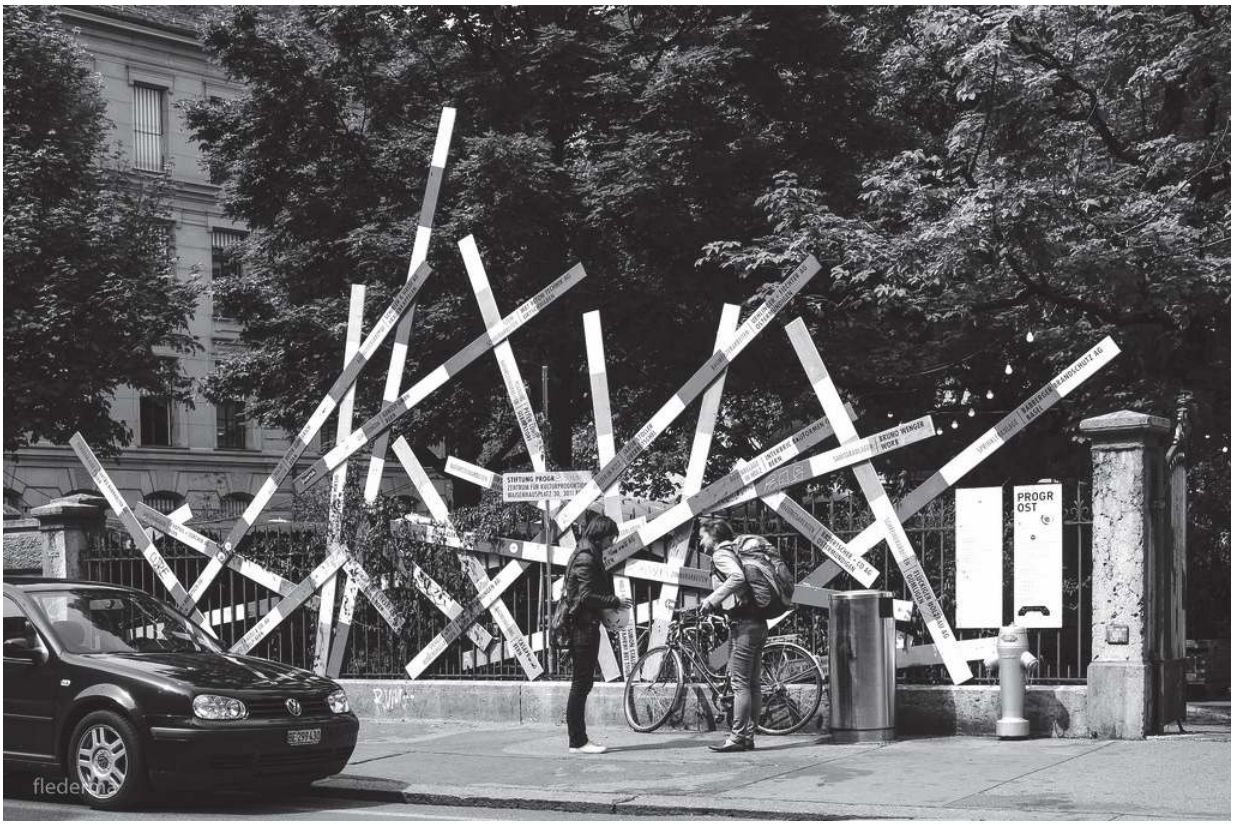

Figure **1.4.2.1** - *Photo credit: fotoleder via Visualhunt.com/CC BY-NC-ND*

Dealing with Writer's Block

Writer's block can occur at any point during the writing process. You may find yourself sitting down to write when you suddenly realize that you can't think of a single thing to say. Don't panic! It's a common problem with a variety of solutions.

Here are a few...

- Staring at a blank screen can be intimidating. Try writing out your dilemma in the form of a question: "What is it I'm trying to say?" "What are my goals?" Then brainstorm to answer these questions.
- Take a break. Ten minutes away from your work will usually recharge your creativity.
- Review the literature on your topic to see what other people are saying. Even opposing views can be inspiring.
- Bounce ideas off someone else. Speaking about your writer's block with friends, family, and fellow students may help untangle ideas or generate new ones.
- Read aloud what you've already written to see if the juices start flowing again.

Experiment

How do you start your draft? While the occasional flash of inspiration can lead you to scribble out great work on the back of an envelope with a stubby pencil, paying brief attention not only to "what you write," but "how you write," can inspire you to write differently or even more effectively.

If you start drafting from the conclusion, for example, it could be like having a "Guiding Star" for your paper. Or you could leave the introduction and conclusion blank until the end. With that said, you can make up your own approach to create your own way of writing. All the technological tools you have access to make it possible for you to write virtually anytime, anywhere, and however you want. Take advantage of it. Type on your computer, do research on it, record your own voice if the pen is slowing down your thinking. Many people find it helpful to brainstorm; start writing for an extended period of time without stopping and see what you can come up with. Charting can be a good way to come up with ideas and see connections you may not otherwise notice; when you

chart, you write down a topic in the center of the paper. Then write other words or ideas that fit in with the topic. Draw lines that connect the related ideas. Experiment with your approach to writing.

Meeting the Minimum Word Count

If you are having trouble meeting the minimum page length, look over your paper again and see if you can find spots that could use additional detail. Also, look at your assignment sheet again to see if you met the assignment's requirements. It is okay to add more detail to certain sections; for instance, is "a blue car" sufficient, or would "a 2007 Malibu Blue Mazda Miata" work better? But be careful not to make your paper too wordy. Remember that quality is more important than quantity. Just adding needless words to add to the word count keeps you from actually developing your ideas and strengthening the content of the paper.

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1.4.3: Titling your Essay

Coming up with a good title for your essay might seem difficult, but there are several techniques that can help. Although some writers start with a good title and write a paper to fit it, others (and probably most) worry about coming up with a good title after they're finished with the draft. The advantage of waiting until the end to work on the title is that you know exactly what you've written.

Many academic writers prefer a two-part title structure separated by a colon. The "catchy" bit goes before the colon, whereas the latter part is a straightforward description of the paper, for example, "Cutting out the Cut and Paste: Why Schools Should Use Plagiarism Detection Software."

Here are some tips for coming up with good titles:

- Get inspiration from best-selling books or well-known essays, particularly those closely related to your topic (e.g., "Men are from Mars, Women are from Snickers: Candy Bars and the Obesity Epidemic.")
- Look through your paper and see if you can identify some "key words" or special phrases that might serve as part of a title (i.e., "Edit this Page: How Wikis Enable Collaborative Writing" or "The Blue Screen of Death: How to Respond to Technical Difficulties During a Presentation.")
- Consider poetic devices, such as repeating consonant sounds (e.g., "The Cost of Caring").
- Get inspiration from famous quotations or song lyrics (e.g., "I Shaved My Legs for This?: A Feminist Perspective on Country Music.")

If you can't come up with a good title right away, walk away from your screen and think about other things for a while. If you just can't come up with anything clever, just remember that a clear and precise title is much better than none at all. A title like "The Use of Skull Imagery in Hamlet" may not sound profound, but at least the reader will know what the paper is about.

> "When you get an idea, go and write. Don't waste it in conversation." —Kenneth Koch

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1.4.4: Final Thoughts on Drafting

Here's a quick summary of the key guidelines in drafting:

- Don't worry about your audience before you draft. Your audience may dictate the style and tone of your writing, but it is more important to get a good start before adding potential complications to the mix.
- You may need to narrow or expand your topic as you develop your paper.
- If you are stumped about how to start the introduction, it might be helpful to simply skip it and come back to it later. The bigger picture might become clearer as you approach completion.
- While drafting, keep all of your research close at hand. This will prevent the need to stop writing to look something up, which could break your concentration.
- Writing in 30-minute stretches, or longer, will establish momentum, making your job as a writer much easier.
- If you come across a small detail that you are unsure about, simply write yourself a note and come back to it later.
- The first draft will not be perfect. Your priority should be getting your thoughts out on paper (or on-screen). Leave the fine-tuning for later.
- If you must stop writing, be sure to end in a place where you have a good idea of what comes next. Make a brief not yourself so you'll be able to pick up the thread more easily. You will be able to pick it up again more easily.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

1.5: Revising and Editing

Topic hierarchy

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1.5.1: Revising and Editing- One and the Same?

> "Substitute 'damn' every time you're inclined to write 'very'; your editor will delete it and the writing will be just as it should be." —Mark Twain

Although many writers and instructors use the terms interchangeably, it is helpful to see revising and editing as two different activities. For our purposes, revising is an ongoing process and occurs throughout the writing of the essay when a writer attempts to make the changes. These changes may be ones suggested in a peer review but also ones you decide on as you write. Think of revising as "revisioning" your writing to make the content clear, focused, descriptive, and detailed.

Editing happens after you are satisfied with the overall content of the writing. Editing means going through a piece of writing and making comments and suggestions about how it could be better—or even whether it's appropriate at all. Editing also includes proofreading for grammar, punctuation and spelling errors. Editing *identifies* the changes needed, and revising *incorporates* the changes needed. For example, a reviewer might suggest that you tweak your introduction to make it better fit the rest of the paper. The actual process of changing the introduction is called revising.

Differences between Revising, Editing, and Proofreading

It is important to note that revising, editing, and proofreading are very different processes. Despite the differences, however, they often overlap. They are being separated here for ease of explanation.

Revising

- Revising is done throughout the writing process, with special emphasis on the first few drafts.
- Focus = big issues
- Audience
- Organization
- Content
- Evidence
- Conclusion

Editing

- Editing is done throughout the writing process, with special emphasis on the middle and final drafts.
- Focus = technical issues
- Flow
- Word choice
- Grammar
- Transitions
- Textual inconsistencies

Proofreading

- Proofreading is reserved for the final draft.
- Focus = mechanics and presentation
- Spelling
- Punctuation
- Format
- Typographical errors

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1.5.2: Overview of Revising

> “Rewriting is when writing really gets to be fun…. In baseball you only get three swings and you’re out. In rewriting, you get almost as many swings as you want and you know, sooner or later, you'll hit the ball.” —Neil Simon

Successful writers understand that revising is an integral part of the writing process. It is important for authors to spend the majority of their time revising their texts. That revising is a time-consuming and practiced skill surprises many beginning writers because they often describe revision as changing particular words in a sentence or scanning a text for misspelled words or grammatical errors. Such changes correspond more appropriately to the term proofreading. To revise, however, is to significantly alter a piece of writing.

Revising and editing are two separate processes. Revising requires a significant alteration in a piece of writing, such as enriching the content or giving the piece clarity. Although editing can be a part of this process, revising generally involves changes that concern bigger issues, such as content and organization. While revising, a writer might notice that one idea needs to be developed more thoroughly and another idea omitted. The writer might decide that rearranging paragraphs will provide clarity and support for the essay, strengthening the paper as a whole. Granted, writers should also change grammar and punctuation while revising, but if that is all they are doing, then they are simply editing.

A Change for the Better

> “I write one page of masterpiece to ninety-one pages of sh*t. I try to put the sh*t in the wastebasket.” —Ernest Hemingway

Writing is an intellectually challenging, and draining, activity—writing well, that is. Putting ideas on paper is a good start, but revising those ideas so that they are persuasive, cogent, and form a solid argument is the real work of writing. As you review what you have written, you will undoubtedly see holes in your logic, sentences that confuse rather than clarify, and sentences and paragraphs out of place. Below are some helpful hints to consider as you analyze and transform your paper.

- Take a break. Looking at your paper later will help you see it from the point of view of the audience. A good rule of thumb is to wait at least a day before revising. Often, writers look at their prose a day later and recognize significant flaws they would not have noticed had they written their paper in one night.
- Be your own critic. You are obviously your own best critic. When writing, most people do not (and should not) turn in their first drafts. So take advantage of your first, second, and third drafts to write your opinions in the margins. Highlight the things you really like, and circle the things you would like to change.
- Read and re-read your paper. In the first read-through consider the clarity of both the focus and the purpose of the paper. Does every supporting statement agree with the thesis? In the second read-through analyze organization, logical development, and correctness. Often, reading your text aloud reveals awkward phrasing, missing information, weak points, and illogical reasoning.
- Put yourself in the shoes of your reader. Look at your work through their eyes. Keep in mind that while you may know something about a topic and write about it with supported research, your audience may be new to the topic. Being specific in your writing helps clarify your message to audiences. Do not assume that your audience already knows what you know.
- Understand that revising your paper should not be the last thing you do—revision should be ongoing throughout the creation of a document.

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1.5.3: Overview of Editing

Editing is a technical process and includes proofreading to fix typos and grammatical errors. You can (and should) edit your own work in addition to relying on a peer review or trip to the writing center. This means going back over what you've written and finding ways to improve it. Most writers frequently switch between drafting new sentences and paragraphs and editing ones they've already written.

As previously mentioned, revision concerns large sections of text, while editing concerns individual sentences. Below is a list of potential errors to consider while editing.

- Fragments
- Run-on sentences
- Dangling or misplaced modifiers
- Adjective and adverb use
- Verb usage and tense
- Subject/verb agreement
- Pronoun/antecedent agreement
- Sentence balance
- Comma use
- Spelling
- Word choice (connotation vs. denotation)
- Format/presentation

Sentence Structure

Use active verbs.

Be-verbs (is, am, are, was, were, be, has/have been) indicate condition and often require an extra sentence or clause to be sound. Active verbs allow you to compose sharply without numbing the rhythm of your writing. Read your writing with an objective eye and think:

"How can I make every sentence and paragraph straightforward and simple?" Below are examples in italics of wordy and confusing verbiage. Below the italics are the same sentences that have been simplified.

*The sharp rise in fuel prices **is** a serious challenge to trucking firms. It makes it hard for them to provide timely service to customers and to meet payroll expenses.*

Sharply rising fuel prices **challenge** trucking firms by causing delays in customer service and payroll.

*Primary causes of the rise in fuel prices **are** an issue of confusion for many citizens. They don't know how to fight the rise because they don't know its cause.*

Primary causes of rising fuel prices **elude** many citizens, making them unaware of how to fight the increase.

Name the people.

Directly state **who or what group** is acting in your sentences. Note the contrast in power and clarity among the sentences below.

Without people: *A citywide ban on indoor smoking in Duluth originally caused a marked drop in bar patronage.*

With people: *When the Duluth City Council passed a citywide ban on indoor smoking, many people stopped going to bars.*

Eliminate wordy phrases. Certain stock phrases are weak and wordy. They can make you sound stuffy or as though you're just trying to fill up space. Use the simple bolded words below instead of the empty and cumbersome language in italics.

Because, Since, Why: *the reason for, for the reason that, owing/due to the fact that, in light of the fact that, considering the fact that, on the grounds that, this is why*

When: *on the occasion of, in a situation in which, under circumstances in which*

About, Regarding: *as regards, in reference to, with regard to, concerning the matter of, where ABC is concerned*

Must, Should: *it is crucial that, it is necessary that, there is a need/necessity for, it is important that, it cannot be avoided that*

Can: *is able to, has the opportunity to, has the capacity for, has the ability to*

May, Might, Could: *it is possible that, there is a chance that, it could happen that, the possibility exists for*

Luckily, Internet users can find numerous websites about how to eliminate wordiness.

Use parallelism in sentences. Parallelism sounds difficult but is easy to write or edit. Parallelism uses the same pattern in words and structure to show equal importance or provide balance in sentences.

Incorrect: John likes reading, **his studies**, and talking.

Corrected: John likes reading, studying, and talking.

Incorrect: We were asked to calculate scores, record them, and **putting them** on the bulletin board.

Corrected: We were asked to calculate scores, record them, and post them on the bulletin board.

Incorrect: The science class had to dissect frogs or **were experimenting** with gases.

Corrected: The science class had to either dissect frogs or experiment with gases.

To check for parallelism, first circle or highlight every **and** or **or** to check for balance in the sentence.

List the phrases from your sentence on a separate piece of paper. Example: **reading, his studies, and talking**. Make corrections to your list to create balance: **reading, studying, and talking**.

Once you fix a few sentences, problems with parallelism become easier to recognize and to correct.

Editing Tips

> "Bad spellers of the world, untie!" —Graffito

Editing is like going over your writing with a fine-toothed comb, scanning the surface and the depths for errors, misstatements, and a lack of clarity.

First, **keep resources close**. Gather your writing handbook, dictionary, thesaurus, handouts, and any other editing resources and *keep them close*. This way, you will not be tempted to guess at the correct way to do something. Instead, use your resources when you need them. Spelling errors can be avoided if you have a dictionary nearby. Don't rely on spell check. It will only correct the spelling, not the proper usage of a word. For example, the word **they're** is a contraction of the words "they are." Additionally, the word **their** means possession of something as used in the sentence, "We sat in *their* chairs." And finally, **there** is expresses an area or place as in the sentence, "We sat over *there*." A full distinction can be made in the following sentence: "*They're* over *there* working on *their* writing." Looking up these words in a dictionary will prevent unnecessary errors from occurring.

Second, **know your errors**. Keep a list of the errors you tend to make next to a corresponding list of corrections. No writer makes unique mistakes all the time; instead, our mistakes are habitual. Know what yours are by looking at your instructor's comments on past papers or by working with a writing tutor. That way, you can enhance your editing strategies by watching specifically for these types of errors. If there are grammar rules you find yourself looking up more frequently than others, write them down for future reference.

Third, **break it down**. Edit one thing at a time. Instead of reading your paper through from start to finish once or twice and trying to catch everything, try searching for one thing at a time. For example, you might go through your paper once to tighten up wordiness. Then, read through a second time, while looking for one type of error which you frequently make, such as comma splices. Then, try reading a third time looking for words that may have been misspelled when you ran a spell check. Read a fourth time for another characteristic error, such as subject-verb agreement.

Next, **reduce visual clutter**. Use two pieces of blank paper to cover up everything but one sentence at a time. This forces you to pay closer attention to the words because they are the only thing you see. Normally, our eyes move all over a text as we are reading; this trick will prevent that tendency.

Work backwards. Read from the end of your paper to the beginning, one sentence at a time. When we read in the conventional manner—top to bottom or left to right—we tend to read quickly and are constantly leaping ahead without really focusing on the words. We tend to see what isn't there, because we know what it is supposed to say. Reading backwards forces us to slow down, thereby allowing us to catch more errors within individual sentences.

Finally, **cut unnecessary words**. Inexperienced writers should be able to cut 20 percent (or more) of their prose. Look hard at each word, each phrase, and each sentence. Does each and every one help you achieve your purpose? Does each sentence in a paragraph relate to the main idea? If you are like most people, you will find unnecessary repetition rampant in your writing. Pruning the verbiage will result in leaner, tighter, and more forceful writing. Remember E.B. White's mantra: “Omit needless words. Omit needless words. Omit needless words.”

When reviewing your work, it is also important to ensure that the tense you choose remains consistent. **Tense** refers to the relation of details in the past, present, and future. For example, one writer may tell a story about going to the mall in the present tense by saying, “I **am** walking around the mall and I **see** my third grade teacher.” Another writer may choose to relate this story in the past tense by saying, “I **was** walking around the mall when I **saw** my third grade teacher.” Although it is important to select the tense that best suits the particular context a writer is using, it is equally important to remain consistent with whatever tense is chosen. Inconsistency within tense is extremely confusing for readers. It is important to review your use of tense to ensure that your language is clear. For example, if you were to say “I **was** walking around the mall and I **see** my third grade teacher,” your audience would be very confused, wondering if you were seeing your teacher in the present or last week. By keeping your tense consistent, your reader will always know when you experienced what you’re writing about.

After going through the steps above and making changes as necessary, you should feel your paper is nearly complete. The content should be in place, and your text should make your case clearly and forcefully. If you feel this is the case, you are ready to closely analyze your text.

> “Books aren’t written; they’re rewritten. Including your own. It is one of the hardest things to accept, especially after the seventh rewrite hasn’t quite done it.” —Michael Crichton

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1.5.4: Analyze Each Part of Your Paper

As part of revising, you now need to revisit the parts of your essay: introductions, body paragraphs, and conclusions.

Introduction

When you look over the draft of your paper, the first thing you should focus on is your introduction. Whether it is one paragraph or an entire chapter, the purpose of the introduction is to grab your readers' attention and make them want to know more about your subject. Does it? Make sure you draw your readers in from the beginning and follow with interesting and supportive information. If readers are not intrigued from the very beginning of the piece, they will quickly become distracted and avoid reading any further.

Thesis Statement

A thesis is not only an idea, but it is also a theory that provides direction and guidance on what one is talking about. It is a theory because it is an abstract type of generalized thinking that binds the whole piece of writing together and also provides a goal and a standard for the paper. Make sure you have a clear thesis. Simply put, a thesis is your main point, the line of argument that you are pursuing in your essay. It should answer two simple questions: What issue are you writing about, and what is your position on it? A thesis statement is a single sentence (or sometimes two) that provides the answers to these questions clearly and concisely. Ask yourself, "What is my paper about, exactly?" to help you develop a precise and directed thesis, not only for your reader, but for you as well.

Most readers expect to see the point of your argument (the thesis statement) within the first few paragraphs. This does not mean that you have to place it there every time. Some writers place it at the very end, slowly building up to it throughout their work, to explain a point after the fact. Others don't bother with one at all, but feel that their thesis is "implied" anyway. Beginning writers, however, should avoid the implied thesis unless certain of the audience. Almost every professor will expect to see a clearly discernible thesis sentence in the introduction. Remember: The harder it is for you to write your thesis statement, the more likely it is that your entire essay is incoherent and unfocused. If you are having real problems crafting a good thesis statement, you may need to start over, narrow your topic, or dig even more deeply into what you are trying to say and write.

A good basic structure for a thesis statement is "they say, I say." What is the prevailing view, and how does your position differ from it? However, avoid limiting the scope of your writing with an either/or thesis under the assumption that your view must be strictly contrary to their view.

Following are some typical thesis statements:

- Although many readers believe *Romeo and Juliet* to be a tale about the ill fate of two star-crossed lovers, it can also be read as an allegory concerning a playwright and his audience.
- The "War on Drugs" has not only failed to reduce the frequency of drug-related crimes in America but actually enhanced the popular image of dope peddlers by romanticizing them as desperate rebels fighting for a cause.
- The bulk of modern copyright law was conceived in the age of commercial printing, long before the Internet made it so easy for the public to compose and distribute its own texts. Therefore, these laws should be reviewed and revised to better accommodate modern readers and writers.
- The usual moral justification for capital punishment is that it deters crime by frightening would-be criminals. However, the statistics tell a different story.
- If students really want to improve their writing, they must read often, practice writing, and receive quality feedback from their peers.
- Plato's dialectical method has much to offer those engaged in online writing, which is far more conversational in nature than print.

You will know your thesis statement is finished when it contains the basic information for your argument without any major in-depth descriptions.

Position

Make sure that your reader knows *your* position on the issue. This should be properly expressed in your thesis, but check your entire introduction for "wishy washy" sentences. Unless you're only writing a summary, your introduction should make it clear

how you feel about the issue at stake. This is not, however, accomplished by stating your position in the introduction prior to your thesis. Employ recommended introduction strategies to illustrate your position.

Avoid sentences or thesis statements such as the following:

- Abortion is a very controversial issue in America.
- Capital punishment is both good and bad.
- This paper will present the pros and cons of modern copyright law.

Are these examples stating an issue and taking a position, or merely stating what everyone knows already? Again, your reader should already know that the issue you're writing about is controversial; otherwise, there would be little reason to write about it. Unless you've been instructed to merely write a report or summary of an issue, assume that your professor wants you to take a position and defend it with the best evidence you can muster. However, you should not forget to fairly analyze all positions and debate opposing viewpoints. Even if you only cater to other opinions in order to disprove them, you will have strengthened your argument as a result.

Body Paragraphs

As you build support for your thesis in the body paragraphs, always ask yourself if you are spending your readers' time wisely. Are you writing unnecessarily complex and confusing sentences, or using 50 words when five would do? If a sentence is already plain and direct, there's no need to fluff it up. Flowery words and phrases obscure your ideas: when writing, being *concise* is key. For example, why write, "Cats have a tendency toward sleeping most of the day" when you could simply write, "Cats usually sleep most of the day"? How about changing "The 12th day of the month of April" to "April 12th?" Try to pick out such sentences and substitute simpler ones.

But wait—don't you need to inflate your text so you can meet the minimum word count? Wouldn't it be better to use "due to the fact that" for "because" and "in addition to" for "and," since these phrases use far more words? Answer: No. Any experienced reader will instantly see through such a pitiful scheme and will likely become irritated by the resulting "flabby" prose. If you are having trouble meeting the minimum word count, a far better solution is to add more examples, details, quotations, or perspectives. Go back to the planning and drafting stage and really ask yourself if you've written everything useful about a topic.

Other students worry that their sentences don't sound smart enough. Compare these two sentences:

- Do not ask what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.
- Do not submit a query concerning what assets and benefits your country can bestow upon you and yours, but rather inquire as to what tasks or activities you yourself can perform and carry out that will be useful for the citizens of your own country.

Although the second sentence is longer and harder to grasp, that doesn't make it more intelligent. In fact, it's far more impressive to write a complex thought in simple prose than vice versa. Beware, however, that you do not lose meaning when you make a sentence simpler; cut out only the most unnecessary "fluffy" adjectives, but don't sacrifice being descriptive.

How about your organization? From sentence-to-sentence, paragraph-to-paragraph, the ideas should flow into each other smoothly and without interruptions or delays. If someone tells you that your paper sounds choppy or jumps around, you probably have a problem with organization and transitions. The addition of quotations from a text that relates to your topic can be an excellent way to refocus your writing and avoid unrelated ideas.

Keep in mind that very few writers can write a well-organized paper in one draft. Instead, their first drafts are disorganized and even chaotic. It takes patience to sort through this mess, consolidating related ideas into coherent paragraphs and helping the reader to follow their train of thought without derailing. Compare:

- Proofreading is an important step in the writing process. Read your paper aloud to catch errors. Use spell check on your computer.
- Proofreading is an important step in the writing process. One technique is to read your paper aloud, which will help you catch errors you might overlook when reading silently. Another strategy is to use spell check on your computer.

The second example has better transitions between ideas and is easier to read. Note that the example with better transitions is also longer. Good transitions can improve your style and help you reach the minimum word count!

Conclusion

After all the work you have exerted on your paper, you want to end with a good conclusion. Your conclusion should do more than summarize the essay; it should “drive the thesis home.” It is the last opportunity to make an impression on your audience, convince them of the sincerity of your efforts, and leave them with the satisfaction of learning something new.

Chapter 6 offers suggestions to develop solid paragraphs in each stage of your essay. Refer to this chapter during the writing process.

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1.5.5: Why Discuss Style in a Section on Editing?

> “Style is knowing who you are, what you want to say, and not giving a damn.” —Gore Vidal

As you write, you make choices. As you revise and edit, you examine the effectiveness of those choices. Some choices are more effective than others and may reinforce your message. It all depends on your goal, your purpose, and your audience. Are you writing a birthday greeting or a dissertation? An instant message or a public address? Your choices determine your text's effectiveness; they help relate meaning.

Prescription and description litter these pages and others. Some writers tell you how to write: how your writing should look, sound, and feel. These writers prescribe rules (writer's handbooks are their Bibles). Should you follow them? Prescription can be limiting. In some instances, it may be profitable or necessary to follow a formula (when writing a legal document or a theme for your fifth grade teacher, for example). It is necessary to learn the rules if only to break them. Rules are not static, however. They evolve. Rules are added, changed, omitted. Current fashion is the only certainty.

Other writers describe how text is actually written. They analyze past and present text, highlighting similarities, differences, and respective efficiency. They define goals and purpose. It may be purposeful to apply rules, yet at other times, it may not. Do not allow yourself to become limited by prescription.

Examine your goal and determine the best approach to reach it.

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1.5.6: Before and After Revision Examples

Example Before Revision

Student Name

Professor Name

Course Name

Date

Household Chore Divisions When We Get Married

My mom does almost everything at our house. She cooks, cleans, does laundry, vacuums, and when my sisters and I were younger, she did most of the child care – not fair! My father, on the other hand, clips the hedges, waters the lawn, and snow-blows the driveway. He makes more money than my mom. My sisters and I take care of mowing the lawn, washing dishes, cleaning the bathrooms, and scrubbing the floors. I was interested to know how Pete and I will split chores once we are married because there (ideally) will not be as large of an earning gap between the two of us as there is between my parents.

Pete and I discussed and debated a lot as we went through the "list of chores." I tried to stand my ground on percentages of time that I should do a chore unless Pete was able to give me a reasonable explanation of why I should do a greater percentage of something than he does; he did the same, and so this assignment was a great communication tool and gave us the opportunity to confer on possible problems which may occur somewhere down the road.

My boyfriend Pete and I talk a lot about getting married. We are now college seniors, so it just seems like the next step in the progression of our relationship. We figure, however, that we will wait until I am done with law school and he has his PhD before we do it. Although that brings us to at least 6 years from now we agree that it will be better if we are financially stable before getting married.

Pete and I have decided to split chores almost evenly. I will be doing 44.43% of the total things that will need to get done. He will be doing 43.24% of them. We decided that our son, who will be named Christian, was old enough to help with some of the chores. Some of the other things, we decided, would be worth paying an outside source to do. Income tax returns, for example, we concluded could be better and more efficiently taken care of by a CPA. We found that I will be doing 50.25% of the housework, while Pete will be doing 43.17%. We also found that I will be doing 10% of the occasional work while Pete will be doing 63.33%. I will do 60% of the child care, and Pete will do 40%. I seem to be doing more daily tasks, and Pete seems to be doing more occasional tasks.

I think that this assignment was a good starting point for a discussion between Pete and myself. I am going to be a lawyer and he is going to be a chemist. Both of our schedules will be tight, and we will have to find a better compromise in real life then we did in our imaginary one. If we do not, neither one of us will be truly satisfied.

From the results of this assignment, I will be doing more of the traditionally "female work", and Pete will be doing more "male work." I think that our assigned careers play a part in this but not as much as I would like. I think that although we have broken many of the stereotypes that control my parents, we are still following some of them. When I look over the results it seems odd that Pete will be doing more of the ironing than I, but he taught me to iron and his job calls for more ironed clothes than mine. We also figured that he will have a little more leeway on time as a manager than I will as a lawyer. Thus, he will be getting the kids ready for school. We broke a couple of stereotypes, but we still have a ways to go before reaching equality.

Example After Revision

Student Name

Professor Name

Course Name

Date

Household Chore Divisions When We Get Married

My boyfriend Pete and I talk a lot about getting married. We are now college seniors, so it just seems like the next logical step in our relationship. We figure, however, that we will wait until I am done with law school and he has his Ph.D before we do it. Although that brings us to at least six years from now, we agree that it will be better if we are financially stable before getting married. Stability is one goal, but another is understanding our roles in the household.

My mom does almost everything in the home where I was raised. She cooks, cleans, does laundry, vacuums, and when my sisters and I were younger, she did most of the child care – hardly fair or equal. My dad, on the other hand, clips the hedges, waters the lawn, and snow-blows the driveway. My sisters and I take care of mowing the lawn, washing dishes, cleaning the bathrooms, and scrubbing the floors. My dad does make more money than my mom, but it seems to me like she is somehow "making up" for her lack of earning by being a servant. I was interested to know how Pete and I will split chores once we are married because there (ideally) will not be so large an earning gap between the two of us as there is between my parents.

Pete and I discussed and debated a lot as we went through the "list of chores." I tried to stand my ground on percentages of time that I should do a chore unless Pete was able to give me a reasonable explanation of why I should do a greater percentage of something than he does. He did the same, and so this assignment was a great communication tool and gave us the opportunity to confer on possible problems that may occur somewhere down the road.

Pete and I have decided to split chores almost evenly. I will be doing 44.43% of the total things that will need to get done. He will be doing 43.24% of them. We decided that when our child was old enough to help with some of the chores, he or she will. Some of the other things we decided would be worth paying an outside source to do. Income tax returns, for example, could be taken care of more efficiently by a CPA. We found that I will be doing 50.25% of the housework, while Pete will be doing 43.17% of the housework. We also found that I will be doing 10% of the occasional work while Pete will be doing 63.33% of the occasional work. I will do 60% of the child care, and Pete will do 40% of the child care. I seem to be doing more daily tasks, and Pete seems to be doing more occasional tasks.

From the results of this assignment, I will be doing more of the traditionally "female work," and Pete will be doing more "male work." I think that our assigned careers play a part in this but not as much as I would like. I think that although we have broken many of the stereotypes to which my parents subscribe, we are still following some of them. When I look over the results, it seems odd, gender-task speaking, that Pete will be doing more of the ironing than I, but he taught me to iron and his job calls for more ironed clothes than mine. We also figured that he will have a little more leeway on time as a manager than I will as a lawyer. Because of this, he will be getting the kids ready for school in the morning. We broke a couple of stereotypes, but we still have a way to go before reaching equality.

I think that this assignment was a good discussion starting point for Pete and me. I am going to be a lawyer and he is going to be a chemist. Both of our schedules will be tight, and we will have to find a better compromise in our real life then we did in our imaginary one. If we do not, neither one of us will be truly satisfied.

Notes

With only a few changes made, notice how much nicer the Example After Revision reads than the Example Before Revision.

1. The order of a few paragraphs was re-arranged. Notice how the focus changes perspective from the past to the present. It immediately centers and controls what the author wants the reader to "see" and sets the tone for the rest of the essay. Also, notice the way the author repeats the words "Pete and I" to keep the reader on track. Notice that the paragraph that was moved to the beginning provides a more solid introduction. It immediately tells the reader why the rest of the essay is relevant. The writer is considering getting married, so it is a good time to talk about household chores. This puts the rest of the essay into context and helps orient the reader to what will be coming and why the author wrote the essay. The concluding paragraph was also rearranged and now offers a more accurate summary of the essay as a whole. The example before the revision had a concluding paragraph that veered off topic to deal with the idea of gender roles, which, although mentioned, is not the main idea.
2. Punctuation was included **inside** of quotation marks rather than **outside** quotation marks. This makes for easier reading and tells your reader/professor that you are conscious of the proper technique when quoting, and keeps the clarity of the speaker consistent.

3. The numeral “6 was changed to the word “six.” Be aware of numbers in your writing. Generally, the rule is to spell out numbers one through nine and use numerals for numbers 10 or higher.
4. Some material was added to the Example After Revision for clarity. When you believe something can be added or taken away to provide your reader with a better idea of your meaning or thought process, do so. Clarity is extremely important when writing a paper. If your reader becomes confused, this will damage the paper’s effectiveness. Do your best to guide your reader, so there will be little to no *re-reading* and a grade to reflect this.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

1.6: Reviewing

Topic hierarchy

1.6.1: Overview of Reviewing

1.6.2: Establishing Criteria

1.6.3: Writing Helpful Comments

1.6.4: Responding to Criticism

1.6.5: Peer Review Example

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1.6.1: Overview of Reviewing

> "No passion in the world is equal to the passion to alter someone else's draft." — H.G. Wells

Sooner or later, someone is going to hand you a piece of writing and ask for your opinion. You may be asked to review another student's essay as part of your class work. Perhaps a friend or a younger brother or sister has come to you for help. If you develop a reputation for being a good writer, then the chances are good that even your boss might ask you to look over letters or policy statements and offer your professional opinion. In any case, if you really want to do a good job in these situations, you're going to need reviewing skills. You're going to need to be able to identify problems, suggest alternatives, and, more importantly, support everything you say with reasonable claims. Furthermore, you must do all this in a convincing way that makes the writer want to make the changes you suggest. You must know what's wrong with a document, why it's wrong, and how to fix it.

You've probably heard the saying, "A writer is his own worst critic." Whoever said this undoubtedly suffered from poor self-reviewing skills. After all, it's easier to spot problems in other people's writing because our own ego (or pride) doesn't get in the way. Another problem is that sometimes we get so caught up in what we want to get across in our writing that we don't pay enough attention to how we're expressing it—a sentence that makes perfect sense to us might be total gibberish to someone else. Thankfully, these are all problems that can be overcome. You can learn to fairly and accurately review your own work. One way you can get better at self-reviewing is to spend time reviewing other people's work. Eventually, you'll develop a knack for spotting errors that will serve you well as you edit and revise your own work.

Writers, particularly new writers, often find that letting other writers review their work is tremendously helpful. Most colleges and universities have writing centers, where students can have their essays reviewed for free by experienced student writers or tutors. These tutors can work with you one-on-one to help you improve your writing and earn better grades.

You should realize that reviewing your work, like planning, drafting, or revising, is a recursive process. It is not something a writer does just at the end of his work. For instance, you may want to write an introduction to an essay and have it reviewed by a teacher or classmate before trudging forward. If you're on the wrong track, you'd be better off knowing about it sooner rather than later — especially if a deadline or due date is looming.

> "You write to communicate to the hearts and minds of others what's burning inside you. And we edit to let the fire show through the smoke." — Arthur Plotnik

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1.6.2: Establishing Criteria

Let's suppose that you just gave your paper to your roommate and asked her to look it over. You explain that you've been working on the paper for three days and that you really want to earn an A. "I want your honest opinion," you say. "Don't worry about hurting my feelings. What do you think?"

You watch your roommate's face as she reads your paper. She grimaces. Laughs. Yawns. Finally, she hands you the paper back and says, "This sucks."

This may be the type of "review" you are accustomed to receiving—overly critical and not very helpful. Perhaps you agree that your paper is in trouble and needs help, but without a better understanding of what's wrong, you aren't likely to be able to do much about it. Furthermore, how can you trust your roommate's judgment of your paper? What if it just so happens that your roommate is neurotic about starting sentences with "But," and, seeing such sentences in your paper, decided right there that the paper was terrible?

Ultimately, what makes an evaluation worthwhile is the soundness of its criteria. As a writer, you want to know not just whether someone likes your paper but also what factors they are taking into consideration when they review your paper. Both the reviewer and the person being reviewed need to be as clear as possible about the criteria that will be used to evaluate the work. Are your reviewers only looking at your grammar, or are they also determining the rationality of your arguments? Does a comma splice make a bigger difference than a rough transition between paragraphs?

All of these matters should be spelled out clearly beforehand, either by the writer or the reviewer. As a writer, what are you personally working on? It's not a bad idea to think about your strengths and challenges as a writer before handing over your paper to a reviewer or to use work that has been returned to you in the past with feedback. For example, if you're writing a paper for a professor you've had before, and who has made comments on your past work, use those comments to provide your reviewer with a focus. If you are the reviewer in this situation, ask to see the assignment and rubric, if possible. You can also ask the writer for specific guidelines, areas of greatest need, or even anything s/he might know about the grader. Is the person giving the grade unconcerned with punctuation conventions but obsessive about tense shifting? The point is, the more focused the reviewer and writer are, the more effective the reviews are.

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1.6.3: Writing Helpful Comments

> "There are two kinds of editors, those who correct your copy and those who say it's wonderful." —Theodore H. White

In the scenario above, you were not able to gain any insights or knowledge from your roommate letting you know that your paper "sucks." What you wanted was some kind of feedback that would help you improve your paper, so you could get a good grade. You don't know if your paper sucks because it lacked a strong thesis, if it sucks because your writing strayed from the assignment, or if it sucks because of grammatical errors. You can be a better self- and peer-reviewer than your roommate was. Given the previous example, how hard can it be? When you're reviewing your own paper or the paper of a friend or classmate, ask yourself a few questions:

Organization

- What are your initial thoughts? What strengths and weaknesses does the paper have? What parts confused you, or might be confusing to other readers? What's the most important thing that the writer is trying to say?
- How is the paper you're reviewing organized? Again, does it start with the broad and move to specifics? Do all sentences support the paragraph's topic sentence, and do all paragraphs support the thesis? Is there an Introduction that draws in the reader, or does it restate the assignment and become redundant? Is the paper organized in a way that will make sense to readers? Does the writer employ transitions effectively? Does the paper flow from beginning to end?

Focus

- Is the paper focused on the assignment? Does it follow the same thought throughout the paper, or does it jump from subject to subject? Do I feel like I'm still learning about/thinking about the same subject at the end of the paper that I was at the beginning of the paper?
- Try to paraphrase the thesis of the paper as a promise: The writer will... Does the writer fulfill his/her obligation stated in the thesis?
- What's the writer's position on the issue? What words does the writer use to indicate his/her position?

Style

- In what style is the paper written? Does it work for the subject matter and assignment? Will the paper appeal to its intended audience? Is the writing at an appropriate level for the target audience?

Development

- Does the title indicate what the paper is about? Does it catch your interest? Does the opening paragraph draw you in? If not, can you suggest a different approach to catch the readers' attention?
- How is the development of the paper carried out? Does it start with a broad subject and then move to something more specific?
- Does the concluding sentence draw the argument of the paper to a close by bringing together the main points provided in the paper, or does it just end? Does the writer conclude in a memorable way, or does he/she simply trail off? If the ending is too abrupt or too vague, can you suggest some other way to conclude the paper? Does the ending introduce any new topics?

Conventions

- Are common or appropriate writing conventions followed? Are grammar, spelling, punctuation and other mechanics observed?

While reviewing the paper, make notes in the margins of any problems you find. If you believe that developing a paragraph a little bit more would be helpful to the argument, write "more." If you are unclear of something, write "? not sure." If you notice a missing comma, insert it in the correct spot, but be sure to set it off somehow so that you or your friend will notice the correction. If another word might work better, write "WC" to indicate inappropriate word choice. If you're critiquing an essay and you are uncertain of the appropriate advise to give, simply write "awkward."

Please note: It is important not to overwhelm your writer with comments. As much as possible, try to avoid repeating similar comments (e.g. don't correct every single comma error you find). Also, although it can be tempting to make some of the changes you suggest yourself, you never want to rewrite the work you are reviewing.

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1.6.4: Responding to Criticism

> "I am forced to say that I have many fiercer critics than myself." —Irwin Shaw

Nobody likes to be told that what he or she is doing isn't right. But good writers are able to take criticism, realizing that nobody is perfect, and use that criticism to help them, either with the assignment at hand, or with writing assignments in the future. If your roommate tells you that your paper *sucks*, you probably want to ask him or her *why* it sucks. If your roommate says that you are continually writing run-on sentences, ask for advice on how to correct them or look in a writing guide to learn how to fix them. By handling criticism constructively, you'll be more aware of your common errors and less likely to repeat them, or at least you will know how to find and correct them the next time you write.

If, while meeting with a tutor, you learn that you need further development of some of your ideas for clarity, revisit your writing and judge for yourself whether or not you do. Ask yourself if you understand since you are the one who did all of the research and *know* what you mean (probably a good indication that the tutor was right), or if you are comfortable that a reader would understand what you are saying without more information.

Remember: as the writer, you're in control of your paper. When people offer criticism, they're usually just trying to help you. Try to keep that in mind. Take the suggestions when you think they make sense, and discard the ones that don't.

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1.6.5: Peer Review Example

Here is an example of an essay submitted for peer review. The assignment is to write a paper about anything in nature: a plant, an animal, a natural disaster, anything. Practice reviewing with the steps mentioned above. What would you say to the author?

Student Name

Professor Name

Course Title

Date

The Jalapeno: an Ode

The jalapeno— is it a tasty cooking element, or a national mystery? As a lover of all things spicy, I find myself asking questions about the nation's most elusive pepper: where did it get its name? Where did it originate from? What makes it so spicy? How and where does it grow? And, most importantly, what kinds of food include the jalapeno? These questions are only natural to ask oneself when faced with the utterly fascinating pepper. However, through some difficult research, mental travel to the wild regions of the past, and a little bribery, the answers can and will be found.

But who to ask? If I lived in Texas I would ask Stacey Snow, Ms. Jalapeno 2005. She was crowned Ms. Jalapeno at the 27th annual Jalapeno festival in Laredo Texas. This festival is featured on the travel channel, and is commonly known as the "hottest weekend of the year." This festival has amazingly unique entertainment: the jalapeno egg toss, the blind jalapeno toss, the jalapeno spitting contest, the "some like it hot" cook off, the land raft race, the three-legged sack race, and a good old fashion game of tug-of-war.

The jalapeno is named after Jalapa, capital of Veracruz, Mexico. However, the jalapeno's popularity is not completely foreign. In 1995 New Mexico named the jalapeno the official state pepper, with chili peppers and pinto beans as the state vegetable. The jalapeno is part of the chili pepper family. The family also includes anaheim, cayenne, poblano, and serrano.

The jalapeno is not native to Minnesota; in fact, it is not native to the United States. It is thanks to Christopher Columbus that we have the spicy treat. Still today the pepper is a popular favorite, with Texas producing half of the 14 million gallons of jalapenos produced each year in the United States. Jalapeno flavored potato and tortilla chips weigh in at 17 million pounds produced each year.

The spicy bite in jalapenos can send tears down its consumer's face. This burning sensation is no accident; it is due to a chemical called capsaicinoids. There are five varieties, with capsaicin being the hottest and most famous. The capsaicins in jalapenos give them the burning sensation. When the fire in the mouth sensation occurs, the brain releases endorphins into the blood stream. These act as a natural pain reliever.

The jalapeno plant is pod-like, and usually grows from 2 to 3 feet tall. It is single stemmed and grows upright. Though there are literally countless forms of wild peppers, the jalapeno is considered a domestic plant. The pods are cylindrical, which flourish in semi-arid climates with dry air and irrigation. The plant matures between seventy and eighty days generally producing twentyfive to thirty-five pods per plant.

Jalapeno foods come in many shapes, sizes, and flavors. The most recent jalapeno phenomenon to hit the market is jalapeno jelly. Originally from Lake Jackson Texas, jalapeno jelly was first marketed in 1978. This jelly is often lime-green, with a sweet flavor, and the same consistency as normal jelly. It is fitting that this jelly originated from Texas, because the jalapeno is the official Texas state pepper, along with the chiltepin; not so coincidentally, these are the two peppers used in the states official dish: chili. Though there are many types of hot peppers, the jalapeno distinguishes itself in a number of ways. First, the jalapeno is most often green when mature, and is about 2 inches long with cracks in the stem. The hotness is also immediate after a bite. The thing that makes the jalapeno so different from other foods is the cult phenomena surrounding it. Figurines, websites, and even academic papers have been formed on the jalapeno craze.

Most important to the jalapeno are the recipes. Many wild jalapeno recipes do exist, with jalapeno bread, jalapeno sauce, stuffed jalapenos, chicken and cream cheese with jalapenos, coca-cola ham glaze with jalapeno, jalapeno martini, jalapeno hushpuppies, jalapeno soufflé, jalapeno-basil vinaigrette, and tamale pie being just a select few. Dried jalapenos are known as chipotles, another common ingredient in many dishes. In Texas, people even go so far as to drink jalapeno coffee and jalapeno tea! Yuck!

It is safe to say that the jalapeno is both a tasty cooking element and a national mystery. Any time a recipe is made, the jalapeno will be there. Maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow, but rest assured, someone, somewhere (probably in Texas), will add a jalapeno to it. However, the day the jalopsicle becomes the most popular frozen treat, consider it the day we have gone too far.

Sample Comments

Here, the peer reviewer has organized her/his comments based on the five criteria and has made specific references to sentences and passages where appropriate.

Organization

- After the introduction paragraph, there is not much narrowing. The topic broadly seems to be jalapenos. Perhaps the writer could try picking one specific question and sticking to that.
- The organization needs to be improved. Perhaps repeating the questions would help, or as previously stated, sticking to the development of one specific question.

Focus

- The paper seems to fulfill the assignment very well, but it does jump subject somewhat, particularly between paragraphs 3 and 4. I do like the theme of the jalapeño being presented as a national mystery; perhaps that could become the thesis statement.
- Unfortunately, the thesis of the paper doesn’t seem to exist. The questions in the first paragraph gives the reader an idea of where the paper is headed, but there really is no statement explaining what the writer is trying to prove.
- Does the author have a position? If he/she does it must be that he/she reveres the jalapeno. There doesn’t seem to be much controversy in here for the author to support or oppose.

Style

- The title is clever, but could be a little more specific. It isn’t so much an ode, but more of an investigation. However, it does catch interest.
- The style and tone are spot on. For the topic, which is not very serious, the laid back humorous style seems to fit in very well.

Development

- This paper certainly has plenty of personality. The author has a nice balance of humor and information. However, I find myself getting lost in the middle. Perhaps if the author were to repeat a question at the beginning of each paragraph, the reader could remember what the thesis is.
- The conclusion is funny, but I don't think it really does its job; I find the last sentence especially confusing and unconnected. Perhaps the author could keep what he/she has, but add in some more review of all the information that is covered.

Conventions

- The conventions seem to be okay. BUT WHERE ARE THE CITATIONS??? The author needs to develop ethos by sharing where her/his information came from regarding jalapenos.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

1.7: Effective Paragraphs and Their Elements

Topic hierarchy

1.7.1: What Is a Paragraph?

1.7.2: Types of Paragraphs

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1.7.1: What Is a Paragraph?

Simply, a paragraph is a collection of sentences made up of words. Words, sentences, and paragraphs are the building blocks of good writing. The keys to a "good" or effective paragraph are **unity**, **coherence**, and **adequate development** through a variety of organized details that create a full exploration or analysis of the paragraph's focus. In effective paragraphs, the sentences are related and the details flow in a natural or logical sequence.

What Makes a Good Paragraph?

Unity is achieved by focusing each paragraph on a single idea, often called the **controlling idea**. This controlling idea is usually established in the **topic sentence**. The topic sentence works like a mini-thesis for the paragraph and guides the content of the paragraph. Beginning writers should consider making the first sentence of each paragraph the topic sentence; more advanced writers can manipulate the placement of the topic sentence to the middle or end of the paragraph, or simply imply the topic through a unified focus and **coherence**.

Coherence makes the paragraph flow and is created by bridges. Think about what bridges do: they join cities and islands; they connect places to one another. These bridges also connect sentences and ideas, helping the writer avoid "sentence stacking." Sentence stacking happens when bridges are lacking and sentence structure is not varied.

Two types of bridges can be employed:

- Logical bridges carry the same idea over from sentence to sentence.
- Verbal bridges link ideas using repeated key words, synonyms, pronouns, and transitions.

Here is an example of a paragraph of stacked sentences that lacks logical and verbal bridges:

My dogs are named Cooper and Calli. Cooper is a Golden retriever and Akita mix. He is a male. Calli is a shepherd, Husky and wolf mix. She is a female. Calli was rescued from the pound. Cooper was purchased from a breeder. They are close in age. They play together all the time.

Revised to incorporate bridges and varied sentence structure, the paragraph would read as follows:

My dogs, Cooper and Calli, are best friends. Cooper, a male retriever and Akita mix, came from a breeder. On the other hand, Calli, a shepherd, husky and wolf mix, was rescued from the pound. Because they are close in age, they play together all the time.

Still, the paragraph lacks **adequate development**. Adequate development is achieved through details, including facts, description, examples, quotes, analysis, explanation, and evaluation. A more developed paragraph would read like this:

My dogs, Cooper and Calli, are best friends. Cooper, a male golden retriever and Akita mix, came from a breeder. On the other hand, Calli, a shepherd, husky and wolf mix, was rescued from the pound. Because they are close in age, they play together all the time. For example, the two dogs hunt for mice that are attracted by the seed in the chicken coop in the back yard. They also play in the kiddie pool I fill with water every morning. Being a golden retriever mix, Cooper should be more attracted to the water, but Calli is the one who is always wet from laying in the pool.

The paragraph, however, has no closure. It just "stops." A lead in and a final sentence are still needed:

Cooper keeps Calli active and fit with their constant play. They are truly bonded.

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1.7.2: Types of Paragraphs

The basic paragraph contains the elements of unity, coherence, adequate development and usually a topic sentence. But not all paragraphs are the same. Paragraphs have special functions; the purpose determines the type of paragraph you write. Students often learn that paragraphs must have six, or 10, or 14 sentences. The truth is that paragraphs contain the right number of sentences to make good writing, and good writing considers the purpose of the paragraph to determine its style, content, and length.

Introductions

Whether it is one paragraph or an entire chapter, the purpose of the introduction is to grab your readers' attention and coax them to continue reading. The introduction also sets the tone, whether it be light-hearted or serious. Make sure you draw your readers in with a set of strategies appropriate to your topic. If readers are not intrigued from the very beginning of the piece, they will quickly become distracted and avoid reading any further.

What is the difference between a good and a bad introduction? A bad introduction is misleading, rambling, incoherent, boring, or so hopelessly vague that you know less about the topic than you did before you read it. On the other hand, a good introduction gives the reader a reason to keep on reading, and sets the stage for a really exciting performance. An introduction is like a first impression; it is crucial to your image and, once presented, you never get a second opportunity. Your essay's introduction is your reader's first impression of your ability as a writer. Even if you are brilliant and have great ideas, a muddy or boring introduction will turn away many of your readers. One caution: Do not use tedious openers such as "in today's society" or openers that merely relay what the assignment is; change the opening. Additionally, do not directly state your intentions by saying, "In this essay I will…" Also, avoid clichés; you want your writing to be fresh and original. And finally, be careful not to write a wordy or overly dense introduction; your introduction should merely set the stage for the rest of the paper. Your introduction should provide a hook and relate to the issue at hand.

In developing your introduction, a mix of strategies can be used:

- An anecdote, a brief story, that hints at the topic of the essay;
- A definition, though one of your own making. Do not quote the dictionary because these definitions are too simplistic and trite;
- A set of facts or statistics that you will develop further in your essay;
- Quotations from subject matter experts regarding your topic. Any quotes should be specific to your issue and the discussions that surround it, not something pulled from "famous quotations" Internet sites. Do not, however, let another's words open your essay. The quote should be in the body of the introduction, not the first sentence;
- Background that sets the stage for the discussion of your topic;
- Examples that demonstrate your topic.

Body Paragraphs

Each body paragraph, or set of paragraphs in a longer essay, should focus on a single topic and develop it thoroughly with a mix of details or evidence. Types of evidence include facts, data, examples, and expert testimony.

Conclusions

After all the work you have exerted on your paper, you want to end with a **good conclusion**. For many writers, this is the hardest part of the essay to write. A beginning writer often learns that one should restate the thesis and sum up the main points. A more sophisticated conclusion uses a variety of strategies available, leaving a lasting impression on the reader.

To begin a solid conclusion, incorporate the following key elements.

- Reference any elements offered in the introduction.
- Do not simply restate your thesis; instead, emphasize the significance of your thesis.
- Sum up your main points.
- Reflect on the information presented.

To expand your conclusion and drive home your main point, you can also incorporate creative elements. Some suggestions are as follows:

- Ask a thought-provoking question;

- Ask a thought-provoking question;
- Present a "call to action," telling your readers what you want them to do with the information you have presented;
- Provide a quotation that captures and confirms the assertion you made in your thesis. The quote should be from an authority on the subject, however; don't just go to quotes.com and choose a random quote.

Often, this choice will be determined by the genre, audience, or purpose of your paper. Nevertheless, your conclusion should accurately reflect the paper's subject and provide the reader with closure.

One final point: Be sure not to end a paper with new ideas or a thesis you have not already supported or explained in the paper. Remember, a conclusion is meant to reiterate the paper's main argument and then return the thesis to the larger issue the paper is addressing and should not present any new arguments or topics in the process.

Transitional Paragraphs

Short paragraphs between longer paragraphs are sometimes needed to link sets of information or transition from one idea or set of ideas to the next. The transitional paragraph can sum up previous points or draw conclusions then lead into the ideas to follow. An example of a transitional paragraph occurs in previous section of this chapter in the description of conclusions:

"Often, this choice will be determined by the genre, audience, or purpose of your paper. Nevertheless, your conclusion should accurately reflect the paper's subject and provide the reader with closure."

While not all essays need transitional paragraphs, do not be afraid to use them in more complex writing.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

1.8: Analyzing Assignments

Topic hierarchy

1.8.1: Snowflakes, Fingerprints, and Assignments

1.8.2: Rhetorical Analysis

1.8.3: Summary and Response Paper

1.8.4: Finishing the Assignment

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1.8.1: Snowflakes, Fingerprints, and Assignments

Writing assignments in college differ as much as instructors. There is no one guidebook, approach, or set of rules that college teachers will consult when putting together their coursework. Since each assignment will always be unique, it is important to devote time to thoroughly understanding what is being asked of you before beginning. Don't wait until the night before the work is due to begin asking questions and delving in. The sooner you understand and approach the assignment's requirements, the less time you will spend second-guessing (and needlessly revising) your writing.

Analyzing an Assignment

You will likely encounter many different kinds of writing assignments in college, and it would be nearly impossible to list all of them. However, regardless of genre, there are some basic strategies one can use to approach these assignments constructively.

- **Read the assignment sheet early and thoroughly**. An assignment sheet may be lengthy, but resist the temptation to skim it. Observe and interpret every detail of the text. Moreover, it is essential to focus on the key words of the subject matter being discussed. It would be unfortunate to hand in an incomplete or misguided assignment because you did not properly read and understand the guidelines. Since you can easily overlook details on the first reading, read the assignment sheet a second time. As you are reading, highlight areas where you have questions, and also mark words you feel are particularly important. Ask yourself why your professor has given this assignment. How does it relate to what you are studying in class? Pay attention to key words, such as *compare, contrast, and analyze*. Who is your audience?

  Should the paper be written in a formal or informal tone? Is there documentation required? If a specific number of sources are required, how many must be books vs. online sources? What type of citation is called for: APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.? Is there a page or word count minimum/maximum? Are you required to submit a draft before the final copy? Will there be peer review?
- **Get answers to your questions**. After thoroughly reading the assignment sheet, you might not have questions right away. However, after reading it again, either before or after you try to start the assignment, you might find that you have questions. Don't play a guessing game when it comes to tackling assignment criteria—ask the right person for help: the instructor. Discuss any and all questions with the person who assigned the work, either in person or via email. Visit him or her during office hours or stay after class. Do not wait until the last minute, as doing so puts your grade at risk. Don't be shy about asking your professors questions. Not only will you better your understanding and the outcome of your paper, but professors tend to enjoy and benefit from student inquiry, as questions help them rethink their assignments and improve the clarity of their expectations. You likely are not the only student with a question, so be the one who is assertive and responsible enough to get answers. In the worst-case scenario, when you have done all of these things and a professor still fails to provide you with the clarity you are looking for, discuss your questions with fellow classmates.
- **Visit the Writing Center**. Many colleges and universities have a writing center. Tutors are helpful consultants for reviewing writing assignments both before and after you begin. If you feel somewhat confident about what you need to include in your writing assignment, bring your completed outline and/or the first draft of your paper together with your assignment sheet. Tutors can also review your final draft before its submission to your professor. Many writing centers allow you to make appointments online for convenience and may also have "walk-in" availability. It is a good idea to check out the available options a week or so in advance of when you will actually need the appointment, or even longer if it will be during mid-term or finals week.
- **Create a timeline**. Set due dates for yourself, whether they be to have a topic picked or a whole rough draft completed. Procrastination rarely results in a good paper. Some school libraries offer helpful computer programs that can create an effective assignment timeline for you. This is a helpful option for new, inexperienced writers who have not yet learned the art of analyzing assignments, and who are not familiar with the amount of time that is required for the college writing process. Remember, late papers may or may not be accepted by your instructor, and even if they are, your grade will likely be reduced. Don't sell yourself short with late submissions.

Instructors will come up with any number of assignments, most of which will stress different types of composition. The techniques you use in writing a narrative can also translate into writing a short story or observational essay. The basic rhetorical strategies are covered in their own chapters, but here are samples of reading and analysis assignments that may be blended into your course.

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1.8.2: Rhetorical Analysis

A rhetorical analysis calls for students to closely read a text and determine several characteristics about it (author, context, purpose, emotional appeal/effects, etc). For example, you may read “A Modest Proposal” by Jonathan Swift and write a rhetorical analysis. Remember, this is not a reflection piece, but rather a deep look at the tone, style, and intended audience, as well as ethos, logos, and pathos.

At first, a rhetorical analysis sounds somewhat difficult. However, analyzing just means making a conscious effort to read each word carefully and think about what the author is doing. The first step would be to read the piece, not once, but two or three times. Highlight important passages and take notes. For this assignment, the instructor wanted students to write about ethos, logos, and pathos, which are rhetorical terms you should become familiar with. Pay attention to specific word choices that may evoke emotion, or any facts the author may have put forward in the text. Look at the background of the author as well as the time period in which he or she was writing. Consider the tone of the piece. Is it formal/informal/serious/humorous? These are all things to keep in mind while reading. Make an ongoing list of the author’s rhetorical techniques that you may want to discuss in your paper. (See Chapter 15 for more detailed information on ethos, logos, pathos.)

Remember to be mindful of your essay’s organization. It is easy to discuss three different topics in one paragraph and jump back and forth from one idea to the next, but this makes it difficult for your reader to follow. Also, do not forget that this is not a reflection. For this assignment, the instructor isn’t concerned with your reaction to the text, or your ability to summarize; he or she wants to gauge your analytical skills.

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1.8.3: Summary and Response Paper

An example of the summary/response writing would be to read Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail," and give a brief summary of the article and a response. Students might be asked to cite specific examples and avoid generalizations.

Before writing a summary, it is important to use your critical reading skills. First, read the article carefully. It might help to write down the main point of each paragraph in the margin next to it. Next, reread the article and look carefully for the main points the author is trying to get across. Look for things the author states explicitly, as well as what is implied by things that are not clearly stated. Look for any biases or missing information. Ask yourself questions while you read, such as "What is the big picture here? What is the author really trying to get across with this or that example?" The title will often provide a clue about the author's main point. Most of all, slow down and take the time to reread the article several times. In summarizing an article, think about how you would explain its message to someone who hasn't read it. What are the main points of the piece? What is necessary to know about the work in order to understand it?

While writing a summary is a familiar assignment from grade school, in college, summaries are no longer enough, and instructors will frequently require a response. Writing a response is giving your opinion about the text. However, statements such as "I did/did not like it" are not sufficient. Not only must you be more descriptive with your opinions, but you need to support them. If you do not think that an author provides enough information to prove his or her point, state the specific flaws and what can be done to improve them. The same rule applies for any emotions felt while reading the text. Instead of just saying the writing made you sad, point out a specific passage in the text that made you feel that way. Talk about the word choices the author used and how that affected your reading.

It is important to note the word "brief" in the assignment sheet. The instructor does not want a twopage summary and then a paragraph of reflection. Your response should take up the bulk of the paper.

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1.8.4: Finishing the Assignment

Remember, no matter what the assignment, identifying key words in guidelines can help you determine what type of thinking and ability the professor wants you to demonstrate. The following six areas of competencies are from Bloom's Taxonomy.

1. **Knowledge**: This becomes evident in how well you remember the subject matter, such as the major ideas, dates, places, and events. Questions may begin with *identify, describe, examine, when, where, who.*
2. **Comprehension**: How well do you understand the information presented. Can you describe the information in your own words? Questions may begin with *interpret, contrast, predict, discuss.*
3. **Application**: Can you use the principles learned to solve other problems in different situations? Questions may begin with *illustrate, examine, modify, experiment, relate.*
4. **Analysis**: Can you recognize hidden meanings, see patterns, identify the underlying parts? Questions may begin with *separate, order, connect, classify, divide, explain.*
5. **Synthesis**: Can you relate knowledge from different areas to draw conclusions? Questions may begin with *modify, rearrange, substitute, design, invent, generalize.*
6. **Evaluation**: This involves verifying the value of the evidence when solving controversies, and developing opinions. Questions may begin with *decide, convince, select, compare, summarize.*

If you need clarification on what your instructor is looking for, do not hesitate to ask. After you have finished your paper, be sure to double-check that you have fulfilled all the requirements. Proofread your paper multiple times before handing in the final copy.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

1.9: MLA

MLA stands for Modern Language Association—an international association with over 25,000 members from 100 countries. MLA publishes a style guide for formatting papers. There are other style guides, but this section will focus on key information from the MLA Handbook, 8th ed.

1.9.1: What is MLA?

1.9.2: Incorporating Sources and In-text Citations

1.9.3: Practice Exercises

1.9.4: Formatting the Works Cited Page

1.9.5: Exercise for Formatting Entries for a Works Cited page

1.9.6: Requirements for Parenthetical Citations

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1.9.1: What is MLA?

MLA stands for Modern Language Association—an international association with over 25,000 members from 100 countries. MLA publishes a style guide for formatting papers. There are other style guides, but this section will focus on key information from the MLA Handbook, 8th ed.

Basic MLA Formatting for Papers (See image below.)

- 1” margins
- Double spaced
- Paragraphs indented ½”
- No extra space between paragraphs
- A header on the top right hand corner ½” from the top of the paper should include: Student’s last name and then leave a space and the page number

On the first page on the top left-hand side include:

Your full name

Teacher’s Name

Course Title

Date

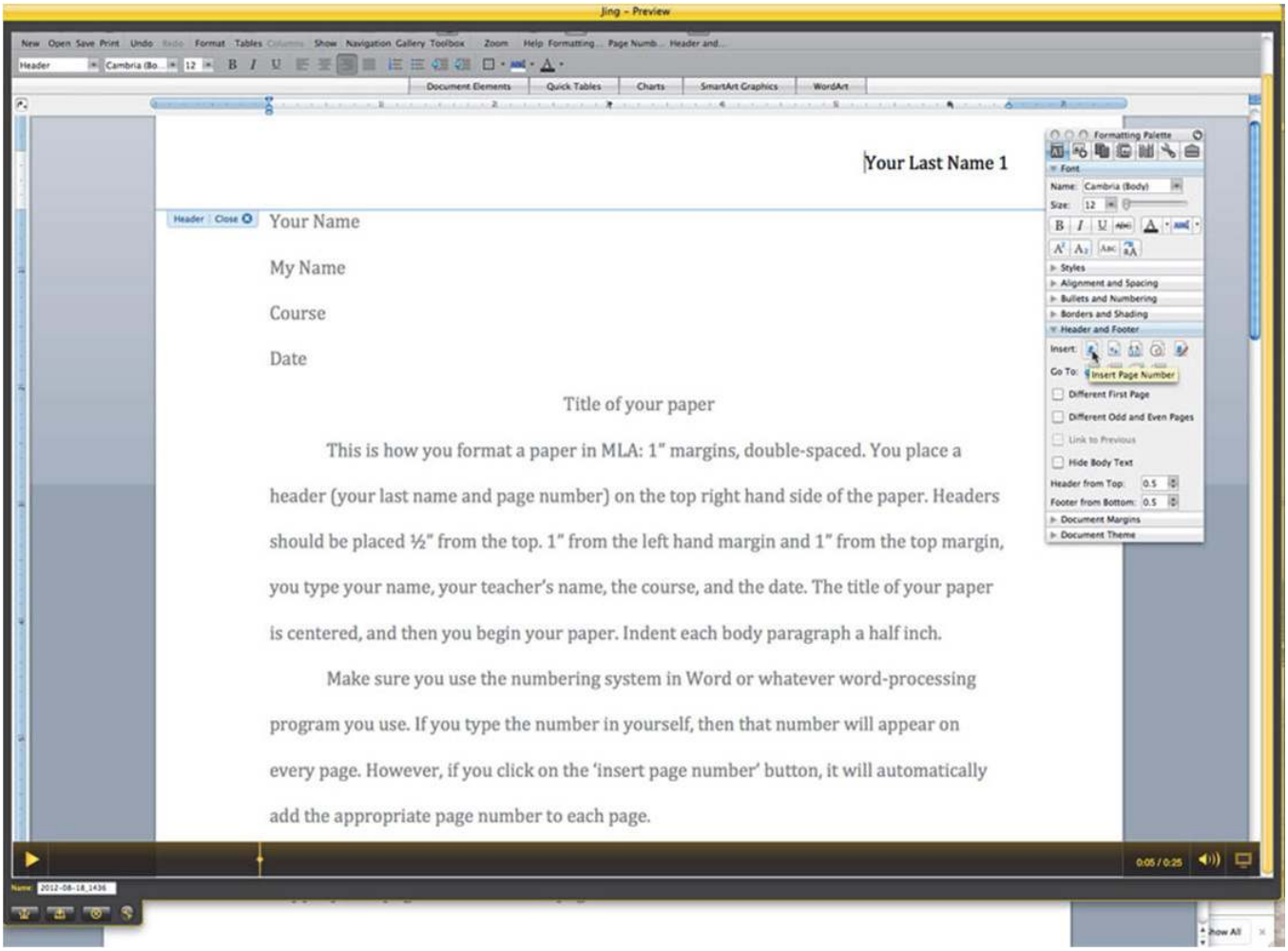

Figure **1.9.1.1**

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1.9.2: Incorporating Sources and In-text Citations

In-text citations direct the reader to sources listed in a type of bibliography known as a Works Cited page. There should be a direct correlation between the information provided in the text of the paper and the Works Cited page. Here are a couple of examples of how someone could use a source in a paper and how it would refer to a Works Cited page.

Example 1.9.2.1:

According to Dr. Ian Wilmut, chair of Reproductive Science at the University of Edinburgh, “about one quarter of the lambs that were born alive died within a few days because they hadn't completed normal development” (qtd. in Wade).

Later, Wilmut further noted that the science had not advanced enough to apply it to humans indicating “that for a clinician to be suggesting doing that [cloning humans] is quite appalling” (qtd. in Wade).

Sample Works Cited Entry

Works Cited

Wade, Nicholas. “The Clone Named Dolly.” New York Times, 14 Oct. 2013. www.nytimes.com/2013/10/14/bo...med-dolly.html.

As you can see, the in-text or parenthetical citations include the author’s last name. When your audience refers back to the Works Cited page, the entry goes under the author’s last name, so the audience can quickly identify the original source.

Plagiarism: Using another writer’s words and ideas in an essay without giving proper credit to that individual. This is a violation of the student code of conduct.

Paraphrase: Taking a section of information from a source and rewording it to keep the essence of the text and ideas. This still requires a citation.

Summary: In your own words, stating the main idea and key points of the whole of the source.

Parenthetical citation: Placing the source information in parentheses after borrowed material. Usually you include the author and the page number, if available. Example: (Polliard 7)

If no author is given, use an abbreviated version of the title of the article. Example: (“Multiple Personalities in Hamlet” 7) would become (“Multiple” 7).

Attributive tag: An introductory phrase before a quote or paraphrase that indicates the source of the information by providing the author or the title of the article. Example: According to Professor Polliard, plagiarism can potentially result in a failing grade for the course.

ABC’s for Incorporating Sources

Always cite your information

- Use an attributive tag to indicate where source material begins. Example: According to Dr. Ian Wilmut, head researcher at the Edinburgh Institute,
- Use a parenthetical citation after information borrowed from a source whether you paraphrase it, summarize it, or quote it. “Simply being an introvert can also feel taxing—especially in America...” (Walsh 42)
- Use quotation marks around material that is taken word for word from the source (see previous example).
- Include a complete Works Cited page at the end of the essay (next lesson and assignments).

Balance the source material with paraphrases and quotations

- Do not use an exact quotation for every piece of documented information.
- Use quotes only when the information is highly technical or can’t be stated equally well in your own words.
- Consider what the audience would find interesting in terms of quotations.
- Only use the pertinent information. Do not include a whole paragraph when a sentence will do.

Connect the source material to the topic sentence with explanation between sources.

- Don’t plan on using quote after quote without connective commentary.

- Connective commentary means that you interpret the significance of the source material in relation to the topic sentence or thesis statement. Why is this information relevant? Use your own words and insight to illustrate the usefulness of the source information.
- An essay should have more of your own words than it has source information; source information is meant to add "backing" or credibility to your ideas. At least 85% of the paper should be your work and ideas with no more than 15% of the information coming from outside sources.
- Don't be a name-dropper! Provide context to explain the background qualifications/ credentials of the person credited for the original information whenever possible.

Creating an Attributive Tag

- **Sample quote**: "The fear response is controlled by the autonomic nervous system and so is largely impervious to higher order cognitive control, and the system is biased, that is, hyper-responsive and prone to erring on the side of caution."
- **Where the quote came from**: This quote was written by Dr. Mathias Clasen in his article, "Monsters Evolve: A Bio-Cultural Approach to Horror Stories" and was found on page 223.
- **Appropriate Attributive Tag**: According to Dr. Mathias Clasen of Arhaus University, Denmark, "The fear response is controlled by the autonomic nervous system and so is largely impervious to higher order cognitive control, and the system is biased, that is, hyperresponsive and prone to erring on the side of caution" (223)

Sample Paraphrase and Summary from Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)

The original passage:

Students frequently overuse direct quotation in taking notes, and as a result they overuse quotations in the final [research] paper. Probably only about 10% of your final manuscript should appear as directly quoted matter. Therefore, you should strive to limit the amount of exact transcribing of source materials while taking notes. Lester, James D. Writing Research Papers. 2nd ed. (1976): 46-47.

A legitimate paraphrase:

As indicated in Dr. James D. Lester's book, Writing Research Papers, research papers students often quote excessively, failing to keep quoted material down to a desirable level. Since the problem usually originates during note taking, it is essential to minimize the material recorded verbatim (Lester 46-47).

An acceptable summary:

Students should take just a few notes in direct quotation from sources to help minimize the amount of quoted material in a research paper (Lester 46-47).

A plagiarized version (bold text reflects exact words and/or phrasing from original source):

Students often **use too many direct quotations** when they take notes, **resulting in too many of them in the final research paper**. In fact, **probably** only **about 10% of the final** copy should consist of **directly quoted material**. So it is important to **limit the amount of source material copied while taking notes**.

The version considered plagiarism contains the exact words and phrasing from original source, and it does not give credit to Lester's work.

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1.9.3: Practice Exercises

Exercise 1.9.3.1

Given the excerpt from a recent Time magazine article, evaluate the attempted paraphrases for plagiarism and citation accuracy. Use a highlighter to note words and phrases lifted exactly from the passage.

Sample Excerpt:

Walsh, Bryan. "The Upside of Being an Introvert (and Why Extroverts are Overrated). Time, 6 February 2012, pp. 40-45.

"Simply being an introvert can also feel taxing—especially in America, land of the loud and home of the talkative. From classrooms built around group learning to open-plan offices that encourage endless meetings, it sometimes seems that the quality of your work has less value than the volume of your voice" (Walsh 42).

1. Simply being an introvert can also feel taxing—especially in America, land of the loud and home of the talkative (Walsh 42).
2. Being an introvert in America is challenging because we are the land of the loud and home of the loquacious. Today's classrooms are adapted around group learning environments, and office settings have open-plans that encourage endless meetings (Walsh 42).
3. In an article published recently in Time magazine, the author discusses how introverted people struggle to be successful in classrooms and business settings because these work environments are planned to enable students and employees to work in groups and participate in long business meetings. Often the amount and quality of a person's work goes unnoticed compared to the person who speaks the loudest and produces the least.
4. Sometimes introverted people struggle to be successful in classrooms and business settings because these work environments are planned to enable students and employees to work in groups and participate in long business meetings. Often the amount and quality of a person's work goes unnoticed compared to the person who speaks the loudest and produces the least (Walsh 42).

Exercise 1.9.3.2

Pretend that you have been assigned an essay to argue the virtues of an introverted personality. Consider and analyze the information below to include as possible support. To create a sense of **balance** in source material, evaluate whether the following excerpts would be more effective as quoted or paraphrased material. Check the box for either quote or paraphrase. Be prepared to share and explain your answer.

hints

- Can the information be paraphrased without losing any of the value of the style or poignancy of the information?
- Does the original wording of the information offer any special insight?
- Does the information have ideas that would speak to the audience in a way that would make them understand the material better than a paraphrase?

"Shyness is a form of anxiety characterized by inhibited behaviors. It also implies a fear of social judgment that can be crippling" (Walsh 40).

Paraphrase ☐ Quote ☐

"In schools, it's the bolder kids who get attention from the teachers, while quiet children can too easily languish in the back of the classroom" (Walsh 42).

Paraphrase ☐ Quote ☐

"Introverts may be able to fit all their friends in a phone booth, but those relationships tend to be deep and rewarding" (Walsh 42).

Paraphrase Quote

"And simply by virtue of their ability to sit still and focus, introverts find it easier to spend long periods in solitary work, which turns out to be the best way to come up with a fresh idea or master a skill" (Walsh 42).

Paraphrase Quote

"There's even a case to be made that introverted CEOs are the business leaders of the future" (Walsh 44-45)

Paraphrase Quote

Exercise 1.9.3.3

The passage below is taken from the same Time article written by Bryan Walsh. Explain why the passage is a good example of balancing and connecting his ideas with "backing."

The very fact that introverts are more sensitive to their environment often means they're fully aware that they appear out of step with the expectations of others, and they can easily internalize that criticism. Just about every adult introvert can remember being scolded, even if gently, for being too quiet as a kid. Anytime a teacher grades on participation, introverted kids will be at a disadvantage. There's nothing wrong with parents' nudging their shy children into the world, but there is something wrong if it's more than a nudge. "You don't want to break the kid by overwhelming their coping capacity," says Jay Belsky, a psychologist at the University of California at Davis. "The key is sensitive encouragement."

1. How much of the paragraph is the author's own words and ideas?
2. What does the quote at the end add to the paragraph?

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1.9.4: Formatting the Works Cited Page

A Works Cited page is an MLA formatted bibliography. A Works Cited entry usually has three basic parts: Author. Title. Publication Information. When a work has no author, then an entry includes the title and publication information.

Requirements for the Works Cited Page

According to the Purdue OWL, you need to provide the necessary information for readers to find your sources. Ask yourself, "What information is necessary to make finding the sources foolproof?"

- In-text citations should look consistent throughout your paper.
- Works Cited lists include core information, such as author's name, title of source, publication information, based upon the type of source, and should be uniform and simple so readers can locate the sources.
- Entries are double spaced
- Only the first line of each entry goes on the left margin; subsequent lines are indented a half inch
- Entries are organized in alphabetical order based upon author's last name. If a source does not have an author, use the title.
- Important change: When citing a web page that has been published previously in print, it is no longer necessary to include the original publication date.

Telling the Difference between Magazines and Journals

Magazines	Journals
Shorter & simpler titles	Long & complicated titles
Shorter articles	Usually longer articles
Lower page numbers	Higher pages numbers
Published more frequently	Published less frequently
Usually have specific publication date	Generalized publication
Lots of photographs and colored images	Graphs
Ads for food, drink, cologne, cars, etc.	No ads for food, drink, cologne, cars, etc.
No bibliography	Bibliography, a. k. a. Works Cited page

Sample Entries

Here are some sample entries taken from the Purdue OWL and the *MLA Handbook*:

Book in Print

Jacobs, Alan. *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction*. Oxford UP, 2011.

Scholarly Journal

Kincaid, Jamaica. "In History." Callaloo, vol. 24, no. 2, Spring 2001, pp. 620-26.

Magazine

Poniewozik, James. "TV Makes a Too-Close Call." Time, 20 Nov. 2000, pp. 70-71.

E-book

Smith, Simon. Rocking the New World. Penguin Classics, 2010. ACLS Humanities. E-book, hdl.handle.net/2028/heb.07588.0001.001.

Database Source (journal)

Goldman, Anne. “Questions of Transport: Reading Primo Levi Reading Dante.” The Georgia Review, vol. 64, no. 1, 2010, pp. 69-88. JSTOR.

Database Source (magazine)

Crocker, Michael. “A Witness to History.” Newsweek, 14 Jan. 2015, pp. 45-47. Academic Search Premier.

Corporate Authors

Corporate authors can be organizations, institutions, and government agencies to name a few. When works are created by corporate authors but published by another source, entries are placed under the corporate author’s name. When the corporate author also publishes the work, the entry goes under the title of the work.

United Nations. Consequences of Rapid Population Growth in Developing Countries. Taylor and Francis, 1991.

“Zika Virus Disease.” Mayo Clinic, 1998-2016. http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-c...e/ovc-20189269.

Page from a website (No original publication date because it is from The Atlantic’s website)

Deresiewicz, William. “The Death of the Artist–and the Birth of the Creative Entrepreneur.” *The Atlantic*, 28 Dec. 2014, www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/01/death-of-the-artist-birth-of-entrepreneur.

Blog

Hollmichel, Stephanie. “The Reading Brain: Differences Between Digital and Print.” *So Many Books*, 25 Apr. 2013, somanybooksblog.com/2013/04/25/the-reading-brain-differences-between-digital-and-print.

Video

“The Bomb.” PBS, 28 July 2015. PBS, http://www.pbs.org/video/2365530722/.

1.9.4: Formatting the Works Cited Page is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

1.9.5: Exercise for Formatting Entries for a Works Cited page

Directions: Create a Works Cited page from the list of sources below.

- Alphabetize entries;
- Double space;
- When an entry in longer than one line, be sure to indent subsequent lines of text;
- Do not use bullets or numbers on your Works Cited page.

You found the article, "Ethics and Marketing on the Internet: Practitioners Perceptions of Societal, Industry and Company Concerns." It was written by Victoria Bush and originally published in Journal of Business Ethics. It can be found in volume 23, issue 3, was published in 2000. The article appears on pages 237-348.

On page 36 of its July 23, 1999 issue, *Time* magazine published "The Power of Forgiveness." Robert Catchem was the author. You found the article in *Academic Search Premier*.

You decide to use Norman Zimmer's "Forgiveness Sonnet Sequences." It was found in the journal, PMLA, 1999 edition, volume 43, pages 202 through 295.

American Life is a monthly magazine published in Atlanta. In volume 16, number 3 of that publication, which was published August 1999, Thomas Kelly's article, "Barking Up the Wrong Tree," appeared. It was printed on pages 188 through 193.

You went to the library to check out the book, *Walking*, by Henry David Thoreau. You decide to use a quote from it. The book was published in 1922 by Pearce-Longman.

Thomas Kelly also wrote a short article called, "A Critical Analysis of Dog Walking." It appeared in the *Journal of American Wolfhounds* (volume 3, number 12). It was published in 2004 and was found on pages 578-625. You found it in the online database, *Academic Search Premier*.

You are doing a report on the Challenger disaster. You find information on the web page, "Challenger STS 51-L" on the National Aeronautic and Space Administration web site. The web page was last updated on November 23, 2007.

You decide to write your cause/effect paper on Bipolar Disorder. You find information on the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) web site. The title of the web page is "Bipolar Disorder." There is no date on this web page, but the URL is www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topi...er/index.shtml.

Additional Resources: PVCC Databases and MLA Research Practicum (exercise) is available at the PVCC English Division website/PVCC English Resources: https://pvccenglish.wordpress.com/

1.9.5: Exercise for Formatting Entries for a Works Cited page is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

1.9.6: Requirements for Parenthetical Citations

When using outside sources in your work, it is important to give credit to the original source and provide basic in-text citations also known as parenthetical citations at the end of the sentence that contains that borrowed information. Parenthetical citations may contain the following:

- Author's name
- Title of the work
- Page numbers
- Paragraphs numbers

What needs to appear in parentheses is based upon how much information you include in the attributive tag and what kind of source is being cited. (Parts of this section are from the Purdue OWL website.)

Examples

Here are some examples from the Purdue OWL and the *MLA Handbook*:

Parenthetical Citations with Author's Name (print source)

Quote with attributive tag

18th century Romantic Poet, William Wordsworth was marked by a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (263).

Quote without attributive tag

Romantic poetry is characterized by the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth 263).

Paraphrase with attributive tag

18th century Romantic Poet, William Wordsworth, extensively explored the role of emotion in the creative process (263).

Matching Works Cited entry

Wordsworth, William. Lyrical Ballads. Oxford UP, 1967.

Parenthetical Citations with Author's Name (online source)

Quote with attributive tag

American author and philosopher, Henry David Thoreau wrote, "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived" (par. 16).

Matching Works Cited entry

Thoreau, Henry David. Walden: an annotated edition. 1999-2009. thoreau.eserver.org/ walden02.html.

Parenthetical Citation for Sources without Authors

Quote with attributive tag

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, Bipolar Disorder is a "brain disorder that causes unusual shifts in mood, energy and activity levels" ("Bipolar Disorder").

Quote without attributive tag

Bipolar Disorder is a "brain disorder that causes unusual shifts in mood, energy and activity levels" ("Bipolar Disorder").

Matching Works Cited entry

"Bipolar Disorder." National Institute of Mental Health, https://www.nimh.nih.gov/ health/topics/bipolar-disorder/index.shtml.

Parenthetical Citation Exercise

Directions: For each entry, you will do the following. Write the last word of the sentence in each example and then the appropriate parenthetical citation. Then you will create a properly formatted Works Cited page.

- John Muir was an inventor, naturalist, environmental philosopher and wilderness activist. In a letter to his wife, Louisa, he wrote, “Only by going alone in silence, without baggage, can one truly get into the heart of the wilderness.”

  The quote was obtained from the “John Muir” page on Yosemite National Park’s website at this url: www.nps.gov/yose/learn/histo...lture/muir.htm.
- Surf Snowdonia is a wave pool located in Dolgarrog, Wales, U. K. Its claim to fame is that it’s the first man-made wave pool to host a top professional surfing contest with surfers competing from all over the world. Surf Snowdonia is located in the forested mountains of Wales “once a derelict aluminum factory, it has been transformed into one of the most innovative surfing facilities in the world.”

  This information and quote was found in an article on the Wavegarden web site, the builders of Surf Snowdonia. The title of the article is “Big Success at World’s First Wavegarden Surfing Contest: Red Bul Unleashed, Surf Snowdonia.” The URL of the web site is http://www.wavegarden.com/. The article is on the Wavegarden home page.
- What is the difference between water use and water consumption? Water use is the amount of water necessary to function. For example, a manufacturing plant may require 10,000 gallons to run. “Even if the plant returns 95% of that water to the watershed, the plant needs all 10,000 gallons to operate.”

  This information comes from Paul Reig’s article, “What’s the Difference Between water use and Water Consumption” on the World Resources Institute web site at this url: http://www.wri.org/blog/2013/03/what...er-consumption.
- According to Pablo S. Torre, a sportswriter and columnist for ESPN, 78% of NFL football players will be bankrupt or in financial trouble within two years of retiring.

  This statistic was taken from the Sports Illustrated article, “How (and Why) Athletes go Broke.” Here is the web site for this article, www.si.com/vault/2009/03/23/1...letes-go-broke.
- According to computer scientists, it’s possible to create an algorithm to predict potential ISIS terrorist attacks. In fact, they have already done it. By tracking the pace of development of a group of ISIS sympathizers, it is possible to predict real-life attacks.

  This information was taken from the web page, “The Computer Algorithm Might Be Able to Predict the Next ISIS attack.” It can be found on the PBS NewsHour web site at this address: www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/...t-isis-attack/.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2: Part II- Rhetorical Strategies for Essays

Nine rhetorical strategies are generally recognized: Narration, description, comparison, example, illustration, definition, process, causal analysis and argument. Most writing will use a variety of strategies in a single essay. However, for inexperienced rhetoricians, practicing each separately helps in learning the techniques of organization distinct to the individual strategy. Students then learn to draw from a full palette of techniques to paint your ideas in writing. For example, you can't tell a good story (narration), without description, you might provide examples when comparing items, and you will present causes and effects as part of logical reasoning in argument.

In this section, the chapters included recognize the seven strategies generally taught as single essays. Description is included with Chapter 9, and example is treated in Chapter 12 as synonymous with illustration.

- 2.1: The Narrative Essay
  - 2.1.1: Narration and Narrative
  - 2.1.2: Why Write a Narrative Essay?
  - 2.1.3: Description as a Rhetorical Strategy
  - 2.1.4: Sample Student Essay
  - 2.1.5: Tips on Writing the Narrative
- 2.2: The Comparison Essay
  - 2.2.1: Why Write a Comparison Essay?
  - 2.2.2: Prewriting Strategy
  - 2.2.3: Basic Structure
  - 2.2.4: Sample Student Essay
  - 2.2.5: Tips for Writing the Comparison
- 2.3: The Definition Essay
  - 2.3.1: Why Write a Definition Essay?
  - 2.3.2: Basic Structure
  - 2.3.3: Tips for Writing the Definition Essay
- 2.4: Illustration
  - 2.4.1: Why Write an Illustration Essay?
  - 2.4.2: Basic Structure
  - 2.4.3: Tips for Writing the Illustration Essay
- 2.5: The Classification Essay
  - 2.5.1: Why Write a Classification/Division Essay?
  - 2.5.2: Basic Structure of the Classification Essay
  - 2.5.3: Tips for Writing the Classification Essay
- 2.6: The Causal Analysis Essay
  - 2.6.1: Why Write a Causal Analysis or Cause/Effect Essay?
  - 2.6.2: Organizing the Causal Analysis Essay
  - 2.6.3: Sample Student Essays
  - 2.6.4: Tips for Writing the Causal Analysis
- 2.7: The Argument Essay
  - 2.7.1: Why Write an Argument Essay?

2.7.2: Elements of Argument
2.7.3: The Fallacies of Argument
2.7.4: The Basics of Argument
2.7.5: How to Write an Argument Essay
2.7.6: Sample Professional Essays
2.7.7: Sample Student Essays
2.7.8: Tips for Writing the Argument Essay

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SECTION OVERVIEW

2.1: The Narrative Essay

A narrative is a constructive format (as a work of speech, writing, song, film, television, video games, photography or theatre) that describes a sequence of non-fictional or fictional events. The word derives from the Latin verb narrare, “to tell,” and is related to the adjective gnarus, “knowing” or “skilled.”

2.1.1: Narration and Narrative

2.1.2: Why Write a Narrative Essay?

2.1.3: Description as a Rhetorical Strategy

2.1.4: Sample Student Essay

2.1.5: Tips on Writing the Narrative

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2.1.1: Narration and Narrative

What is Narration?

Narration may serve a variety of purposes in writing. It may serve as the primary mode in a narrative. Narration may also be used just like reasons and examples to support a thesis, based on either fact or invention. Often, it is used to increase reader interest or dramatize a point the writer wants to make. For example, Aesop wrote fables for his clients to use in their legal defense. They were short, easy to remember, and illustrated the client's argument. Traditionally, narration was used to recount the facts of a legal case, in order to put them into context and structure them in the best possible light for the speaker's purpose. Plutarch used narration as the basis for his comparison of Greek and Roman notables. In his 1989 history of the Civil War, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, James MacPherson uses narration to support the theme of the contingency of history. In short, narration has been used as proof for a long time.

What is Narrative?

A narrative is a constructive format (as a work of speech, writing, song, film, television, video games, photography or theatre) that describes a sequence of non-fictional or fictional events. The word derives from the Latin verb narrare, "to tell," and is related to the adjective gnarus, "knowing" or "skilled."

- First Person Narrative: A mode of narration where a story is told by one character at a time, speaking from their own perspective only. "I" "My"
- Second Person Narrative: A mode of narration where a story is told with the use of "You" "Your" EXAMPLE: You went to the store before you bought yourself a flower.
- Third Person Narrative: A mode of narration where a story is told with the use of "She" "He" "They" "They'll"
- Multiple Narratives: A mode of narration where a story is told with the use of several narrators which tell the story from different points of view. The task, for readers, is to decide which narrator seems the most reliable for each part of the story.
- Unreliable Narratives: An unreliable narrator is a narrator whose credibility is in question or has been compromised. This narrative mode is one which is developed by an author for various reasons, but is usually done so as to deceive the reader or audience. In most circumstances, unreliable narrators are first-person narrators, but third-person narrators can also be unreliable.

Elements

The minimum requirements of narration include:

- A beginning, middle, and end
- A main character, perhaps others as well
- A setting in time and place
- Motivated (or caused) action
- Supports the thesis ("It is best to prepare for the days of necessity.")

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2.1.2: Why Write a Narrative Essay?

Many instructors like to begin ENG 101 classes with the narrative essay. It's called an essay, but many narrative essays are really short stories. The narrative has a twofold purpose. Because students are writing about an important event in their lives, students find it easy to write helping them get acclimated to college writing and expectations. And, since students are sharing about their own lives, the narrative helps readers get to know them more personally, building community in the class.

How to Write the Narrative Essay

(Narrative essay elements appear in bold in the following list.)

1. Begin by identifying events in your life that taught you important life lessons. These events should have changed you somehow. Be sure to pick a topic that you feel comfortable sharing with other students as well as your instructor. From this choice will emerge **the theme** (the main point) of your story.
2. Once you identify the event, you will write down what happened. Just brainstorm (also called freewriting). Focus on **the actual event**. You do not need to provide a complete build up to it. For example, if I am telling a story about an experience at camp, I do not need to provide readers with a history of my camp experiences, nor do I need to explain how I got there, what we ate each day, how long it lasted, etc. Readers need enough information to understand the event. So, I do not need to provide information about my entire summer if the event only lasts a couple of days.
3. Use **descriptions/vivid details**. As writers, we want our readers to experience this event as we did. We want to bring it to life. Descriptions put the reader in the moment. Make sure they are active descriptions, vivid and clear. Remember that people have five senses. You can appeal to the reader's sense of smell, taste, sight, sound, feel. Do not simply tell the reader that it was exciting. You need to describe the event in such a way that the readers get excited. Do not simply state that it was hot. Provide a description so that readers think that it is hot. For further explanation and examples, see "Description as a Rhetorical Strategy" following this list.
4. Use **active voice/action**. Active voice puts readers in the moment. They experience events as they happen. Think of a horror story where you experience running from the psychotic murderer right along with the hero. Here is an example of active voice from Tobias Wolff's story "On Being a Real Westerner":

- "Nothing moved but a pair of squirrels chasing each other back and forth on the telephone wires. I followed one in my sight. Finally it stopped for a moment and I fired."
- The verbs are all in active voice creating a sense of immediacy: *moved, followed, stopped, fired*.

5. Use passive voice sparingly to add variety and slow things down. Here is an example of passive voice:

- "I had been aiming at two old people, a man and a woman, who walked so slowly that by the time they turned the corner at the bottom of the hill my little store of self-control was exhausted" (Wolff).
- Passive voice uses the verb "to be" along with an action verb: *had been aiming, was exhausted*.

6. Develop your **characters**. Even though the "characters" in your story are real people, your readers won't get to know them unless you describe them, present their personalities, and give them physical presence.
7. Use **dialogue**. Dialogue helps readers get to know the characters in your story, infuses the story with life, and offers a variation from description and explanation. When writing dialogue, you may not remember *exactly* what was said in the past, so be true to the person being represented and come as close to the actual language the person uses as possible. Dialogue is indented with each person speaking as its own paragraph. The paragraph ends when that person is done speaking and any following explanation or continuing action ends.
8. Once you have completed a draft, you will work on **the pace** of your story. You will make sure you include only the **key events** and details that support your story. You will get rid of any description or event that gets in the way of your story's flow. Use active voice as much as possible. Choose the memory that is the most vivid for you.
9. Avoid clichés and idioms: *the passion burns, as red as a rose, as big as a house, etc*.
10. Avoid being overly dramatic in personifying inanimate object: *the evil flames licked the side of the house*. Fire is deadly and can be devastating, but it is not innately evil.
11. Be honest. Tell the story the way you would naturally tell it and not the way you think your teacher might tell it. Avoid what you think might be impressive language. Be exact in your descriptions. If you want to describe someone's hair, call it hair. Don't use

tresses because that word sounds more sophisticated.

12. Be concise: Don't get bogged down in in passive tense or long-winded sentences. Always remember: there is no exact way to write a story. Always think in terms of the point you are making. Does the information help make that point or does it get in the way.
13. Avoid awkward language: *Read your papers out loud*. You can hear a sentence that sounds awkward or bad. You may not catch it reading it quietly.

- Sample Awkward sentence: There are profound differences between the two types of personalities that scientists are just beginning to find out about.
- Cleaner/More Concise: Scientists are just discovering profound differences between the two personality types.

14. Redundancy: don't be redundant!!! (And avoid exclamation points.) Now is the time to start building your vocabulary. Use a thesaurus and find clearer, more accurate words.
15. Vary sentences: Don't begin your sentences with the same word. Vary sentence beginnings, endings, lengths, and styles.
16. **Point of view**: Be consistent in your point of view. Remember you are telling the story, so it should be in first person. *Do not use second person ("you").*
17. Consistent verb tense: Write the story in past tense. It doesn't work to try to write it in present tense since it already happened. Make sure you stay in past tense.

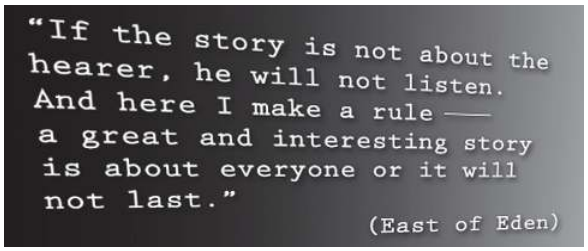

Figure **2.1.2.1** - *Photo credit: Lynn McClelland*

2.1.2: Why Write a Narrative Essay? is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

2.1.3: Description as a Rhetorical Strategy

"Do not simply tell the reader that it was exciting. You need to describe the event in such a way that the readers get excited. Do not simply state that it was hot. Provide a description so that readers think that it is hot." Revision suggestions in margins of student writing often ask writers to "describe." A general comment also is to "show, not tell." What exactly does that mean?

Like many rhetorical strategies for writing essays, such as comparison, causal analysis, and even narration, description rarely stands alone. You can't compare two items unless you describe them. You can't illustrate abstract concepts or make them vivid and detailed without concrete description.

We have five senses: touch, taste, smell, sight, and sound. So, what does it look like, feel like, smell like, or taste like to be hot? "The sweat mixed with its salt stung my eyes, and it dripped from my forehead and slid down my brow." In concrete "show, not tell" description, leaves are not "soft" but "velvet"; sirens are not "loud" as much as they "start my Labrador to howling and vibrate the glass panes in my front door."

The following progression illustrates a progressive improvement in description:

- My friend is overweight.
- My friend Jamie weighs 260 pounds and is 5'8".
- Since he would never let me risk danger on my own, Jamie scrunched his 5'10'' frame and all 260 pounds through the narrow cave entrance and into the black tunnel behind me.

Descriptions when using abstract words or concepts are even more important than when using concrete objects. For example, your instructor crooks her arm and cups her right hand, stating, "Pretend I am holding a grapefruit. Describe it." You and your classmates shout out words: "yellow," "juicy," "softball-sized," "pink and pulpy," and so on. She then cups the left hand and says, "Pretend I am holding love. Describe it." What would you say? And how do you qualify love and make it distinct? Yes, love is "patient" and "kind," "sexy" and "luscious," but these are still abstract words that can have differing meanings to different people. Does love "warm me like a cup of hot chocolate by a fire"? Does it "get up first on a cold morning to make coffee"?

Description is about creating pictures; words are your paint.

Organizing the Narrative

The two most common styles of narratives are the "essay" and "short story" forms. The essay form has an introduction and conclusion that frame the key events of the story. Alternatively is **in medias res**, which is Latin for "in the midst of things." This form works much like a movie or television drama, diving into a critical situation as it is happening in a chain of events. The narrative then continues sequentially, and any back-story is provided as flashback or explanation as the story evolves. Your instructor should identify the preferred style.

In either narrative style, the body of the essay is organized by key event or action. This is where inexperienced writers can get confused and ask when to begin a new paragraph. Paragraphs shift at changes in place or action. Dialogue needs its own paragraph, and each new speaker begins a new paragraph.

Narratives are sequenced in a variety of ways, most commonly chronological order. However, other sequences exist, including final event first, summary opening, and flashback. Place is also important in the narrative. Be sure to ground the event so that readers can picture what happened. If you experience a significant event but only explain "how x made me feel," you have missed an opportunity to tell the story.

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2.1.4: Sample Student Essay

Student Name

Professor Name

Course Name

Date

Where the Danger Is

The weather was cold and gray as usual at this time of year. The trees were all leafless, with fall now just a memory. Christmas was just a few weeks away, and all the kids were looking forward to staying home from school for a few weeks and to the “big payoff” on Christmas morning. Not having to go to school was good, but usually by the time vacation was over, going to school was a big relief. Back to the friends to compare “loot” from Christmas and, to reestablish those fragile ties that hold kids together. At school, students were praised for doing good work, not belittled for each and every mistake. No one there was fighting, and being too loud was against the rules. Right now, the world outside of home was more safe and structured, not chaotic, scary and loud. Even when bad things did happen, it was always far away and nothing to be too concerned about. With Dad often having too much to drink, and Mom just mad at everyone all the time, being home was not usually a very pleasant experience.

Playing outside in the woods or at a friend’s house was the norm for three of us kids. We knew everyone that lived on our road, and except for the cranky old people who lived at the bottom of the hill, everyone was nice to us. In a small rural community, the only thing to be feared at that time of year was crashing on a sled or frost bite from staying out too long. Unless something like that happened, the only rule was to be home before dark.

But that weekend morning was different. We were all home, and the day was starting off rather quietly. None of the kids were arguing, no dogs were barking, and Mom and Dad were actually talking, not shouting or sniping at each other. Dad was sitting at his spot at the dining room table, and Mom was in the kitchen starting breakfast. Usually sitting along the table with Dad at the head was like being at a tennis match, watching the action and listening to the arguments between him at the end and Mom over at the stove.

When the telephone rang, Dad didn’t pick it up, even though he was sitting next to it. Mom walked over behind him and answered the call.

“Hello? Hi, Bobbie. What? What are you talking about? How did this happen? Oh, my God, I don’t believe it! When did they find her? Oh, poor Connie, how will she handle this?” Mom’s voice kept getting higher and higher in pitch, and the tears were starting to flow. This sort of response was totally out of character for her. We all just sat there trying to figure out what sort of gossip our next-door neighbor would have that would cause such a reaction. Dad didn’t say anything, but somehow knew that whatever had happened was completely out of the ordinary. Events occur during each lifetime that forever alter the perception of the world being a safe place to play in. Feeling secure means being at home, no matter the atmosphere, with the door locked up tight.

When Mom finally got herself under control, she said in a low voice, “Margaret was found murdered this morning over on Lauffer Mine Road.” Suddenly, our safe little community became a place of uncertainty and confusion where one of the neighbor’s children was a victim of a killer. The thought that a murderer might be on the loose in our area was one without precedent. The most serious crimes until this moment had been kids corning and soaping the windows on Halloween night. The idea of something like this happening to one of the neighborhood children was almost unbelievable.

As the day wore on, this tragedy lost some of its shock value and became a part of our reality. Mom was on the phone quite a bit, talking in hushed tones with the neighbors. The gossip mill was in full swing. Who did it? And why? Was it a stranger, or maybe someone we all knew? State police cars cruised up and down all day, looking everywhere, even around our house. All three of us stayed pretty close to home that day. No one was playing outside or calling us to come down the road to play. Dad was quite glad not to have to get on us too much to leave Mom alone, or stop fighting among ourselves and be quiet. For just a short period of time, we were where we desired to be.

Going to bed that night and turning out all the lights was a terribly frightening experience, even for a big fourth-grader. Every noise outside could be the killer walking through our yard. Every time the dogs barked, we looked outside to see if anyone was there.

What if the killer was up in the woods behind our house, or hiding in the garage? Being frightened of someone lurking outside was a new experience. Up until then, I never checked to see if the front door was a locked before we went to bed. But the events of that day brought home the reality that my chaotic home was as safe as Dad and Mom could make it. Home really was a haven, and real danger could be as close as the other side of that locked door.

Grader's Comments:

- Purposeful
- Excellent focus
- Clear dominant impression
- The narrative's significance is clearly revealed in the opening, middle, and ending
- Excellent use of paragraph structure 93
- Anecdotes reveal the subjects' character
- Naming of exact physical features could be stronger
- Detailing and imagery could be stronger
- You have a clear focus of events, a strong significance for this narrative, and the work leaves the reader with a dominant impression.

Questions for Discussion and Analysis

Answer the following questions regarding the essay. Be complete in your explanations and cite examples or quotes in support of your answer. Use complete sentences with proper grammar, spelling and punctuation.

1. What is one specific element of the narrative essay that you find exceptional in this essay?
2. What is one area where the story could have used dialogue or description rather than internalized thinking?"

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2.1.5: Tips on Writing the Narrative

- Make sure it is on an important event in your life.
- Make sure you pick an event that caused you to learn an important life lesson.
- You should pick an event that caused you to change and grow in some way.
- Although you certainly do not have to write on something negative, most great steps or leaps in learning have resulted from negative events.
- That is not the only good thing that comes from negative events.
- Some of your best writing will come from them too.
- Once you have written your rough draft, you will print it out, read it to look for places to enhance, sharpen, and focus the story. Revise.
- Use the feedback from your peers or tutors to revise again. Make sure you are giving your readers the best "telling" of your story.

Topic Ideas

- An emergency that brought out the best or worst in you
- An incident that made you believe in fate
- Your best or worst day at school or work
- A major decision
- An encounter with a machine
- An important learning experience
- A narrow escape
- Your first date, first day on the job, or first anything
- A memorable childhood experience
- An event that precipitated a change in your opinion on a significant issue
- A painful moment
- A significant family event
- An experience in which a certain emotion (pride, anger, regret, or some other) was dominant
- A surprising coincidence
- An act of heroism
- An unpleasant confrontation
- A cherished family story

Chapter Questions for Comprehension

Answer the following questions based on your reading of the chapter. Be sure to use complete sentences.

1. What are four elements (or characteristics) of the narrative essay?
2. Why is it important to use vivid descriptions?
3. How does active voice make stories more engaging?

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SECTION OVERVIEW

2.2: The Comparison Essay

Topic hierarchy

2.2.1: Why Write a Comparison Essay?

2.2.2: Prewriting Strategy

2.2.3: Basic Structure

2.2.4: Sample Student Essay

2.2.5: Tips for Writing the Comparison

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2.2.1: Why Write a Comparison Essay?

Comparison/contrast is important because it is a useful tool for critical decision-making. Whether you are buying a new car or choosing a university, it is important to master the art of this critical writing and thinking skill. In writing the comparison/contrast essay, students often engage with the rhetorical strategy because it is an easy genre for them to develop topics and ideas. Since we compare and/or contrast things all of the time, students spend less time struggling to find a topic and more time working on the necessary skills to conquer this kind of paper. In addition, in writing the comparison/contrast, students learn to differentiate between two or more objects seeing how they are similar or how they are different.

Here are a couple of examples. If a photographer wants a new camera, that person may contrast Canon and Nikon. Or if someone wants a new cell phone, that shopper may contrast Samsung and Apple. In these two examples, the writers would develop criteria for contrasting the two companies and their products, and then based upon their criteria, they would identify which item they would purchase. These are two of the basic examples of how we use compare and contrast every day. Another way we use comparison and contrast is through juxtaposition. Juxtaposition places two items close together to create a specific effect, or so readers or viewers can draw conclusions by comparing their similarities or contrasting their differences.

Understanding the Basics of Comparison

First, what is the difference between comparing two items and contrasting two items? If we want to examine the similarities between two items, we compare them. If we want to look at their differences, then we contrast them. Often comparison/contrast explores both similarities and differences. For the purposes of this essay strategy, the term “comparison” will mean looking at both similarities and differences.

In choosing topics, writers must select item that have a **basis of comparison** (something that they both share in common) before they can see the similarities and differences between them. For example, one would not compare an apple with a flight attendant. One would not contrast a dog and a peanut. There must be some basis for comparing the two items. One could compare apples and oranges because they are both fruit, or one could contrast Dell computers with Apples because they both are brands of computers. “Fruit” or “computer” would be the basis in comparison for each of these topics.

To further develop the comparison, consider the following example: The photographer who is contrasting Nikon and Canon is contrasting cameras. But, even that is vague. Writers would want to make sure that they contrasting the same type of camera: two DSLRs with **similar qualities**: cost, number of pixels, lenses, other miscellaneous items that may be included with the purchase. If contrasting a regular Nikon 35mm film camera with a Canon Rebel DSLR, one would not be able to draw clear conclusions. They are completely different kinds of cameras.

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2.2.2: Prewriting Strategy

The first stage of the writing process is always topic generating and freewriting. Use the topic generating and freewriting techniques described in Chapter 1. After competing these steps, let's say you determine you want to compare two DSLR cameras, the Nikon and Canon. Generate as many points of comparison you can think of and place them in a map or grid like the one below. Then fill in as many details as possible. This will give you content for your essay and a way to organize them.

	Nikon D7000	Canon 60D
Price	$685, extra cost for specific lenses, tripod is separate cost	$999, specific lenses included, tripod is separate cost
Image quality	16.2 megapixels	18 megapixels
Shutter speed	6 frames per second, 100 shots, good for still objects, portraits	5.3 frames per second, good for continuous shooting, great for action sports like car racing or basketball
Auto-focus system	Dynamic ISO range 100-6400	Dynamic ISO range 100-6400, expands to 12800

The Thesis Statement

For many students, the thesis statement can be the hardest and most important sentence in a paper. It identifies the topic and purpose of the paper. Students will need to develop clear and concise thesis statements that identify the point and purpose of the essay while breaking the subjects down into logically developed paragraphs. Thesis statements should always be written in third person. There are two kinds of thesis statements: a basic thesis statement and a listing or mapping thesis statement.

Basic Thesis Statement

Despite a slightly higher price, the Nikon D7000 is a better value than the Canon 60D.

The basic thesis statement identifies the topic and makes an assertion about the topic, stating the position of the writer.

Listing or Mapping Thesis Statement

By contrasting price, image quality, shutter speed and the auto-focus system, it is clear that the Nikon D7000 provides more camera for a slightly higher price than the Canon 60D.

The listing or mapping thesis statement acts like a checklist. In this case, often the writer is not making a judgment; the topic is an explanation rather than an evaluation. The information should be covered in the order listed in the thesis statement. Thus, in a comparison/contrast essay on cameras, the first body paragraph would be on price, the second body paragraph on image quality, the third on shutter speed, and the fourth on the auto-focus system. Writers should have at least three criterion to use to compare or contrast.

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2.2.3: Basic Structure

There are two basic formats for the compare/contrast essay: block or point-by-point. Block divides the essay in half with the first set of paragraphs covering one item, the other set of paragraphs covering the other item. So, if the writer is contrasting a Nikon DSLR with a similar priced Canon DSLR, the first set of paragraphs would cover Nikon and the next set would cover Canon. In point-by-point, the writer would cover the two items alternating in each point of comparison (see examples in outlines below).

Block Method	Point-by-Point Method
I. Introduction II. Nikon D7000 A. Price B. Image Quality C. Shutter Speed D. The Auto-focus System III. Canon 60D A. Price B. Image Quality C. Shutter Speed D. The Auto-focus System IV. Conclusion	I. Introduction II. Price A. Nikon D7000 B. Canon 60D III. Image Quality A. Nikon D7000 B. Canon 60D IV. Shutter Speed A. Nikon D7000 B. Canon 60D V. The Auto-focus System A. Nikon D7000 B. Canon 60D VI. Conclusion

Introduction

The introduction is the hook. It is said that first impressions are the most important. This is especially true for essays. Writers only have one opportunity to hook their readers and get them involved, so they need to look at imaginative ways to begin their essays. Some ways to introduce the topic and get the reader involved include telling a story that is related to the topic, ask a question and the thesis answers it, ask a rhetorical question that has no answer but introduces the reader to the subject matter. Usually, the final sentence of the introduction is the thesis statement.

Begin with Narrative (tell a short story)

Topic: Contrasting bike frames and componentry.

Let's say I used to race both mountain and road bikes. If I was writing a contrast essay describing the differences between mountain and road bikes, I could describe what it is like to race down a hill doing 50 mph.

Begin with a question

Topic: Choosing the best smartphone.

Which is better, the Galaxy S5 or the iPhone 5s?

Begin with a rhetorical question

Topic: Contrasting two Las Vegas resorts

Does what happens in Vegas really stay in Vegas?

Conclusion

Conclusions address key points in the essay. Tie the introduction to the conclusion: if you used a quote, refer to that quote again and draw more conclusions from the information; if you began with the story, go back to the story to draw final conclusions from it; if you began with a question that can be answered, then return to that question and answer it. Your conclusion should not just restate the thesis; it should comment on the significance of the thesis. What does your reader know now after reading your essay that wasn't known before?

For more explanation regarding introductions, body paragraphs, conclusions and thesis statements, refer to Chapter 6.

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2.2.4: Sample Student Essay

Student Name

Professor Polliard

English 101

20 July 2009

How Did These Jeans Shrink?

Like a slap across the cheek, the arrival of extra weight squeezing its way into a favorite pair of jeans appears as a shock for some people. Thinking the washing machine has shrunk the jeans, another pair is recruited. The same thing happens, the zipper won't budge and the seams are barely hanging together across the derriere. How did this happen so suddenly? Let's examine the situation, maybe the fifth slice of pizza every Friday night for the last year has something to do with the attitude problem of these pesky jeans. Perhaps the extra handfuls of mixed nuts or afternoon stacks of Oreos have finally found a home. Starting to see the clear picture the revelation occurs, the revelation to change and to lose weight. For many people, keeping fit and lean is a daily battle. Genetics, lifestyles, busy schedules and family obligations all contribute to reasons why many throw up the white flag and surrender, feeling they have no choice but to be overweight. However, there are two popular and successful weight loss programs available to help us fight and ultimately win that battle: Jenny Craig and Weight Watchers. While both programs offer tips and tools for losing weight and living a healthy, active lifestyle, each program has vastly different methods, including cost and support factors.

Between the two programs, Jenny Craig is the more expensive option. First, there is the onetime membership fee which varies anywhere from $59.00 to $200.00. After the initial one-time fee is established, the fundamental method of their weight loss program is buying their meals, Jenny Cuisine. The average cost is around $150.00 per week for Jenny Cuisine and Jenny Vitamins. In addition to the cost of the Jenny Craig food, there is also the cost of buying extra foods needed each week from the market, like fruits, vegetables, dairy products, and low-calorie beverages. The upside of the program is that there is no cooking involved and everything is proportioned correctly and nutritionally balanced. There is virtually no thinking involved and no decisions to be made. A detailed menu spelling out what to eat and when is given to every Jenny Craig client. Being on the Jenny Craig program is as simple as opening a box and flipping on the microwave for three minutes. Voila! Breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks for each day of the week are handled. As the client achieves success with Jenny Craig, he or she will then have the option of making meals on his or her own for part of the week, which is a weaning technique used to boost the confidence of the client to eat smaller portions and healthier foods from his or her own kitchen. Therefore, the cost for Jenny Craig initially is quite steep, especially when considering it is for only one member of the household, the costs do eventually come down based on success in losing weight.

The Weight Watchers approach is quite different. There are no required foods or vitamins to purchase, only meeting fees are required. The cost to attend meetings is $12.00 per week. If a person has achieved his or her weight loss goals in the past with Weight Watchers and he or she has reached a Lifetime status, the cost for attending the meetings is free. Weight Watchers is essentially about calorie counting, which they refer to as Points. Based on a person's age, sex, weight, height, and activity level a certain number of Points are suggested to consume each day. Every member is encouraged to choose healthy foods to spend his or her Points on to ensure a balanced diet. Guidelines for what to eat and portion sizes are discussed frequently which help each member in his or her daily choices. Ultimately, the decision of what to eat is left to the client. A client can choose to cook all or some of their meals at home from scratch, eat frozen meals or even dine out; the program is all about choice and accountability to one's self. As a result, there is no set food cost involved in the Weight Watchers program. Consider the cost of a normal grocery bill when comparing Jenny Craig to Weight Watchers programs. Chances are the amount of money spent on groceries will remain the same if Weight Watchers is chosen. The Grand Canyon-like cost comparison is clear; being on the Weight Watchers program is cheaper.

Although both Jenny Craig and Weight Watchers are hugely successful weight loss programs throughout the world, each approaches the task of transforming their client's attitudes and bodies with different tools of support and guidance. At Jenny Craig, a client makes an appointment to meet with a weight loss representative for a fifteen minute weekly meeting to track weight, measure inches, discuss any food obstacles, and finally to purchase the upcoming week's food. Although the representative is not a

clinical nutrition counselor, the atmosphere is similar to a doctor/patient setting. Jenny Craig's one on one approach may make many feel comfortable to face their weight issues head on, with the private support of their personal Jenny Craig representative.

Weight Watchers, meanwhile, views support in an entirely opposite way. As a member, a Weight Watchers client is invited to the weight loss center any time during the week to attend a group meeting and to have his or her weight privately logged. Free weight loss guides and Points tracking journals are given out for the upcoming week and the atmosphere is party-like. The thirty minute meetings offer discussions on a variety of topics to promote success, make better food choices, become more active, and deal with obstacles that might stand in the way. The camaraderie among members is what keeps members coming back. Members are encouraged to speak up and ask questions, applaud other members' success, or offer suggestions to other members. The Weight Watchers approach is not a do it alone program. Their motto is, "If you don't need the meeting, the meeting needs you." Meaning, if you are successfully losing weight or maintaining a healthy weight, your insight might help someone at the meeting, so come!

With centers and meeting facilities all over the world, both Jenny Craig and Weight Watchers have proven to be healthy and successful programs for people wanting to lose weight and change their lifestyles permanently. The variation in each program's approach appeals to many different types of personalities. Jenny Craig offers a private hand-holding type support which also requires a bigger investment. Weight Watchers offers a discounted group therapy approach that encourages individual responsibility and success. Depending on needs and budget, either program is certain to help almost anyone on his or her journey to not only get healthy and lean but feel great from the inside out.

Grader's comments:

- Apostrophe use and comma use rules are not applied consistently.
- Sentence variety is good, but be aware of comma splices.
- Some repetitive wordiness
- Well-organized and well-developed details to support the thesis.

Questions for Discussion and Analysis

Answer the following questions regarding the essay. Be complete in your explanations, and cite examples or quotes in support of your answer. Use complete sentences with proper grammar, spelling and punctuation.

1. Which organizational pattern was used to develop this essay?
2. What were the organizing content traits or "major comparison points" for this essay?
3. What writing strategies were used to enhance the writer's voice?

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2.2.5: Tips for Writing the Comparison

One common mistake students make in writing the comparison is providing **analysis**. Students present the similarities and differences but forget to explain, analyze, and signify the points presented.

Another common mistake is omitting qualifying transitions, especially when using the block format method. Specific to comparison are the following:

- Similarities: *similarly, similar to, like, in addition, also, likewise, at the same time, moreover*
- Differences: *different, opposite of, unlike, however, on the contrary, nevertheless, but, yet*

Finally, students often try to compare items that are really too large to have unique characteristics. For example, you can't compare two countries, but you can compare two countries' healthcare systems.

Topic Ideas

- Consumer products
- Restaurants
- Sports icons
- Musicians or bands
- Cars or vehicles
- Candidates for government office
- Colleges or universities
- Careers
- Types of drivers
- Parenting styles
- Characters in movies or books
- Theme parks

Chapter Questions for Comprehension

Answer the following regarding the comparison essay referring to the previous information presented here. Be sure to use complete sentences.

1. Briefly describe the two types of organization that may be used in a comparison essay.
2. What one new strategy or insight did you gain by reading the overview?
3. How might you use comparison in your daily life, either personally or professionally? Provide an example.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

2.3: The Definition Essay

Topic hierarchy

2.3.1: Why Write a Definition Essay?

2.3.2: Basic Structure

2.3.3: Tips for Writing the Definition Essay

Define. Label. Interpret.

What words, concepts, or ideas do you associate with this picture? How would you define them? Where might an artist paint a mural like this and for what purpose? What messages are being portrayed, transmitted, suggested by this image? Besides the words, what concepts do the images project? AND, how do you create a unique explanation in writing?

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2.3.1: Why Write a Definition Essay?

When humans interact with one another, they depend on having a universal understanding of vocabulary; sometimes, people create new words to convey a complex emotion or to establish a new use of an old word. Slang terms and metaphors for everyday activities and objects have surfaced generation after generation, often confounding or just irritating our “elders” like “cool” from the 1950s or “awesome” from the 1980s. How many different ways can someone ask for “coffee?” Jargon is created within some professions, for example, in education, medical, or computer science fields. For this reason, new words are added every year to the Standard English Dictionary and to apps such as Urban Dictionary. At times it becomes necessary for a writer to clarify his or her terms within the context of an essay, and sometimes, a writer chooses to challenge a particular interpretation or application of a word which requires an entire essay devoted to the charge.

Consider some of these examples:

What is an “educated” person? Is “educated” the same as being “intelligent” or having a college degree? Does being “educated” entail more than that? A definition essay on this topic would argue for all of the distinguishing traits that could define being “educated.”

In election years, politicians, even within their own political parties, tend to be defined as “liberal” vs. “conservative” or “left-wing” vs. “right-wing.” But what do those terms really mean? Even within established political paradigms, political rivals and pundits on different news programs will disagree or describe these positions differently. A writer could write a definition essay to assert a particular way of viewing these complicated labels.

What is “leadership” in our world today? Does “leadership” imply that one must hold a political office or be the CEO of a corporation? Who else in our society qualifies as a leader? What is generally accepted as the defining or distinguishing characteristics of a leader?

Love, marriage, family—these concepts are not only abstract, but they are concepts that have been used to argue changes to interpretations of laws and civil rights. These are good examples of how definitions that were once generally accepted and unchallenged sometimes need clarified under a new lens.

Understanding Definition

Definition is important when writers need to clarify complex or abstract topics which often is necessary as part of an essay or even as an entire essay arguing for a shared understanding of a word or concept or sometimes to establish a new or uncommon understanding of a word.

Definition can be clarified with more advanced explorations of words and concepts that require names, categories, and a presentation of distinguishing traits.

- **Synonyms**—usually this approach is used for clarification as part of an essay and clarifies the intended definition by using words that are similar.
- **Essential Definitions**—names the word by defining it, applies a broad category, identifies limitations or traits that prevents the interpretation from being applied incorrectly
- **Extended Definitions**—this type of definition requires a multi-paragraph, essay length development that usually involves other modes of development to support an assertion of an argued meaning.

Logical fallacies to avoid

- **Circular definition**—avoid using the word itself in the assertion of the definition.
- **Overly broad definition**—be careful to limit the definition so that it can’t be applied to unintended contexts.
- **Overly narrow definition**—also be careful to not be too limiting so that your definition does not restrict the applications from ideas that should be included.
- **Omission of main categories**—similar to being overly broad.
- **Prejudiced thinking/labeling**—be sensitive to how some audiences could be stereotyped or labeled negatively without clear justification.

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2.3.2: Basic Structure

The Thesis Statement

The definition thesis statement should not only provide the parameters of your proposed definition, but it should also establish why there is a need for establishing a shared understanding of your idea. 109

Example 2.3.2.1:

- While many people may believe that being educated requires formal schooling with degrees and certificates to prove achievement, being educated is also the result of learning independent of formal education: books read, journeys taken, and self-reflection.
- Although family once meant having two parents and siblings living in a house with a white picket fence, families today consist of myriad variations of this arrangement as long as love and support of one another are the critical boundaries.

Unlike other essay modes, the definition essay is organized around the devices that you choose to use to develop your extended definition. For example, a writer could use a process approach. In another approach, a writer could use illustration or narration to demonstrate the real life contexts where the word is used. Cause and effect could be used to clarify what happens when the word is understood in your terms and contexts; similarly, the causes that lead to misinterpretation could be considered and demonstrated. Finally, using a comparison/contrast approach is a common section of most definition essays; sometimes this approach is called negation—with the author emphasizing what the word clearly does *not* mean, when it does *not* apply.

Introduction

One strategy for starting a definition essay is to mention circulating and conflicting definitions for the word or concept to be clarified in the essay. Another possibility it to take a historical approach. How has the word or concept been viewed in the past? If the focus of your essay will be arguing for a new slang word, then use examples of other slang words have been introduced in previous generations. As a last resort, you can start with a short dictionary definition of the word, but this approach can be viewed as monotonous and boring to some audiences. Regardless of the approach that you choose, remember that it needs to lead to the thesis statement which is the clear assertion of how you want the word or concept to be understood.

Conclusion

To effectively write a conclusion for an extended definition essay, think about the impacts that adopting your established definition will have for the audience in situational contexts. Reiterate why your assertion is more apt that other perspectives, and be sure to summarize the distinguishing traits used to establish your definition as they were presented in the introduction.

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2.3.3: Tips for Writing the Definition Essay

The definition essay as a rhetorical mode demonstrates a writer's ability to present a particular view of new language or an analysis of society's evolving understanding of old concepts. The purpose can be either expository or argumentative, used as support for another essay mode, or an entire essay itself. Rather than applying the "tried and true" literal dictionary definition of a word or idea, an extended definition is often an argument for applying connotations and contexts that help clarify the complexities of greater social issues and establishing boundaries for shared understanding and appreciation for user-friendly terminology.

Topic Ideas

- Addict/addiction/alcoholic
- Patriotic/patriotism
- Dance as a sport
- An athlete
- Health/fitness
- Home
- Hero
- Vacation
- Family or marriage
- Extreme sports
- Hate crimes
- Education/educated
- Political terms
- Field/discipline specific terms
- Parenting terms
- Organic
- Leadership

Chapter Questions for Comprehension

Be complete in your explanations and cite examples from the chapter if appropriate. Use complete sentences with proper grammar, spelling and punctuation.

1. When would a writer need to use definition approach?
2. What are three types of definition?
3. Explain the difference between concrete and abstract topics and concepts.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

2.4: Illustration

Topic hierarchy

2.4.1: Why Write an Illustration Essay?

2.4.2: Basic Structure

2.4.3: Tips for Writing the Illustration Essay

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2.4.1: Why Write an Illustration Essay?

Illustration is often used as a mode of writing when the writer needs to clarify general statements or observations about perceived truths about society, nature, experiences, and behavior. Illustration is used to clarify abstract concepts by providing a demonstration of a concept with supporting examples which show, in a concrete way, the point the writer is trying to establish. For example, a review of a beach resort would likely include main points and supporting examples regarding the hotel amenities, the restaurants available, beach access and related beach activities, and perhaps, price. All of these points would be assembled in an organized written composition—a personal journal entry, a travel brochure, a newspaper review, or a letter of complaint or praise to resort management.

Understanding Illustration

The point of any illustration assignment is for the writer to assert an overall observation and back up that assertion with evidence-based examples. Like other rhetorical modes, it can be simply informative—providing a neutral presentation of information for readers to use to draw their own conclusions, or it can be argumentative—providing a stance of favoritism or superiority on the topic. The key to organizing the overall essay is to decide on categories of main ideas that are needed to provide a comprehensive overview of the topic.

The Thesis Statement

The thesis statement for an illustration essay should convey the main point for why clarification or development of a deeper understanding of the topic is necessary or important.

Example 2.4.1.1:

- The over-reliance on social media and texting has created an environment where people feel comfortable sharing critical feelings they would have previously kept to themselves.
- Many of today's popular movies rely on excessive gore and violence to entertain audiences which could explain why book adaptations are more violent than the original text.
- If money is not object, then a vacation to the Kanaapali Shores Beach Resort will satisfy a tourist's paradise dream.

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2.4.2: Basic Structure

The organization of the essay depends on the purpose of the essay and requires a clear rationale for why the examples apply as an illustration of a concept.

As a single supporting paragraph, a writer uses a topic sentence to designate the main idea followed by primary and secondary support structure. Primary supports are the main ideas to support a topic sentence, and secondary supports are the examples and details to provide the concrete information to complete the writer's point.

Purpose of Illustration: To demonstrate how a vacation at the Kanaapali Shores Beach Club Resort is enjoyable and affordable.

Primary support 1: The hotel amenities

- Secondary supporting details: the room, the bed, the bathroom, the kitchenette, the view, the concierge services

Primary support 2: The restaurants

- Secondary supporting details: the variety of food, the quality of food, the service, the ambiance

Primary support 3: The beach and activities

- Secondary supporting details: the beauty of the sand, sky, and water; sunbathing, snorkeling, windsurfing

Primary support 4: The cost

- Secondary supporting details: the price of the room per night, the prices of meals, the price of activities/entertainment

In an illustration essay, each of the supporting body paragraphs will follow the same basic structure. Writers should use flexibility with that structure, though. The design is not meant to be a single sentence of primary support followed by a single sentence for secondary support. Often, a writer may have several concrete secondary examples or details to use to fully develop the primary point. However, only use as many examples as necessary without being redundant or becoming tedious for the audience.

For example, if you want to illustrate the qualities of an effective professor, then you must first establish what attributes would be shared among many quality professors. Your illustration could then be based on instructional delivery methods, grading, interpersonal communication, availability outside of class. Each of these traits would be the main ideas supporting the thesis, and the examples of each trait could include descriptions of each trait or examples of known individuals who demonstrate it. Using this strategy helps the writer focus on illustrating how all professors could be amazing rather than just making the essay present like a tribute to one amazing teacher.

What if you are trying to illustrate the bad habits associated with social media use? You have choices for how you organize the essay. You could handle the examples as associated by device, or you could handle the development of the essay according to each different "bad" habit or behavior and discuss each device in the context of that behavior. For example, you could talk about all of the annoying habits a person might display when on their cell phone and then all of the annoying habits people show when on Facebook. Alternately, you could talk about "rudeness" as your distinguishing category and then use the examples of rude behavior associated with all of the devices or social media applications.

These are some of the options for outlining/organizing the paragraphs of an illustration essay:

1. One long example using multiple paragraphs
   a. Could be narrative using an anecdotal story
   b. Spatially arranged by location or setting
   c. Order of importance
2. Series of short examples where each example is a paragraph
   a. Weakest to most important
   b. Chronological
3. Large series of categorized examples where each category is a paragraph with embedded examples usually arranged from least to most important within each category.
4. Sometimes no special order is needed or process because the examples are of equal importance.

Introduction

Narrative and descriptive devices are often used to engage the reader with a general overview of the presented topic.

Conclusion

Summarize the purpose and bring the essay full circle to the introductory device. If an essay started with an anecdote of a situation, bring closure to that situation. Be sure to reiterate the purpose for illustrating the ideas related to the topic.

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2.4.3: Tips for Writing the Illustration Essay

Illustration essays use well-developed examples to illuminate a topic in a way that an audience may not have previously considered. The examples should be detailed and real, based on observation or research, so that they are relatable to the audience who could use the information to make informed decisions or validate opinions.

Topic Ideas

- An effective or ineffective teacher/professor
- An outstanding nurse/doctor
- Symptoms of stress on the body
- The perfect vacation destination
- A horrible job
- A review of any business establishment

Chapter Questions for Comprehension

1. What practical, non-academic purpose indicate an illustrative writing approach?
2. What role do adjectives serve in the development of an illustrative paragraph or essay?
3. Why is secondary support critical in the development of an illustrative assignment?

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SECTION OVERVIEW

2.5: The Classification Essay

2.5.1: Why Write a Classification/Division Essay?

2.5.2: Basic Structure of the Classification Essay

2.5.3: Tips for Writing the Classification Essay

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2.5.1: Why Write a Classification/Division Essay?

If you have ever done laundry, you have probably divided and classified items. You sort your clothes: whites in one pile, colors in another, jeans all together. If you browse the car ads, you might look at SUVs, sedans, and sports cars. When we study science, we group together or categorize species, for example, in the animal kingdom: mammals, reptiles, birds, fish, and amphibians. We express preferences when we choose preferred categories of music: rock, country, rap and so on. Classification is important because it helps us understand the world.

Sorting mechanisms help us organize and understand complexities. Imagine attempting to sign up for your college classes and finding an online list of all the classes the college offered but no categories, where English composition came before calculus but after world politics. Imagine going grocery shopping in a store where the shampoo was next to the apples, and the deodorant was next to the ground beef. Without items being divided in categories, the world would be chaotic. We expect apples to be in the produce section, shampoo and deodorant in the personal hygiene section, and ground beef in the meat section.

Understanding the Basics of Classification (elements appear in bold)

This is the first key to sorting a group into categories. In what ways can you divide the whole? Although animals can be divided scientifically, creative thinking can find new ways to classify. For example, animals could be classified as those with feet, those with wings, and those with fins to explain how they get around. In the previous example, how animals "get around" is the **single principle** on which the division is based.

After determining your single principle, make sure your categories have **covered the whole**. In other words, as the old expression states, "divide the whole pie." Make sure all the items in the large group fit into one of the determined categories. In sorting the laundry, is there a category missing? Beside white, dark, and jeans, some would argue a fourth category, delicates, is needed.

Next, each category in the group must fit into that **distinct and separate** group. Determine the distinguishing features of each group and make sure the categories do not overlap. Do all animals move through the world with feet, wings or fins? For example, some animals with legs are rumored to "fly," such as the flying squirrel, but actually the squirrel glides and doesn't have wings. Bats, on the other hand, have feet but don't walk on them; they use their wings to propel themselves. Finally, **balance your categories** with equal details, examples, and evidence. Don't prefer one group and treat it in more depth than the others.

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2.5.2: Basic Structure of the Classification Essay

The Thesis Statement

The thesis statement in a classification essay often identifies the classified groups. Further, it should make an assertion about the relevance or importance of the groups. Students will need to develop clear and concise thesis statements that identify the point and purpose of the essay while breaking the subjects down into logically developed paragraphs. Thesis statements should always be written in third person. There are two kinds of thesis statements: a basic thesis statement and a listing thesis statement.

Basic Thesis Statement

Although the animals of the Earth have distinct environments, how they move through their varying environments is based not on the habitat, but on the method of propulsion.

The basic thesis statement identifies the topic and makes an assertion about the topic, stating the position of the writer.

Listing or Mapping Thesis Statement

Animals move through their environments in one of three ways: by feet, wings, or fins.

The mapping thesis statement identifies the topic (animals), makes an assertion about the topic (move through their environments in one of three ways) and lists the categories (feet, wings, and fins).

Introduction

The introduction is the hook. It grabs the reader's attention and provides engagement in the topic. As with many rhetorical strategies, topics can be introduced by telling a story that is related to the topic, asking a question that the thesis answers, asking a rhetorical question that has no answer but introduces the reader to the subject matter. Usually, the final sentence of the introduction is the thesis statement.

Body Paragraphs

Each category in the classification needs its own paragraph. In addition, if the categories are mentioned in a mapping thesis statement, follow the order established in the thesis statement. In developing each category, explain the specifics that make the category, provide examples of things that fall into the category, and evidence of those distinctions.

Conclusion

Conclusions address key points in the essay and tie the introduction to the conclusion.

Your conclusion should not just restate the thesis; it should comment on the significance of the thesis. What does your reader know now after reading your essay that wasn't known before?

For more explanation regarding introductions, conclusions and thesis statements, refer to Chapter 6.

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2.5.3: Tips for Writing the Classification Essay

The most important issue in classification is making your categories distinct and unique from each other. Students must refine any overlapping categories to make the grouping effective. In addition, make sure your examples within the individual categories fit the description of that category.

Topic Ideas

- Types of pets
- Video games
- Careers in your field of interest
- High school cliques
- Personal electronic devices
- Sports
- Ways to watch movies or TV shows
- Study strategies
- Personalities

Chapter Questions for Comprehension

Answer the following questions regarding the classification essay referring to the previous information presented here. Be sure to use complete sentences.

1. What are the key elements of the classification essay? Describe them briefly.
2. What one new writing strategy did you learn by reading the chapter?

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SECTION OVERVIEW

2.6: The Causal Analysis Essay

Topic hierarchy

2.6.1: Why Write a Causal Analysis or Cause/Effect Essay?

2.6.2: Organizing the Causal Analysis Essay

2.6.3: Sample Student Essays

2.6.4: Tips for Writing the Causal Analysis

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2.6.1: Why Write a Causal Analysis or Cause/Effect Essay?

Causal analysis, or cause and effect, is used in both everyday and professional life, so being able to recognize and incorporate cause/effect data is important as it is used in multiple applications including problem solving. When studying accidents or plane crashes, investigators attempt to determine the sequence of events that led to the crash. What caused it? When deciding to spend all of that taxpayer money to build the train system in the valley, supporters first gather data showing the current effects of all of the traffic on the city. Then they provide the probable effects of the train system on the valley based upon similar results from other cities. These are just a couple of ways that causal analysis is utilized in society, so it is important to be able to understand it.

With the causal analysis essay, students are introduced to source-based writing. If 90% of the papers students will write in college are in third person, 98% of the papers will be source-based. With the causal analysis, students will be expected to identify credible sources for their papers. They will read and assimilate the information, then incorporate it in their work as evidence and support.

Choosing a topic

Many students find the causal analysis essay hard to write. They struggle with a few aspects. First, they struggle to identify an appropriate topic. The topic needs to cover a true cause/effect relationship. Here are some examples:

- Effects of overuse of cell phones
- Effects of air pollution on inner-city children
- Causes of childhood diabetes
- Causes of bullying

These topics identify clear cause/effect relationships. In other words, x most definitely causes y, or y is a direct result of x. These topics are focused enough to provide sufficient information to complete a three to four page essay with in-depth analysis of the topic and support from outside sources.

Students make a few mistakes when choosing a topic. One mistake students make is to pick a topic that is too broad; for example, students choose topics like the causes of climate change or the effects of the Great Depression. Books have been written about topics like this. These topics provide too much information to cover in a short paper. Instead of an in-depth analysis, the essay is shallow and rushed. Students need to avoid broad topics like these.

The second mistake students make is confusing causes and reasons. A cause has a direct effect. It explains how it occurred. For example, let's say that you put a glass of water in a freezer that is cold enough to freeze water; what will the outcome be? You get ice. There are laws of physics that operate in this world, and water must obey them. That is how the world works. However, a reason explains why it occurred. The focus of a reason is why something happens. Let's say that you don't study for a test the night before you take it, what will the outcome be? We don't know. This time the outcome is not automatic. While not studying is a bad idea, it does not mean you will fail the test. It is not an inevitable outcome. The reason you may fail the test is because you chose not to study, but you might be confident about this particular information and feel it is unnecessary to study. Thus, students need to pick topics where the relationship between the cause and effect can be clearly established.

Finally, the third mistake students make is confusing causation and correlation. Things can happen at the same time without there being a direct cause/effect relationship. Let's say that there is a five-year study that covered an increase in inflation in the United States. At the same time, the study noted that sales in flat-screen televisions had increased. Does that mean that the increase in inflation caused an increase in TV sales? Probably not. There may be a relationship between the two, but one does not directly cause the other.

Thus, choosing a topic that shows a clear causal relationship is extremely important.

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2.6.2: Organizing the Causal Analysis Essay

The causal analysis essay can be split into four basic sections: introduction, body, conclusion, and Works Cited page. There are three basic formats for writing a cause/effect:

1. Single effect with multiple causes–air pollution is the effect, and students would identify several causes;
2. Single cause with multiple effects–bullying is the cause, and students would establish several effects it has on children;
3. Causal Chain–This is a more complex format. Causal chains show a series of causes and effects. For example, dust storms between Tucson and Phoenix can be deadly causing a chain reaction of accidents. The dust is the initial catalyst. It causes car A to stop. Car B crashes into Car A. Car C crashes into Car B., etc. Climate change is a good example of a causal chain topic. Population increase is causing an increase in traffic and greenhouse gases. It is also causing an increase in deforestation for housing, roads and farming. Deforestation means less plants to take up the CO2 and release O2 into the environment. Each item causes an effect. That effect causes another effect. All of this contributes to climate change.

Introduction

The introduction introduces the reader to the topic. We've all heard that first impressions are important. This is very true in writing as well. The goal is to engage the readers, hook them so they want to read on. One way is to write a narrative. Topics like bullying or divorce hit home. Beginning with a real case study highlights the issue for readers. This becomes an example that you can refer to throughout the paper. The final sentence in the introduction is usually the thesis statement.

Another way to introduce the topic is to ask a question or set of questions then provide background and context for the topic or issue. For example, if you are writing an essay about schizophrenia, opening questions might be "What are the main causes of schizophrenia? Who is susceptible?" The student would then begin a brief discussion defining schizophrenia and explaining its significance. Once again, the final sentence of the introduction would be a thesis statement introducing the main points that will be covered in the paper.

Body Paragraphs

The body of the essay is separated into paragraphs. Each paragraph covers a single cause or effect. For example, according to the National Institute of Mental Health, the two main causes of schizophrenia are genetic and environmental. Thus, if you were writing about the causes of schizophrenia, then you would have a body paragraph on genetic causes of schizophrenia and a body paragraph on the environmental causes. A second example is climate change where separate paragraphs explain each cause/effect relationship: population increases, increases in air pollution due to traffic exhaust and manufacturing, increases in food production and agriculture, deforestation. All are causes for climate change, and all are intricately linked.

A body paragraph should include the following:

- Topic sentence that identifies the topic for the paragraph,
- Several sentences that describes the causal relationship,
- Evidence from outside sources that corroborates your claim that the causal relationship exists,
- MLA formatted in-text citations indicating which source listed on the Works Cited page has provided the evidence,
- Quotation marks placed around any information taken verbatim (word for word) from the source,
- Summary sentence(s) that draws conclusions from the evidence,
- Remember: information from outside sources should be placed in the middle of the paragraph and not at the beginning or the end of the paragraph;
- Be sure and use transitions or bridge sentences between paragraphs.

Conclusion

- Draw final conclusions from the key points and evidence provided in the paper;
- Tie in the introduction. If you began with a story, draw final conclusions from that story;
- If you began with a question(s), refer back to the question(s) and be sure to provide the answer(s).

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2.6.3: Sample Student Essays

Sally Summers

Prof. Polliard

English 101

16 April 2016

The Rise of Music Streaming

There have been many staples to define the music industry's timeline; Vinyl LP, the 8-track tape, CDs, Digital MP3s, and now music streaming. A quote from a digital blog dives into music streaming: "With a music streaming service, instead of purchasing a track or album, you pay a flat monthly fee to play unlimited tracks that you don't actually own" (Mitroff). There are many vinyl and physical media enthusiasts, but for the day to day music listener, a streaming service, with access to thousands of albums and no need to download or store them, makes a lot more sense. The Digital Market as a whole has shown incredible promise recently. "In 2014, digital revenue grew nearly 7 percent to $6.85 billion, while physical sales—of which CDs make up the vast majority—fell 8 percent to $6.82 billion" (Vincent). Being the first time that digital media has overtaken its physical counterpart, the industry has all but accelerated into outlets of digital, such as streaming music. With the fall of physical media comes the rise of music streaming, on many different platforms and with creative spins that put a new spark in the music industry.

Numbers don't lie and people seem to want faster and easier ways to listen to the music they love, streaming via a service makes that want tangible at little cost. Going to the store to buy a new album? Why? You could have streamed it to any media device the second it was released and not have spent any more than the subscription to that music streaming service. Growth shows promise especially in a subscription based business, "An estimated 41 million people paid for music subscription services in 2014, five times the level of eight million people in 2010" ("An Industry"). This shows the rapid acceleration in this industry, at the cost of physical media. Subscriptions starting at $5.99 per month (for students on Spotify) make these services easily reached by many. The average music listening person will only need one copy of an album, not a vinyl, CD, and digital copy. Streaming is growing fast, however "Downloads still account for 52% of digital revenue" (Vincent).

Spotify is one of the most popularly used services, "Spotify debuted in the U.S. in 2011 and has 30 million paying subscribers worldwide as of last month (Carman) which is growing very rapidly. There are multiple competitors to Spotify such as Apple Music, Rhapsody and Rdio, Tidal, Google Play Music, and Xbox Music. Each one with it's own specific perks and benefits over the competition, for the most part they accomplish a very similar goal described as streaming high quality music to you anywhere, any time and at a relatively low cost. With the obvious benefits of physical media, CD's and Vinyl have not become obsolete just yet, "with the sector's share of industry revenues declining from 60 percent in 2011 to 46 percent in 2014" ("An Industry"). Many users still enjoy having the copy tangible that won't disappear when you stop paying the subscription fee.

With massive amounts of users switching to digital media comes a cost of pirated and shared versions of albums and songs. The industry as a whole has been hit massively because of this, "…overall revenue falling just 0.4 percent to $14.97 billion for the year 2014. (For historical comparisons, this is down from a peak of $40 billion in 1999)" (Vincent). The industry continues to attempt to squash and eliminate pirated copies and users who share them. Torrenting and file sharing sites make downloading an album extremely easy and mostly undetectable. Which means that a lot of people are doing this, "One report from the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry estimates that 20 million Americans continue to pirate music, as well as about a fifth of the world's population" (Carman). This shows how even though streaming has amplified the digital market pirating is still a problem. There are ways services like Spotify encrypt and protect it's songs so users can't share them, but downloading a song from Apple Music (iTunes) makes it readily available to upload and share.

With all of the advancements made digitally and the wild demand for instant music, streaming services continue to meet the needs of its listeners. New advancements call for plenty of problem solving like the elimination of pirating—even then that's a problem the film industry has dealt with for decades. Huge numbers and growth prove that this is the directions digital music is taking, "Revenues from music subscription services—including free-to-consumer and paid-for tiers grew by 39 percent in 2014…" ("An Industry"). Pushing off from physical media as an industry might not be so bad, and diehard fans won't let the vinyl die.

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Grader’s Comments:

- Apostrophe errors, especially “it’s” and “its”
- Comma splices and fragments—be careful when you integrate source material quotations
- Word choices could be improved.
- Avoid “you”
- Conclusion ties back to intro effectively
- Strong use of statistics for support
- Consider stronger word choices

Questions for Discussion and Analysis

Answer the following questions regarding the essay. Be complete in your explanations, and cite examples or quotes in support of your answer. Use complete sentences with proper grammar, spelling and punctuation.

1. Which type of organization did the writer use to develop this causal analysis essay?
2. Evaluate the source material listed on the Works Cited. How credible are the sources used? Why or why not?
3. What causes are attributed to increased popularity of music streaming? What effects?

Claudia Payne

Professor Leto

English 101

18 June 2016

War of the Worlds

Anytime of the day, Americans can turn on the Television (T.V.), radio, Internet, cell phone and find a number of news stations and watch live coverage from anywhere in the world. Live coverage is current. People from all over the world upload pictures and videos on the Internet of natural disasters. The whole world can view these videos immediately. Yet, most people watch with a keen eye and understand that most of what is said is full of propaganda and other people’s agendas. With the help of great resources such as the T.V., radio, Internet and cell phone, Americans today are not as likely to panic as easily as they once were. Halloween Eve, 73 years ago, a bright, young man, by the name of Orson Welles created an all-out panic over America with the radio drama, “War of the Worlds” which was a live production on his Mercury Theater on the Air show. This replay of the famous 1898 novel written by H.G. Wells, which in short was about Martians from Mars invading the planet, created so much madness. In a matter of minutes, phone lines were jammed with people trying to get information. Thousands of people were fleeing their homes, crowding the streets, heading to church to be saved while others loaded their guns and locked themselves inside their homes, preparing for a fight. The main reasons that the “War of the Worlds” radio broadcast caused so much panic across America was because of the show’s format, the timing of the warning announcements, and people’s previous experience with emergency broadcasts. Combine all of this with the lack of resources available to the public to validate the truth, and panic was created.

The Mercury Theatre on the Air used intermixed media, realistic sound effects and had intriguing interviews during the “War of the Worlds” radio broadcast. The broadcast was interchanging from an orchestra playing to news bulletins that became increasingly alarming. The first interruption of the program began with reports of explosions on the planet Mars. The next update was about a flaming object, possibly a meteorite touching down on a farm in the Grover’s Mill neighborhood in New Jersey. The tone changed with further announcements indicating that there was no meteor, but Martians from Mars unleashing their wrath on spectators and killing them with heat rays. There were interviews with police, military troops, and public officials. Generals, captains, lieutenants, and commanders were interviewed. Even an unnamed man, sounding much like the President began to address the nation. There

was also an announcement from the Secretary of the Interior. The intense accounting of events along with the screams of men, women and children added to the drama. Sounds of guns, muffled voices, airplane motors, sounds of heat rays, boat whistles, and fog horns were all used by Orson Wells and his cast to set the mood that played into the panic that night (Estrin 178). People were advised the broadcast was a drama, yet it all seemed so real.

Another great influence that contributed to the depth of the panic was timing and placement of announcements stating the radio play was fiction. Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) announced on three separate occasions during the 60 minute broadcast that it was the shows reenactment of the "War of the Worlds" by H.G. Wells ("War"). However, the real-life, action packed drama still caused one woman to disregard the notification, and she wound up spending all of her savings on a train ticket to go some 60 miles before understanding that what she heard was only a play (Estrin 15). The use of the Emergency Broadcast System's announcements, "we interrupt this program" were adding to the drama and realistic feel. The show started off indicating this was a fictional story, and there wasn't another mention until 40 minutes later. The last announcement was given by Orson Welles himself at the end of the script ("War"). The Mercury Theatre on the Air had a huge competitor on the NBC Network, The Charlie McCarthy Show, and most people tuned to this program regularly. What added to the mood was that during a dull moment on the rival's show, approximately ten minutes in, listeners tuned to the "War of the Worlds" reenactment. The late tuning to the show caused nearly 50% of the listeners to miss the opening disclosure there by giving more authenticity to the story, which added to the panic (Frank, Reuven). The drama being played out in this way really set the tone; it also gained the realistic feel because it reminded people of previous events in time.

The audiences' past experiences with radio broadcasts helped heighten the panic that ensued this evening. It was not long before this Halloween Eve that America was listening to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Fireside Chats." These broadcasts brought the voice of authority and politics to the radio. This built the foundation and gave stability for Americans to believe that what they hear is real. Welles knew the feel he wanted when preparing with his cast for the show. America will never forget the chilling voice of announcer Herbert Morrison, giving minute-by-minute reports of the horrible crash of the Hindenburg airship in May 1937. The "War of the Worlds" broadcast had a similar tone. Welles gathered his crew together and played the recording of Morrison revealing step-by-step accounts of this horrible tragedy that left 35 people dead (Rankin 294). The radio airwaves were constantly covering groundbreaking news events during the months leading up to the "War of the Worlds" broadcast. Author Reuven Frank wrote about the non-stop coverage of Hitler's occupation of Austria that was flooding the Networks in March of 1938, and in May of that year, it was round the clock talk of the Munich Crisis and Germany beginning to invade Czechoslovakia. With all the talk of Germany invading these countries, it is no wonder that Americans were uneasy and could easily panic if given word of an invasion of any kind, even those of Martians from Mars.

Back in the 1930s and 1940s, having the radio was a great source for information. Most people relied on the radio for important updates during emergencies. Not many people had telephones and even less had televisions (T.V.). During this time T.V. was in the beginning trial stages. If more resources were available, like the ones that are available today, things could be verified much more readily. Word of a Martian invasion would not be as alarming, and people could validate the information with the resources available. Orson Welles created the feeling of doubt for people with the after effects of this broadcast. Once people found out that the radio broadcast was fiction and a "War of the Worlds" reenactment, they were upset and began to criticize Orson Welles. Some people say that Orson Welles knew the broadcast would create drama. Some say that he wanted to teach people a lesson to not always believe everything that is heard on the radio. Orson Welles possibly created more doubt than what he may have initially intended. Many people today do not believe anything they hear on the radio or read on the Internet. People do not listen as closely and do not have trust in news reports as they once did. Having doubt to this extent can cause tremendous damage if a real tragedy were to unfold. People may ignore important bulletins for a real tragedy and not take them seriously. If there was an announcement of a shooter on the loose and people did not believe it, what would happen? People could get hurt and possibly killed by not believing these updates.

The truth is that most people take for granted what they hear or see in the news. Some believe Orson Welles was the one to create this skepticism over 70 years ago this Halloween Eve (Frank, Rich).

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Grader’s Comments:

- Fascinating topic
- Opening paragraph a bit wieldy
- Excellent examples of human nature
- Maybe add a few lines of description of historical events that are no longer well known
- Conclusion does a nice job tying the present day to the past

Questions for Discussion and Analysis

Answer the following questions regarding the essay. Be complete in your explanations, and cite examples or quotes in support of your answer. Use complete sentences with proper grammar, spelling and punctuation.

1. What is the thesis statement?
2. What type of causal analysis essay is this? Single cause with multiple effects or single effects with multiple causes?
3. List the main points that are covered in the paper (would be the causes of a single effect or the effects of a single cause)
4. Examine the in-text citations and the Works Cited page.
    a. What types of sources are used in the essay?
    b. Can you easily find each source in the Works Cited page?
5. Do these sources seem appropriate to the type of paper she is writing? How reliable are these sources?

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2.6.4: Tips for Writing the Causal Analysis

Many times topics are really categories in which multiple issues are present. One popular example is immigration. However, immigration as a topic for an essay is too large, as books on immigration policy, history, cause and effect have been written.

Consider what issues exist under the big umbrella of immigration? What other cause/effect relationships can you think of regarding immigration?

- border security
- children born in U.S to undocumented immigrants (often called “dreamers”)
- uneven or outdated laws and classifications (economic, family, refugee, student, fiancé)

Topic Ideas

- Homelessness
- Social media: causes of overuse; effects on relationships
- Bullying/cyberbullying
- Addiction(s)
- College student stress
- Rising college tuition

Chapter Questions for Comprehension

Answer the following prompts regarding the causal analysis essay referring to the previous information presented here. Be sure to use complete sentences.

1. Explain the three mistakes students can make in writing the causal analysis essay.
2. How might you need to analyze causes of a problem or situation in your lives outside of school? Provide two examples.
3. What are the three organizational patterns used to organize cause?

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SECTION OVERVIEW

2.7: The Argument Essay

Topic hierarchy

2.7.1: Why Write an Argument Essay?

2.7.2: Elements of Argument

2.7.3: The Fallacies of Argument

2.7.4: The Basics of Argument

2.7.5: How to Write an Argument Essay

2.7.6: Sample Professional Essays

2.7.7: Sample Student Essays

2.7.8: Tips for Writing the Argument Essay

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2.7.1: Why Write an Argument Essay?

When you hear the word “argument,” what do you think of? Maybe you think of a shouting match or a fist fight? Well, when instructors use the word “argument,” they’re typically thinking about something else. What they’re actually referring to is a position supported by the analysis that preceded its conception, not necessarily defending against antagonism.

More to the point, they’re talking about defending a certain point of view through writing or speech. Usually called a “claim” or a “thesis,” this point of view is concerned with an issue that doesn’t have a clear right or wrong answer (e.g., four and two make six). Also, this argument should not only be concerned with personal opinion (e.g., I really like carrots). Instead, an argument might tackle issues like abortion, capital punishment, stem cell research, or gun control. However, what distinguishes an argument from a descriptive essay or “report” is that **the argument must take a stance**; if you’re merely summarizing “both sides” of an issue or pointing out the “pros and cons,” you’re not really writing an argument. For example, “Stricter gun control laws will likely result in a decrease in gun-related violence” is an argument. Note that people can and will disagree with this argument, which is precisely why so many instructors find this type of assignment so useful—it makes you think.

Academic arguments usually “articulate an opinion.” This opinion is always carefully **defended with good reasoning and supported by plenty of research**. Research? Yes, research. Indeed, part of learning to write effective arguments is finding reliable sources (or other documents) that lend credibility to your position. It’s not enough to say “capital punishment is wrong because that’s the way I feel.”

Most of the papers students write in college are arguments. This should not be surprising. We are surrounded by them. Every time we watch television, surf the Internet or read a magazine, we are bombarded with ads. Ads are persuasive arguments trying to get consumers to buy or do something.

Here is an ad that uses an interesting twist to make its argument:

***Figure* 2.7.1.1 -** *Kleenex Tissue Ad 1990- “Teach Them Not To Share”*

- Irony is “the use of words to convey one meaning that is the opposite of its literal meaning” (“Irony”).
- What is ironic about this ad?

- What is the main argument of the Kleenex ad?

2.7.1: Why Write an Argument Essay? is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

2.7.2: Elements of Argument

When writing or analyzing arguments, we begin by examining how the argument appeals to the reader. There are three types of appeals utilized in arguments: logos or logical, pathos or emotional, and ethos or ethical appeals.

Aristotle's Triangle: Three Types of Appeals

Logos or the logical appeal relies upon well-developed, well-organized and well-reasoned arguments supported by evidence from reliable, authoritative sources. When writing argumentative essays and papers, we rely heavily upon the logical appeal to make our case. The evidence utilized in the logical appeal is usually research-based evidence: statistics, clinical studies, any empirical evidence collected carefully and methodically. This is also why arguments are written in third person. We let the evidence drive our arguments, so readers do not think our work is based upon our biased viewpoint.

Pathos or emotional appeal recognizes that humans are emotional beings. The key to using the emotional appeal successfully in papers is to provide an opportunity for an emotional response and not to try and orchestrate an emotional response. An example of the wrong use of an emotional appeal are infomercials for organizations like the ASPCA or UNICEF. While there is no doubt their work and message is important, they try to manipulate the audience with the use of emotional music, manipulative photographs, with an emotional narrative running beneath the music and images. While this may be okay for non-profit organizations, it does not work in college papers. Do not try to manipulate your audience this way. Also, do not try to use emotionally charged language. Stay in third person and avoid sounding biased, accusatory or self-righteous. As a writer, the people you are trying to persuade are the people who either disagree with you or are not sure. By sounding accusatory or self-righteous, you will put the opposition on the defensive, and you have already lost your argument.

The proper use of emotions is through narrative case studies. Case studies provide the opportunity to appeal to readers' emotions. The key is not to tell the readers what to feel or to try and manipulate the readers to feel a specific emotion. Instead, writers tell the story and allow the readers to decide how they want to respond. Readers can become emotionally involved with the topic or not. It is up to them. This works well for social issues like hunger and homelessness, bullying, child abuse, or illegal immigration. The blending of specific case studies with empirical evidence creates a deeply meaningful approach to argument. If I am talking about homeless children in America, by providing the statistics on the large number of children affected by this issue along with stories of the struggles of specific children, this drives the point home. We have a name and face to go with those numbers making the argument very human.

Ethos or the ethical appeal relates to the writer's persona being projected through the work. By using an unbiased tone and unbiased language, we project an image of trustworthiness and credibility. That is also why we use credible sources. We, as writers of college papers, do not have any credibility yet with our audience. By using authoritative, reliable sources, we borrow their credibility to help persuade readers to adopt our point of view. We are effectively saying, it is not just me that thinks this way. Here is a testimonial from Dr. So and So and his research that supports it. The research, surveys or clinical studies provides the evidence that supports the argument.

- Looking back at the Kleenex ad, what types of appeals did the ad use?

Beyond the use of these appeals, there are some other elements to consider when analyzing or writing arguments: audience, purpose, a well-defined issue, compelling evidence, refutation, and persona.

Audience

What audience does the writer have in mind? Who is the target audience the writer is trying to persuade? As a writer, your audience is the first consideration. This determines the language you will use, the sources you will cite, and the approach you will take. For example, if I were writing an antiabortion paper, I would address a panel of scientists much differently than a church congregation. Some of my sources would change, and my language use would probably change. For scientists, I would sound more clinical. For the church congregation, I would sound more emotional. My evidence would change, too. For scientists, I would use clinical evidence. For a church congregation, I would use sacred text. What if my target audience were children instead of adults? Once again, some of my sources would change and my approach would be different.

Purpose/Thesis

Why are you writing it? What are you trying to prove? The purpose is the thesis statement. As a writer, you need to know why you are writing the paper. It cannot be just to fulfill a requirement. It is imperative that your position is clear. What exactly are you arguing? It should be very apparent which side you are on and why.

Provide the reasoning behind your position. Remember, do not state it overtly like this: The **purpose of this essay is to prove** that potential dog owners must research breeds in order to choose dogs that best suit their lifestyles and opt to spay or neuter them if the overcrowded dog population is ever going to be solved.

This is considered weak. That said, you do have a good thesis statement if you drop the initial part: **Potential dog owners must research breeds in order to choose dogs that best suit their lifestyles and then spay or neuter them if the overcrowded dog population is ever going to be solved.**

Here is an example from a student paper: **Although the American flag is worthy of great esteem, the government cannot take away the right to desecrate the flag without taking away all that it stands for–freedom.**

Using language strengthens your argument. The following examples from the Community College Consortium's Rhetoric and Composition textbook help further illustrate this point:

You should avoid using "I" and "My" (subjective) statements in your argument. You should only use "I" or "My" if you are an expert in your field (on a given topic). Instead choose more objective language to get your point across. Consider the following:

I believe that the United States Government is failing to meet the needs of today's average college student through the under-funding of need-based grants, increasingly restrictive financial aid eligibility requirements, and a lack of flexible student loan options.

"Great," your reader thinks, "Everyone's entitled to their opinion."

Now let's look at this sentence again, but without the "I" at the beginning. Does the same sentence becomes a strong statement of fact without your" tacked to the front?:

The United States Government is failing to meet the needs of today's average college student through the underfunding of need-based grants, increasingly restrictive financial aid eligibility requirements, and a lack of flexible student loan options.

"Wow," your reader thinks, "that really sounds like a problem."

A small change like the removal of "I" and "my" can make all the difference in how a reader perceives your argument— as such, it's always good to proof read your rough draft and look for places where you could use objective rather than subjective language.

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2.7.3: The Fallacies of Argument

Okay; your paper is filled with quality research. You're feeling good about your paper. But when you get the paper back your instructor has left a comment like, "This is an argument fallacy." So now you're left wondering what is "false" about the argument; and what is this "argument fallacy"?

Argumentative fallacies are sometimes called "logical fallacies." Usually these fallacies are created when the reasoning behind the argument lacks validity. A lack of validity weakens your argument, and then leads to a failure to provide a sufficient claim. This is a common error in argumentative papers.

These fallacies can be caused by your negligence or lack of rigor and attention while making a certain argument. In other words, a very general argument, not followed through rigorously, can end up in an "argumentative fallacy." So, never generalize; don't just say and leave—pursue your point to its logical termination.

The following section from LEO: Literacy Education Online explains some of the fallacies that can easily occur in your writing.

***Figure* 2.7.3.1 -** *LEO: Literacy Education Online*

Logical Fallacies

When you attempt to employ logic to support claims in your papers, your reasoning is sometimes weakened because you are presenting fallacious arguments. It is important for you to be able to identify and eliminate fallacies in your writing. This section will explain and give examples of typical fallacies as divided into five major categories:

1. feelings
2. distraction from the argument
3. misinformation
4. generalization
5. irrelevant connections

The argumentation methods comprising these five categories can be used as rhetorical devices, but they must not be confused with logical thinking. Tutors can help their students to make such a distinction.

FEELINGS

Quite often, writers appeal to their audiences' feelings to attract attention to and elicit agreement with their ideas. Although this can be effective, manipulating audience feelings is not employing logic, and it does not make a writer's argument stronger. Logical thinking never involves feelings.

Appeal to Force: The writer threatens the audience, explicitly or implicitly, with negative consequences if the claim is not believed.

If you do not believe in God, you will go to hell.

Appeal to Pity: The writer begs for the approval of the claim; the audience may agree because they feel sorry for the arguer.

I cannot get a job because the public education system failed me; I have to steal to survive. It is society's fault, not mine.

Appeal to Gallery: The writer uses emotive language that will produce a desired effect on a group or "gallery" of readers. By appealing to the fears or interests of the audience, the writer hopes to gain approval.

Same-sex marriage must be prohibited, or the family structure as we know it will collapse.

Appeal to Authority: The writer cites authorities to show the validity of the claim, but the authority is not an expert in the field, the authority's view is taken out of context, or other experts of that field disagree with the authority quoted.

I think that businesses should not have to limit the amount of pollutants they release into the atmosphere because Rush Limbaugh says that there is no real evidence for industrial pollutants causing the Greenhouse Effect.

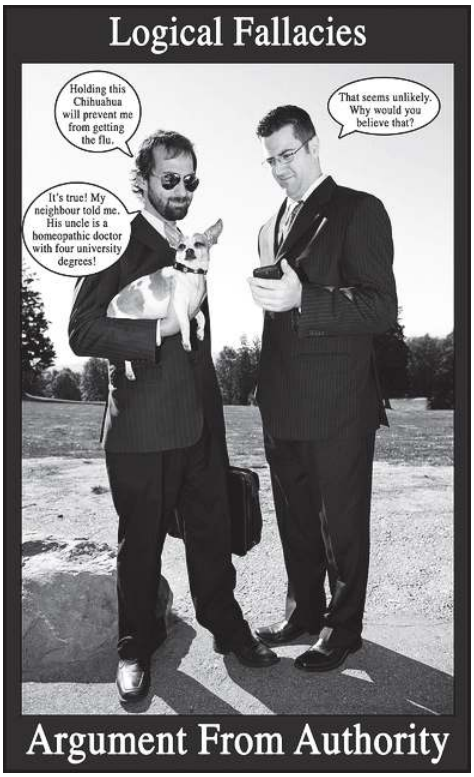

Figure **2.7.3.2** *- Photo credit: Mark Klotz via VisualHunt.com/CC BY-NC*

Old is Better: The writer relies on traditional wisdom to support the argument. This is a logical pitfall because the argument does not consider that new ideas could apply.

People have believed that fish is "brain food" for decades, so I don't believe the FDA when they claim that eating fish does not enhance the intellect.

New is Better: The writer claims that a new discovery has better effects or is more applicable to a given situation simply because it is new. However, being newer does not make an idea more correct.

Word processed papers are clearer and more error-free than typed papers because they make use of new technology.

DISTRACTION FROM THE ARGUMENT

This type of fallacy often happens when writers do not have strong support for their claims. Distraction is also used if the opposition's view is strong and logical; then, writers have a tendency to attack the context instead of the argument.

Attacking the Speaker: The writer reduces the credibility of the opposition by attacking them personally for who they are and not for what they say. The validity of logical reasoning does not depend on the morality of the speaker.

Oprah Winfrey's diet advice is useless; she has had problems with maintaining her weight for most of her life, bouncing back and forth between being overweight and slender.

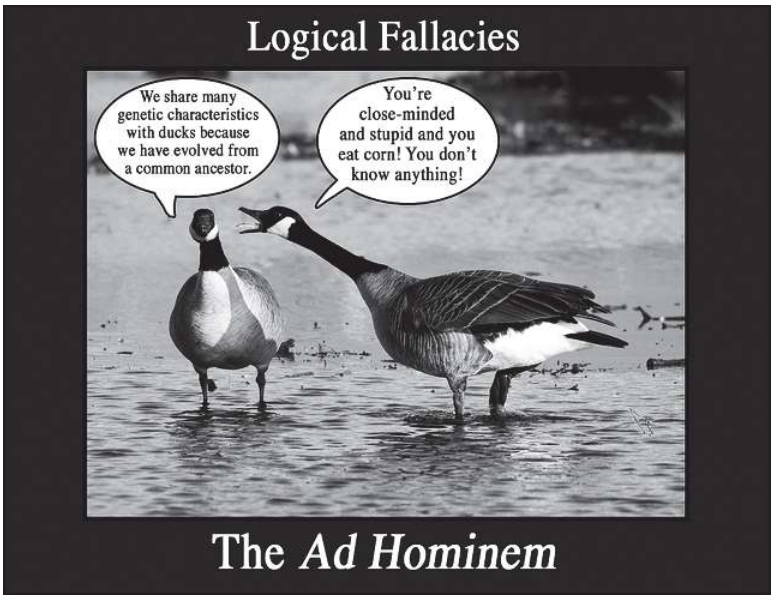

***Figure* 2.7.3.3** - *Photo credit: Mark Klotz via VisualHunt.com/CC BY-NC*

Irrelevant Material: The writer introduces irrelevant material to distract the audience from the subject at hand. Then, s/he draws conclusions based on the unrelated material presented.

Education is important for the future of the American people and our country. So, you should choose to study at St. Cloud State University.

Shifted Burden of Proof: The writer challenges those with an opposing view to defend their arguments; this puts the writer in a position in which s/he can deny the opposition's assertions.

The author writes that animals shouldn't be killed because they can feel pain, but he doesn't prove that they can. For his argument to persuade me, he has to give me positive empirical evidence of animals' ability to feel pain.

Straw Man: The writer does not attack the argument that the opposition sets forth. The arguer may attack one of the opposition's points as if it were the whole argument, distort what the opposition is attempting to express, or exaggerate the opposition's argument to the point of satirizing it.

Al Gore's support of the discussion of sexual orientation issues on Ellen is dangerous: he advocates the exposure of children to sexually explicit materials, which is wrong.

MISINFORMATION

Sometimes, writers present questionable or ambiguous reasons to sustain their arguments. A logical demonstration of a belief, however, must be conclusive and convincing to be effective; any doubtful premises leads the audience to believe that the conclusion is weak.

From Ignorance: The writer's argument is simply that the point has not been proven otherwise. The fact that the counterclaim has not been proven does not make a claim correct.

I believe in God because no one can prove that a god doesn't exist.

False Cause: The writer points out as the cause of an event something that is not the actual cause, or the writer has insufficient evidence for making a causal link. If the identified cause is not the real cause, nothing assures that the point of discussion is true.

Bush was "determined to knock down Saddam Hussein" because of his "nuclear bomb potential."

Note

Hussein did not have any nuclear weapons.

Questionable Premises: The writer's reasons for holding a belief are not as obvious to the audience as they are to the writer, and the writer does not back up the claim with enough support. This fallacy also occurs when the writer introduces an unsupported value judgment.

All judges are fair-minded individuals; therefore, Judge Ito is fair in his decisions.

Ambiguity of Terms/Equivocation: The writer uses two different senses of the same word in an argument, and this ambiguity allows a mistaken conclusion to be drawn by the writer.

It is immoral to kill an innocent human being. Fetuses are innocent human beings. Therefore, it is immoral to kill fetuses.

Note

In the first sentence, the writer uses "human being" in the sense of a morally considerable being. In the second, the writer could be using the term "human being" to make the less controversial claim that a fetus is a genetically human creature.

Simplifying: When restating the oppositions view, the writer mistakenly ignores information which is relevant to the conclusion reached by the opposition.

Freud argued that women have penis envy because they want to be men.

Presuppositions: The writer presupposes some information that supports his/her claim; the writer does not confirm the assumed material.

All students who study on this campus want more computers available for their use, so computer fees should be raised 50% to cover the costs of the expansion.

Hiding Information/Half Truth: The writer, consciously or unconsciously, establishes conclusions without stating all of the facts relevant to the situation.

The Geo Metro is a superior car because it averages 43 miles per gallon.

Note

The writer neglects to mention that this figure was derived in tests where the car was driven with 30 mile per hour tailwinds.

GENERALIZATION

Some writers stereotype and generalize their ideas to make a powerful statement. To construct effective logical arguments, writers must avoid generalizations; once an exception to a generalization is found, the argument that the generalization supports is discredited.

Popularity: The writer bases the argument on the belief that if an idea is held by a large group of people, it is true.

Millions of people are Marxists, so Marxist economic and political theories are correct.

Exception: The writer applies a general rule to a case where the rule is inapplicable.

A year is 365 days long, so I celebrate my birthday every 365 days.

Particular Experiences: The writer makes a rule out of particular experiences to support the claim. As soon as an exception to the derived rule is found, the rule fails to support the argument.

All Greek food causes illness; when I traveled through Greece, I got food poisoning.

Property in the Whole: The writer makes a claim based on the belief that a whole always possesses the characteristics of its parts, which is often untrue. Although this belief is sometimes acceptable, it is not universally applicable, so the appropriateness of using this idea must be determined on a case by case basis.

Since many of the students at St. Cloud State University get A's, St. Cloud State must be a top-rated school.

Property in the Parts: Often, a writer who makes the above fallacy will also commit this one. The writer erroneously assumes that because a whole has a particular property, the parts forming the whole have the same property.

IBM is a reputable organization, so all of its employees must be reputable.

False Alternative: The writer only presents some of the alternatives for solving a problem when more possibilities exist because the writer assumes that the list of alternatives created is exhaustive.

In the United States, one can vote for either Democrats or Republicans.

IRRELEVANT CONNECTIONS

Some writers' arguments fail not because of the information given, but because of the type of connections established between the parts of the argument. If the logical structures are not valid, the argument will fail, even if all of the premises are true and correct.

Consecutive Relation: The writer assumes that because two events occur consecutively or concurrently, they are causally related.

I believe in supernatural beings because every time I drive past the cemetery where my grandmother is buried, a light on my dashboard flashes. Her spirit causes this because it never happens otherwise.

Slippery Slope: The writer bases the claim on the assumption that if a particular event occurs, so will other undesirable events. However, there are no reasons to believe that the subsequent events will occur. This fallacy is usually caused by fear.

If we put limits on the right to bear arms, soon all of our Constitutionally-given rights will be taken away.

Two Wrongs Make a Right: The writer defends an action on the grounds that someone else has done something similar.

Residents of St. Cloud should not have to recycle plastics because those who live in Waite Park are not required to.

Wrong Analogy: The writer reasons by analogy, using a similar, known situation as the basis for the argument. Extended analogies tend to lose their direct connection with the actual topic of discussion, leading to erroneous conclusions.

Having a television rating system is like being in prison. Both infringe on one's rights.

Circular Reasoning: The writer defends the claim by using the conclusion as one of the premises to support the conclusion.

God exists because the Bible says so. The Bible is a reliable source because it is the word of God.

Affirmation of the Consequent: The writer uses an "If...then" statement in the argument's reasoning. Then, the writer confirms the then part of the statement and derives the "If" part, thereby committing a serious logical flaw.

If one is 16 years old or older, one can drive an automobile in Wisconsin. I saw your niece driving through Wausau yesterday. She must be at least 16.

Denial of the Antecedent: Again, the writer employs an "If...then" statement, but in this case, the writer denies the "If" part so that the negation of the then part can be concluded. However, just because the "If" part does not happen, it does not follow that the "then" part will not happen. The "then" part could result for some other reason.

If the ozone layer is destroyed, many people will get cancer and suffer from other illnesses. The ozone layer is being protected, not destroyed. So, many people will be spared the pain of cancer and other illnesses.

Sources

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2.7.4: The Basics of Argument

A Well-Defined Issue

What exactly is being argued in the paper? What is included or not included?

As a writer, it is your job to set parameters around your argument. Be sure to clearly explain the main argument of the paper. For example, if you were writing an anti-abortion paper, you might set the parameters around third trimester. This defines exactly what will be included and what will not be included. In this example, the paper is against third trimester abortions only, not abortion in general.

Compelling Evidence

What kinds of evidence are utilized in the paper? Is the evidence sound? Does it come from authoritative sources? Be sure to use reliable sources. Do not just Google the topic and grab the random information that may pop up. Google Advanced and Google Scholar help you filter some of the information, but be sure to evaluate the sources you choose. In addition, use journal articles when possible because they are usually written by authorities in a specific field. They will provide multiple sources for their information because they must cite their sources. Remember to include a variety of evidence, including facts, data, examples and subject matter expert opinion.

Much of this evidence is now accessed on the Internet. However, when using Internet sources, pay attention to the URL. What is the domain name? Is it a .edu, .net, .com, .org, .gov, .mil? How does this influence the information being provided? Also, be sure to examine further by answering the questions: Who is the author? What is the author's background?

A part of what makes your argument compelling is the variety of sources that you use and the credibility of those sources. You cannot win an argument with random information. Do not rely heavily upon a single source to carry your paper. A variety of sources shows that you have done your diligence as a writer and increases your credibility.

Refutation

Does the author anticipate the opposition’s main arguments? Is the author prepared with counterarguments and compelling evidence that can persuade the opposition to adopt a different view?

Refutation or rebuttal is incredibly important to your argument. You cannot write a one-sided argument.

You must first briefly identify an opposition’s point. Then immediately address it with counterarguments and compelling evidence. When writing an argument, expect that you will have opposition. Skeptical readers will have their own beliefs and points of view. When conducting your research, make sure to review the opposing side of the argument that you are presenting. You need to be prepared to counter those ideas. Remember, in order for people to give up their position, they must see how your position is more reasonable than their own. When you address the opposing point of view in your essay and demonstrate how your own claim is stronger, you neutralize their argument. By failing to address a non-coinciding view, you leave a reason for your reader to disagree with you, and therefore weaken your persuasive power. Methods of addressing the opposing side of the argument vary. You may choose to state your main points, then address and refute the opposition, and then conclude. Conversely, you might summarize the opposition’s views early in your argument, and then revisit them after you've presented your side or the argument. This will show how your information is more reasonable than their own.

As stated earlier, it is the opposition that you are trying to convince. So, how well you handle this section of your paper will determine its effectiveness as an argument.

Persona

What is the author’s attitude toward the topic? Is it hostile, sarcastic, irate, or reasonable? What kind of language and tone are being used? We touched on this when we talked about the ethical appeal. Your tone needs to be calm and reasonable. Your language needs to be honest, clear and respectful. Avoid aggressive, confrontational or biased language and tone. It is important to clearly state and support your position. However, it is just as important to present all of the information that you’ve gathered in an objective manner. Using language that is demeaning or non-objective will undermine the strength of your argument. This destroys your credibility and will reduce your audience on the spot. For example, a student writing an argument about why a particular

football team has a good chance of “going all the way” is making a strategic error by stating that “anyone who doesn't think that the Arizona Cardinals deserve to win the Super Bowl is a total idiot.” Not only has the writer risked alienating any number of her readers, she has also made her argument seem shallow and poorly researched. In addition, she has committed a third mistake: making a sweeping generalization that cannot be supported.”

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2.7.5: How to Write an Argument Essay

First, you need to determine what kind of argument you are writing. Are you writing a position paper? Sample topics would include illegal immigration, wolf protection programs, paying college athletes. Or, are you writing a solution paper, solving a problem? Sample topics include bullying, homelessness, pollution. Next, identify what you already know about this topic. Write a brief outline establishing what you want to argue on this topic. Establish the purpose of your argument. Establishing this before you start researching the topic will make it easier for you to determine what you need to cite in your paper. Next choose an appropriate format.

Organizing the Argument Essay

The two most common organization methods for the argument essay are as follows:

1. Block
2. Rebuttal Throughout - only works with pro/con topics

Block

I. Introduction & Thesis Statement

II. Background information - this section is necessary for solution arguments but sometimes unnecessary for position arguments.

- A. Define key words and terms that will help to define the parameters of your argument
- B. Provide background information. If I want to solve global warming, I first need to explain what it is and how it works, so I can show readers how my solution will fix it.
- C. Establish the severity of the problem. In real life, solutions cost money. If you want taxpayers to pay for it, you need to clearly establish that the problem is severe and must be addressed.

III. First claim: For death penalty because it will stop overcrowding

- A. Give statistics on overcrowding
- B. Give statistics on future problems if no solution is provided
- C. Explain how the process will help
- D. Explain how if appeal process is limited this will further help the situation
- E. Transition

IV. 2nd claim: For death penalty because it will stop repeat offenders

- A. Give statistics on repeat offenders who commit murder
- B. Give statistics if this is not stopped
- C. Explain how process would work if implemented
- D. Explain how this would also stop overcrowding because repeat offenders would not be imprisoned
- E. Transition

V. 3rd claim: for death penalty because it costs less money

- A. Give statistics on the cost of housing
- B. Compare that to the cost of a limited appeal process
- C. Explain how this will work if implemented
- D. Explain how this too relates to previous info
- E. Transition

VI. Rebuttal: Rebuttal of antideath penalty arguments

- A. List a few of the opposition's counterarguments (three)
- B. Take each one, one at a time, and supply statistics to prove it wrong, example would be to prove that innocent people won't be executed
- C. #2 Rebuttal: No other democracy uses it, their side, your side with statistics to prove them wrong
- D. #3 Rebuttal: Death penalty cheapens value of life: their side, your side with statistics to back it up.
- E. Transition

VII. Conclusion

Rebuttal Throughout

I. Introduction and thesis
II. First Rebuttal -Death penalty is barbaric
   A. Opposition's side
   B. Your rebuttal argument
   C. Statistics to support your side and prove them wrong
   D. Explanation of how this will help society
   E. Transition
III. 2nd rebuttal - death penalty no other democracy
   A. Opposition's side
   B. Your rebuttal argument
   C. Statistics to support your side and prove them wrong
   D. Explanation of how this will help society
   E. Transition
IV. 3rd rebuttal - killing innocent people
   A. Opposition's side
   B. Your rebuttal argument
   C. Statistics to support your side and prove them wrong
   D. Explanation of how this will help society
   E. Transition
V. Conclusion

From Prewriting to Rough Draft

The argument is often the most difficult of essays for students to begin. We are many times as unsure of our positions as we are of our reasons for our positions on controversial topics. "Because that's what I believe" is only the starting point. Explaining why you believe in your position is the task of the argument. In exploring a topic for a strong argument, solid reasons and sound evidence are keys to convincing your audience of your position. The following steps should help you work through the process of moving from belief to argument.

Step One

Choose a topic that you can argue either a position or a solution. For example, to argue a position would be to argue for or against something, like the death penalty. To argue a solution is to argue how to solve something, like how to solve the air pollution problem in Phoenix.

Example: The Effects of Political Correctness on Higher Education

Step Two

On a blank sheet of paper, write your topic down and at least five reasons in support of and five reasons against your topic. Or, if you are writing a solution paper, look at least five different solutions for the problem.

Step Three

See how the pros and cons relate. Decide which you want to write about. Do you want to focus on the pros or the cons? Pick the one you feel offers the most possibilities for exploration. Or, choose the solution that seems the most logical, the most doable.

Step Four

Freewrite. Look at Chapter 1 and follow the prewriting process.

Step Five

Transform your chosen topic into a "Guiding Question" and write it down. What is the main question that your essay will answer?

Example: What are three main effects of Political Correctness on Higher Education.

Step Six

Find a variety of initial sources to help you answer your guiding question. You must use these sources in your work either in a quote, paraphrase and/or summary.

- Use database sources and web pages. Be sure and turn in copies of your resources with your final paper. Print and annotate them. And keep them handy: many instructors will not accept any paper without the sources turned in as well.
- Create a Works Cited page from your sources.

Step Seven

Now that you have gathered your information and collected new information, create an outline of your paper.

Step Eight

Answer your "Guiding Question" directly with your thesis statement.

Example: Why are literary works being banned when their overall theme is positive? Because of over-zealous proponents of Political Correctness, once celebrated literary works like Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* are being banned despite their important universal themes.

Step Nine

Check your outline. Place your thesis at the top of the outline followed by the causes and/or effects: I. II. III. Under each main point, place two main specific points that will support the general topic sentence and the thesis. Use capital letters for the specific points.

Step Ten

Write the rough draft.

Step Eleven

Revise the rough draft using the tips in Chapter 4. If your instructor schedules a peer review, be present. You may also visit your college's writing center and work with a tutor. Revise again and edit your draft until you have a solid, well developed and unique argument.

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2.7.6: Sample Professional Essays

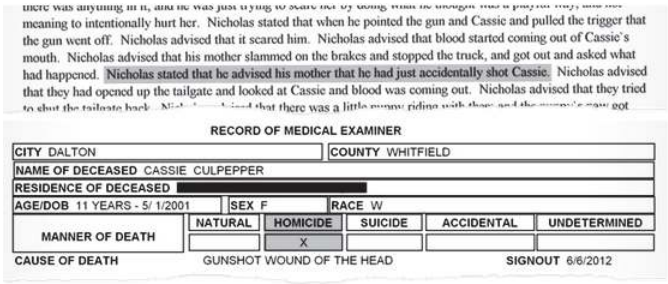
Children and Guns: The Hidden Toll

by Michael Luo and Mike McIntire

First published in The New York Times, Children and Guns: The Hidden Toll is an in-depth review of deaths and accidents involving children and guns and the gun lobby surrounding the tracking and reporting of these deaths. Michael Luo has worked at The New York Times since 2003. He leads a team of metro reporters focused on investigations and long-form narratives. In 2016, his reporters were finalists for the Pulitzer Prize in three categories: investigative reporting, local reporting and feature writing. Team member Mike McIntire is an award-winning investigative reporter and editor. He teaches investigative reporting at New York University's Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute.

The .45-caliber pistol that killed Lucas Heagren, 3, on Memorial Day last year at his Ohio home had been temporarily hidden under the couch by his father. But Lucas found it and shot himself through the right eye. "It's bad," his mother told the 911 dispatcher. "It's really bad."

A few days later in Georgia, Cassie Culpepper, 11, was riding in the back of a pickup with her 12-year-old brother and two other children. Her brother started playing with a pistol his father had lent him to scare coyotes. Believing he had removed all the bullets, he pointed the pistol at his sister and squeezed the trigger. It fired, and blood poured from Cassie's mouth.


meaning to intentionally hurt her. Nicholas stated that when he pointed the gun and Cassie and pulled the trigger that the gun went off. Nicholas advised that it scared him. Nicholas advised that blood started coming out of Cassie's mouth. Nicholas advised that his mother slammed on the brakes and stopped the truck, and got out and asked what had happened. Nicholas stated that he advised his mother that he had just accidentally shot Cassie. Nicholas advised that they had opened up the tailgate and looked at Cassie and blood was coming out. Nicholas advised that they tried

RECORD OF MEDICAL EXAMINER

CITY DALTON			COUNTY WHITFIELD		
NAME OF DECEASED CASSIE CULPEPPER					
RESIDENCE OF DECEASED [redacted]					
AGE/DOB 11 YEARS - 5/ 1/2001	SEX F	RACE W			
MANNER OF DEATH	NATURAL	HOMICIDE	SUICIDE	ACCIDENTAL	UNDETERMINED
		X			
CAUSE OF DEATH	GUNSHOT WOUND OF THE HEAD			SIGNOUT 6/6/2012	

The police investigation report in the Cassie Culpepper case indicates that her brother, Nicholas, shot her accidentally. But the state medical examiner classified her death as a homicide, a common practice for unintentional firearm deaths in which one person shoots another.

Just a few weeks earlier, in Houston, a group of youths found a Glock pistol in an apartment closet while searching for snack money. A 15-year-old boy was handling the gun when it went off. Alex Whitfield, who had just turned 11, was struck. A relative found the bullet in his ashes from the funeral home.

Cases like these are among the most gut-wrenching of gun deaths. Children shot accidentally — usually by other children — are collateral casualties of the accessibility of guns in America, their deaths all the more devastating for being eminently preventable.

They die in the households of police officers and drug dealers, in broken homes and closeknit families, on rural farms and in city apartments. Some adults whose guns were used had tried to store them safely; others were grossly negligent. Still others pulled the trigger themselves, accidentally fracturing their own families while cleaning a pistol or hunting.

And there are far more of these innocent victims than official records show.

A New York Times review of hundreds of child firearm deaths found that accidental shootings occurred roughly twice as often as the records indicate, because of idiosyncrasies in how such deaths are classified by the authorities. The killings of Lucas, Cassie and Alex, for instance, were not recorded as accidents. Nor were more than half of the 259 accidental firearm deaths of children under age 15 identified by The Times in eight states where records were available.

As a result, scores of accidental killings are not reflected in the official statistics that have framed the debate over how to protect children from guns.

The National Rifle Association cited the lower official numbers this year in a fact sheet opposing "safe storage" laws, saying children were more likely to be killed by falls, poisoning or environmental factors — an incorrect assertion if the actual number of accidental firearm deaths is significantly higher.

In all, fewer than 20 states have enacted laws to hold adults criminally liable if they fail to store guns safely, enabling children to access them.

Legislative and other efforts to promote the development of childproof weapons using “smart gun” technology have similarly stalled. Technical issues have been an obstacle, but so have N.R.A. arguments that the problem is relatively insignificant and the technology unneeded.

Because of maneuvering in Congress by the gun lobby and its allies, firearms have also been exempted from regulation by the Consumer Product Safety Commission since its inception.

Even with a proper count, intentional shooting deaths of children — including gang shootings and murder-suicides by family members — far exceed accidental gun deaths. But accidents, more than the other firearm-related deaths, come with endless hypotheticals about what could have been done differently.

The rifle association’s lobbying arm recently posted on its Web site a claim that adult criminals who mishandle firearms — as opposed to law-abiding gun owners — are responsible for most fatal accidents involving children. But The Times’s review found that a vast majority of cases revolved around children’s access to firearms, with the shooting either self-inflicted or done by another child.

A common theme in the cases examined by The Times, in fact, was the almost magnetic attraction of firearms among boys. In all but a handful of instances, the shooter was male. Boys also accounted for more than 80 percent of the victims.

Time and again, boys could not resist handling a gun, disregarding repeated warnings by adults and, sometimes, their own sense that they were doing something wrong.

When Joshua Skorczewski, 11, took an unloaded 20-gauge shotgun out of the family gun cabinet in western Minnesota on July 28, 2008, it was because he was excited about going to a gun safety class that night and wanted to practice.

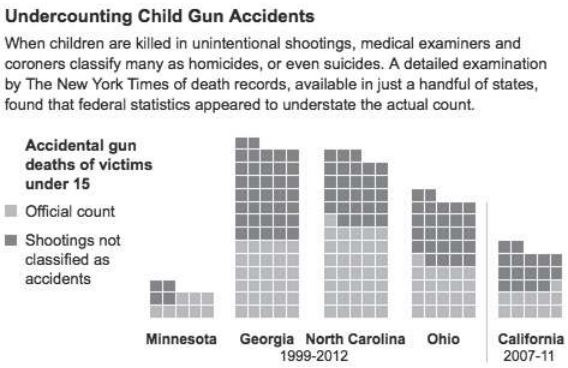
But for reasons that he later struggled to explain to the police, Joshua loaded a single shell into the gun and pulled the hammer back. He decided he should put the gun back, but his finger slipped. It fired, killing his 12-year-old sister, Natasha, who was standing in the kitchen with him. When his mother called from work to check on them, a shaken Joshua told her he had just called 911: “Mom, I shot Tasha.”

Christina Wenzel, the mother of Alex Whitfield, had tried to make sure he did not visit anyone’s house if guns were present. What she did not know, when Alex went to his father’s apartment last April, was that a family member had stored three loaded guns there.

“I always thought I had Alex protected from being killed by another child by a gun that was not secured,” Ms. Wenzel said. “Unfortunately, I was mistaken.”

Undercounting Deaths

Compiling a complete census of accidental gun deaths of children is difficult, because most states do not consider death certificate data a matter of public record. In a handful of states, however, the information is publicly available. Using these death records as a guide, along with hundreds of medical examiner and coroner reports and police investigative files, The Times sought to identify every accidental firearm death of a child age 14 and under in Georgia, Minnesota, North Carolina and Ohio dating to 1999, and in California to 2007. Records were also obtained from several county medical examiners’ offices in Florida, Illinois and Texas.



The goal, in the end, was an in-depth portrait of accidental firearm deaths of children, one that would shed light on how such killings occur and might be prevented. In all, The Times cataloged 259 gun accidents that killed children ages 14 and younger. The youngest was just 9 months old, shot in his crib.

In four of the five states — California, Georgia, North Carolina and Ohio — The Times identified roughly twice as many accidental killings as were tallied in the corresponding federal data. In the fifth, Minnesota, there were 50 percent more accidental gun deaths. (The Times excluded some fatal shootings, like pellet gun accidents, that are normally included in the federal statistics.)

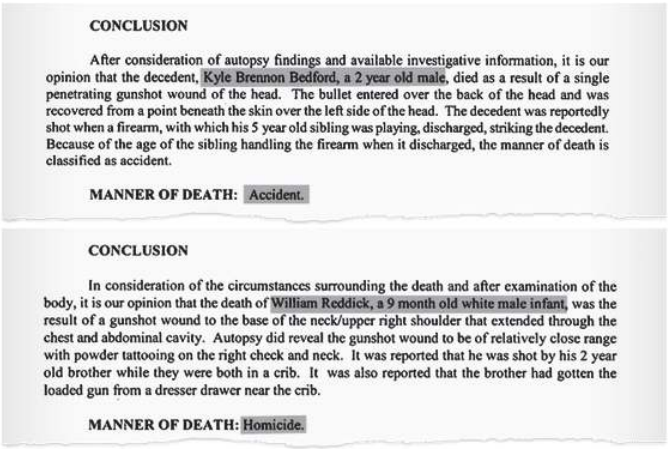
The undercount stems from the peculiarities by which medical examiners and coroners make their "manner of death" rulings. These pronouncements, along with other information entered on death certificates, are the basis for the nation's mortality statistics, which are assembled by the National Center for Health Statistics, a division of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Choosing among five options — homicide, accidental, suicide, natural or undetermined — most medical examiners and coroners simply call any death in which one person shoots another a homicide.

"A homicide just means they died at the hands of another," said Dr. Randy L. Hanzlick, the chief medical examiner for Fulton County, Ga. "It doesn't really connote there's an intent to kill."

These rulings can be wildly inconsistent.

In Bexar County, Tex., for example, the medical examiner's office issued a finding of homicide in the death of William Reddick, a 9-month-old who was accidentally killed on May 17, 1999, when his 2- year-old brother opened a dresser drawer while in the crib with him, grabbed a pistol and pulled the trigger.

But the next year, when Kyle Bedford, 2, was killed by his 5-year-old brother, who had found a gun on a closet shelf, the same office classified the death as an accident.



CONCLUSION

After consideration of autopsy findings and available investigative information, it is our opinion that the decedent, Kyle Brennon Bedford, a 2 year old male, died as a result of a single penetrating gunshot wound of the head. The bullet entered over the back of the head and was recovered from a point beneath the skin over the left side of the head. The decedent was reportedly shot when a firearm, with which his 5 year old sibling was playing, discharged, striking the decedent. Because of the age of the sibling handling the firearm when it discharged, the manner of death is classified as accident.

MANNER OF DEATH: Accident.

CONCLUSION

In consideration of the circumstances surrounding the death and after examination of the body, it is our opinion that the death of William Reddick, a 9 month old white male infant, was the result of a gunshot wound to the base of the neck/upper right shoulder that extended through the chest and abdominal cavity. Autopsy did reveal the gunshot wound to be of relatively close range with powder tattooing on the right check and neck. It was reported that he was shot by his 2 year old brother while they were both in a crib. It was also reported that the brother had gotten the loaded gun from a dresser drawer near the crib.

MANNER OF DEATH: Homicide.

The circumstances behind the accidental shooting deaths of Kyle Bedford and William Reddick were similar. But the Bexar County Medical Examiner's Office ruled one was a homicide and the other was an accident, highlighting just how inconsistent these pronouncements can be.

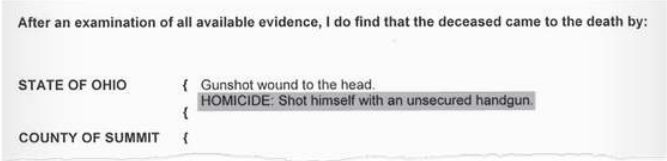
Even self-inflicted shootings that are clearly accidental, like that of Lucas Heagren in Ohio, can wind up classified as homicides.

Lucas's father, Joshua Heagren, had tried to teach the 3-year-old to respect firearms. The boy had gotten a .22 rifle for Christmas, and his father showed him how to fire it. But he also warned him to handle it only when an adult was present.

"He never even attempted to touch guns when Josh wasn't around," Lucas's mother, Kaitlin Campbell, testified at Mr. Heagren's trial, where he was convicted of negligent homicide and endangering children. "He knew."

On the day of the accident, Mr. Heagren had been planning to go out shooting, so he took his pistol from the bedroom, where he normally kept it in a holster between the mattress and the box spring, according to his court testimony. When Ms. Campbell and Lucas returned from buying an inflatable swimming pool, Mr. Heagren slid his gun under the couch before heading outside to set up the pool.

At some point, with his mother distracted by her phone a few steps away, Lucas discovered the gun, grabbed the butt and squeezed the trigger with his thumbs, according to the authorities.


After an examination of all available evidence, I do find that the deceased came to the death by:

STATE OF OHIO { Gunshot wound to the head.
HOMICIDE: Shot himself with an unsecured handgun.
{
COUNTY OF SUMMIT {

Even cases in which children accidentally shoot themselves can wind up being classified as homicides, as shown in this Summit County Medical Examiner's report on the death of Lucas Heagren.

"Our thought process was, parents have a duty to keep their child safe," said Dr. Lisa Kohler, the Summit County medical examiner, whose office classified the case as a homicide. "Leaving a loaded weapon in an area where the child can easily access it is neglect in our mind. Therefore parents have failed to keep a child safe, and therefore it's a homicide."

Dr. Kohler said that because of the neglect issue, her office would almost never classify a firearm-related death as accidental, but added, "Different jurisdictions are going to handle things differently."

Bob Anderson, the chief of the mortality statistics branch at the National Center for Health Statistics, explained that the federal data on firearm deaths are "only as good as the information that comes in."

"I try to tell people when they look at the accidental data, particularly for children, you have to recognize it's an underestimate," he said.

A few public health researchers have noted the undercount in the past, based on their own academic studies. (One study found the opposite phenomenon — an overcount — among fatal gun accidents involving adults because of a different quirk in the data.) To get more accurate information about firearm deaths, researchers have pushed for the expansion of the National Violent Death Reporting System.

The effort first started in the 1990s at the C.D.C. but was shut down shortly afterward when Congress, at the urging of the N.R.A., blocked firearms-related research at the centers. The project was revived in 2002 after researchers decided to expand its scope beyond guns, but it is up and running in only 18 states. President Obama has called for increased financing for the program, part of a package of gun-related proposals made after the school shooting in Newtown, Conn., last December.

Another important aspect of firearm accidents is that a vast majority of victims do not die. Tracking these injuries nationally, however, is arguably just as problematic as tallying fatalities, according to public health researchers. In fact, national figures often cited from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Web site are an estimate, projected from a sampling taken from hospital emergency departments. Nevertheless, in 2011, the most recent year with available data, the agency estimated that there were 847 unintentional nonfatal firearm injuries among children 14 and under.

More concrete are actual counts of emergency department visits, which are available in a small number of states. In North Carolina, for instance, there were more than 120 such visits for nonfatal gun accidents among children 17 and under in 2010, the most recent year for which data is available.

A Failed Lock

On a hot and humid August afternoon last year in Hinesville, Ga., Matthew Underhill, a staff sergeant in the Army, was mowing the lawn while his wife, Tessa, was in the house watching television with their 5-year-old son, Matthew. Their other son, Tristan, 2,

was scampering down a hallway toward the bedrooms.

It had been a good day for Tristan. He had used the potty for the first time. He and his mother had danced a little jig. Down the hall, Tristan entered the bedroom where his father had been staying because of quarrels with his wife. She had chided her husband in the past for forgetting to safely store his .45-caliber handgun. But he had recently put a lock on his door to keep out his wife and children. He thought he had locked the door before going out to cut the grass.

The lock, though, had failed to catch. Tristan found the loaded gun under the pillow on his father's bed. He pointed it at his own forehead and pulled the trigger. Hearing the gunshot, Sergeant Underhill sprinted inside to find Tristan face down on the bed, the gun beneath him. When he called 911, the sergeant was screaming so hysterically that the dispatcher initially mistook him for a woman.

"My 2-year-old just shot himself in the head," he said breathlessly. "He's dead."

Tristan's death underscored several themes running through the cases examined by The Times.

While about 60 percent of the accidental firearm deaths identified by The Times involved handguns as opposed to long guns, that number was much higher — more than 85 percent — when the victims were very young, under the age of 6. In fact, the average handgun victim was several years younger than long gun victims: between 7 and 8, compared with almost 11.

Over all, the largest number of deaths came at the upper end of the age range, with ages 13 and 14 being most common — not necessarily surprising, given that parents generally allow adolescents greater access to guns. But the third-most common age was 3 (tied with 12), a particularly vulnerable age, when children are curious and old enough to manipulate a firearm but ignorant of the dangers.

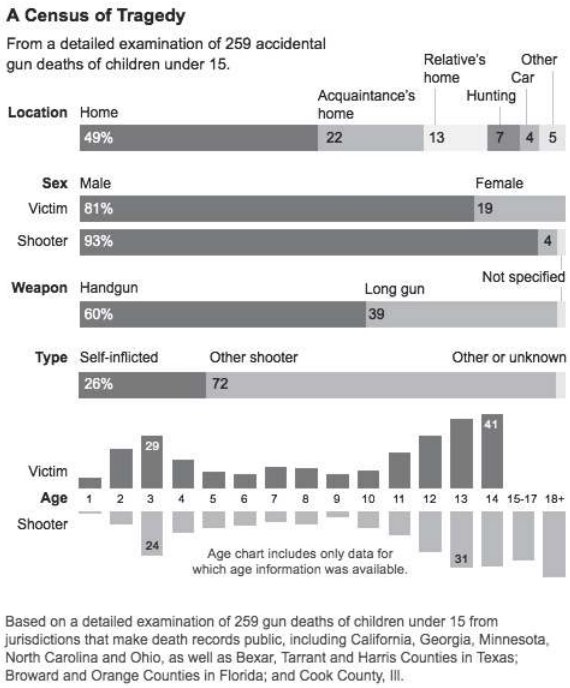
About a quarter of the victims shot themselves, with younger children again especially susceptible. More than half of the self-inflicted shootings involved children 5 or under; the most common age was 3.

About half of the accidents took place inside the child's home. A third, however, occurred at the house of a friend or a relative, pointing to a potential vulnerability if safe-storage laws apply only to households with children, as in North Carolina.

In opposing safe-storage laws, some gun rights advocates have argued that a majority of accidental shootings of children are committed by adults with criminal backgrounds. The Times's review found that was not the case — children were most often the shooters — and that the families involved came from all walks of life.

On Dec. 1, 2006, Beth Dwyer was getting her two boys, ages 5 and 8, ready for school. Her husband, Daron, the minister of music at the family's church in Gastonia, N.C., was not home because he had enrolled in a seminary several hours away. The night before, Ms. Dwyer had taken the family's .25-caliber handgun from the top drawer of a dresser and placed it next to her on the bed. In the morning, she forgot to put it away.

Her 8-year-old found the gun. He initially tried to cock it and pulled the trigger, pointing the gun at the bathroom floor, but nothing happened, according to the medical examiner's report. Evidently thinking the gun was empty, he tried again, pointing the gun at his brother, Matthew, who was crouched on the bathroom counter, having just finished brushing his teeth. This time, with a live round in the chamber, the gun went off, and Matthew toppled to the floor, shot through the forehead.



Even in accidental shootings where criminals were in some way involved, they usually were not the ones pulling the trigger. Rather, they — like many law-abiding adults in these cases — simply left a gun unsecured.

As a felon, Anthony Wise was not supposed to have a firearm. But he was able to buy a .38 Special revolver on the street for $30. He had it in his ex-girlfriend's apartment in Venice, Ill., on Jan. 29, 2007, when he left it next to a computer in the living room and went to another room. Within minutes, a 4-year-old boy, one of several small children in the apartment, picked up the gun and pointed it at his 2-year-old cousin, Timberlyn Terrell. The gun fired. The boy later told an investigator what happened next.

"Blood came out of her forehead," the boy said, according to a transcript of the interview. He then said he did not want to talk about it anymore and asked for "my mama."

Timberlyn died. Mr. Wise was convicted of felony firearm possession, but his 10-year federal prison sentence was based in part on the judge's determination that he had also endangered a child with his negligence.

"Wise would have been a felon in possession even had he possessed the gun in a more responsible way — say, if he had kept it unloaded in a locked cabinet, or if he had kept it unloaded with a trigger lock," an appellate judge wrote in rejecting his bid for leniency. "More than likely, though, responsible possession would not have endangered the lives of children."

Safety vs. Self-Defense

The impact of the undercount of accidental gun deaths emerges in stark relief in the statehouse battles over gun-storage laws.

In state after state and often with considerable success, gun rights groups have cited the federal numbers as proof that the problem is nearly inconsequential and that storage laws are unnecessary. Gun Owners of America says on its Web site that children are "130 percent more likely to die from choking on their dinner" than from accidental shootings.

In February 2012, the rifle association issued a member alert about a proposed safe-storage law in Washington State, arguing that shootings are "at the bottom of the list of causes of accidental harm to children." The group accused State Senator Adam Kline, who introduced the measure, of being interested only in "making life miserable for law-abiding gun owners." The legislation never made it out of committee.

Under the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention figures, in fact, gun accidents were the ninth-leading cause of unintentional deaths among children ages 1 to 14 in 2010. (The agency reported 62 such killings that year.) If the actual numbers are, in fact, roughly double, however, gun accidents would rise into the top five or six.

Gun rights groups have certainly called on gun owners to safely store their firearms. The National Shooting Sports Foundation says that it has distributed 36 million free firearm safety kits and that manufacturers have shipped 60 million locks with guns sold since 1998. But the groups argue that requiring gun owners to lock up their weapons could make it harder to use them for self-protection.

The rifle association and its allies also often note that studies on the impact of safe-storage laws have found mixed results. But those studies are based on the flawed government statistics.

“When we’re evaluating child access laws, we’re using total trash data,” said Catherine Barber, a researcher at the Injury Control Research Center of the Harvard School of Public Health.

Getting a definitive count of the number of states with a safe-storage law is difficult, but The Times identified only 18, using information from the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence and researchers who have studied the laws. And in most of those states, charges can be brought only if the child uses the weapon in a threatening manner, injures someone with it or displays it in public.

Even so, in one state, North Carolina, where the law is narrowly drawn to apply only to adults with minors living at home, the authorities charged about 150 people between June 2006 and June 2011, an analysis of court records shows.

Jodi Sandoval of Ohio discovered the limits of her state’s laws after her 14-year-old son, Noah McGuire, was accidentally killed on July 5, 2012, in a suburb of Columbus.

Noah had slept over at the home of his close friend Levi Reed, who lived with his grandparents. In the morning, with no adults around, the boys went looking for a lighter to set off some fireworks. Instead, they found a .45-caliber handgun behind a television in a bedroom, one of three guns that Levi’s grandfather later told the police he had kept there for protection.

Though his grandfather had always admonished him never to handle the weapons, Levi, 14, removed the magazine, pointed the gun at his friend and pulled the trigger. He did not realize that a round had remained in the chamber.

Levi was recently sentenced in juvenile court to 12 months of probation for reckless homicide, a felony. Ms. Sandoval strongly opposed the prosecution, telling the court at Levi’s sentencing that the adults who failed to properly secure the gun were the ones who should be punished. But there is no safe-storage law in Ohio.

“There are no accidents,” Ms. Sandoval said. “There are simply irresponsible, stubborn, cowardly adults unwilling to stand up against the gun lobby and those who support it.”

A safe-storage bill was introduced in the Ohio legislature in February, prompted by a shooting that killed three students at a high school in suburban Cleveland. But the measure, which would prohibit storing a firearm in a residence in a place readily accessible to a child, has encountered skepticism from the Republicans who control the legislature.

“The tenor was, somebody breaks in, do I have time enough to get to my gun?” said State Representative Bill Patmon, a Democrat who introduced the bill.

A similar measure introduced in Louisiana this year also went nowhere.

The N.R.A. has long argued that better education is the key to preventing gun accidents, citing its Eddie Eagle GunSafe program, which teaches children as young as 3 that if they see a gun, they should “stop, don’t touch, leave the area and tell an adult.” The association, which did not respond to a request for comment, says its program has reached more than 26 million children in all 50 states and should be credited for the deep decline in accidental gun deaths shown in federal statistics dating to the mid-1980s.

Beyond the unreliability of the federal data, public health experts have disputed the N.R.A.’s claims, pointing to other potential explanations for the decline, including improvements in emergency medical care, along with data showing fewer households with firearms. They also highlight research indicating that admonishing children to stay away from guns is often ineffective.

“I have no problem with that message, and I would hope every child in America could follow it,” said Dr. Arthur Kellermann, a co-author of a study published in 2001 in the journal Pediatrics. “I just know that they won’t.”

As part of Dr. Kellermann’s study, researchers watched through a one-way mirror as pairs of boys ages 8 to 12 were left alone in an examination room at a clinic in Atlanta. Unknown to the children, an inoperative .38-caliber handgun was concealed in a cabinet drawer.

Playing and exploring over the next 15 minutes, one boy after another — three-quarters of the 64 children — found the gun. Two-thirds handled it, and one-third actually pulled the trigger. Just one child went to tell an adult about the gun, and he was teased by

his peers for it. More than 90 percent of the boys said they had had some gun safety instruction.

Other research has found that simply having a firearm in the household is correlated with an increased risk of accidental shooting death. In one study, published in 2003 in the journal Accident Analysis and Prevention, the risk was more than three times as high for one gun, and almost four times as high for more than one.

As a solution, many behavioral researchers advocate greater emphasis on child-proofing firearms, along with safe-storage laws. But requiring, or even encouraging, efforts to introduce “smart gun” technology remains unpopular with the gun lobby, which has worked to undermine such research and attempts to regulate firearms as a dangerous consumer product.

In 2000, after President Bill Clinton proposed spending $10 million to help develop a gun that could be fired only by its owner, the rifle association ran derisory radio ads. One, called “Mad Scientist,” featured a Clinton impersonator and a bumbling scientist “deep in the White House laboratory,” trying in vain to get the new technology to work.

A commercially successful smart gun has, in fact, proved difficult to develop. Hurdles include creating fail-safe user-recognition technology, integrating delicate electronic components that can withstand shock from repeated firings, and allaying concerns of manufacturers fearful of liability if a supposedly safe gun was to fail.

Technologies exist, but a lack of research financing has hobbled their progress to the market, as have questions about whether consumers would actually want them. The opposition from gun rights advocates has certainly not helped. Some gun control advocates, meanwhile, fear that such technologies would lead to greater acceptance of firearms in the home.

In the mid-2000s, an Australian defense technology company called Metal Storm teamed with the gun maker Taurus International Manufacturing and the New Jersey Institute of Technology to develop a gun in the United States that would have fired only when gripped by its owner. New Jersey became the first state to require that handguns use smart-gun technology within three years after it is deemed safe and commercially available.

But Taurus backed out within a few months, citing competing priorities, and the project fell apart. Charles Vehlow, Metal Storm’s chief executive at the time, said that while he did not know exactly what pressures Taurus faced, there was a general wariness of smart-gun efforts among manufacturers and pro-gun groups.

“There was no question that the N.R.A. was very sensitive and was aware of what we were doing,” he said.

The Colt’s Manufacturing Company and Smith & Wesson experienced a backlash against their own smart-gun programs, which were abandoned amid financial problems caused, in part, by boycotts from gun groups and others in the industry. So unpopular was the whole smart-gun concept that Colt’s Manufacturing later could not even find a buyer for its patents, said Carlton Chen, a former lawyer for the company.

“I think people looked at Colt’s, they looked at the boycott and they looked at Smith & Wesson, and they thought, ‘Do we really want to go it alone?’ ” Mr. Chen said. “Gun companies have to be fairly careful about what they do.”

Gun rights lobbyists have also helped keep firearms and ammunition beyond the reach of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, which has the power to regulate other products that are dangerous to children. The N.R.A. argues that the commission would provide a back door for gun control advocates to restrict the manufacture of firearms. Proponents of regulation say guns pose too great a hazard to exclude them from scrutiny.

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A Complex Relationship

A few months ago, Daron Dwyer took his 14-year-old son shooting for the first time, six years after he accidentally killed his brother with the gun he found in his parents’ North Carolina bedroom.

Mr. Dwyer had removed all the guns from the house, sending them to his father. But about a year ago, his son started asking if he could learn to shoot. Mr. Dwyer said he would think about it.

It was a question that Mr. Dwyer, who now works as a fitness director at a Y.M.C.A., knew would come. Relatives would often go shooting together during family gatherings. His son was fascinated by all things military. Guns were simply a part of life where they were from. “In my context, there’s a part of a young man’s growing-up experience that includes exposure to firearms,” Mr. Dwyer said. “That’s one of the responsibilities, like learning how to drive a car.”

Mr. Dwyer also saw an opportunity for forgiveness. “It’s kind of a tangible expression of the reality of ‘I do not hold this against you,’ ” he said.

So, alone in the Tennessee woods with his son this past spring, Mr. Dwyer watched him fire a .22 rifle a few times, and a 12-gauge shotgun. In the shattering of the stillness of the forest clearing, both sensed the import of the moment.

“I’m a quietly emotional person usually,” Mr. Dwyer said. “And so I didn’t burst into tears or anything, but inside that’s exactly what it was, mostly in the sense of me wanting him to realize this whole thing of forgiveness, to really feel the impact of the weight lifted, which I think he did.”

Mr. Dwyer’s feelings on guns today are complicated. He still firmly believes in “the right for people to defend themselves.” At the same time, he said: “It is also right to protect children from danger. Those are things you have to hold in tension.”

Under North Carolina law, his wife could have been charged for failing to keep the gun that killed their younger son stored safely. But she was not. Mr. Dwyer described her mistake as a momentary mental lapse, not blatant negligence. And he said that while he agreed with the law in principle, he also had sympathy for the objections to it.

“For defense at night,” he said, “I don’t think you should have to have a lock on it because you’re going to have to access it quickly.”

The deep hold that guns have on American culture also emerges in interviews with several other parents who lost children to firearms accidents.

In the summer of 2009, Joshua Skorczewski finally completed the gun safety classes he had been planning to attend a year before, the night he accidentally killed his sister in Minnesota. His parents thought that it would be good for him to be schooled on safety, that the training would be helpful, “so he would not be afraid of guns,” said his mother, Wendy Skorczewski.

Ms. Skorczewski had once planned to go through the classes too, but later decided against it. “I don’t want nothing to do with them anymore,” she said.

For two years after Joshua went through the training, the family’s rifles and shotguns remained locked away. Joshua and his father returned to bowhunting, but it was not until 2011 that they took out the shotguns again to hunt pheasants.

Ms. Skorczewski explained that in her part of the country, hunting is “in your blood.” She knew she could not ask her husband to get rid of his guns. He needs the escape that hunting provides, she said: “You got to have something to do in your life other than work.”

Tessa Underhill, whose son Tristan was killed last year in Georgia, has also struggled over where to draw the line. As a former corrections officer and Army veteran, she is no stranger to firearms. She used to enjoy going out shooting. Now she is finished with guns, refusing to allow them in her house.

“My child living is more important to me than somebody stealing my flat screen,” she said.

She knows, however, that her husband, whom she is in the process of divorcing, still has a rifle. Her other son, Matthew, now 6, is therefore still exposed to firearms. When asked if she would want Matthew to go shooting with his father one day or be a gun owner himself, she paused.

“That’s a hard question,” she said. “I know that’s something men do, that fathers and sons do.” “

“You need to know how to use one,” she added. “Do I want him to have a gun case full of guns? If he keeps them unloaded and is safe about it.”

Griff Palmer contributed reporting

Questions for Discussion and Analysis

Answer the following questions regarding the essay. Be complete in your explanations, and cite examples or quotes in support of your answer. Use complete sentences with proper grammar, spelling and punctuation.

1. At the beginning of the article, the authors use three examples of gun accidents involving children. What purpose do these stories serve?
2. What is the main reason tracking gun accidents accurately is a problem? What is a secondary reason?
3. What are two examples of safe-storage laws being considered and **why** are they opposed by **which** groups?
4. What are some of the authors' most compelling statistics?
5. Is this a biased article? Explain your answer.

Death and Justice

by Edward I. Koch

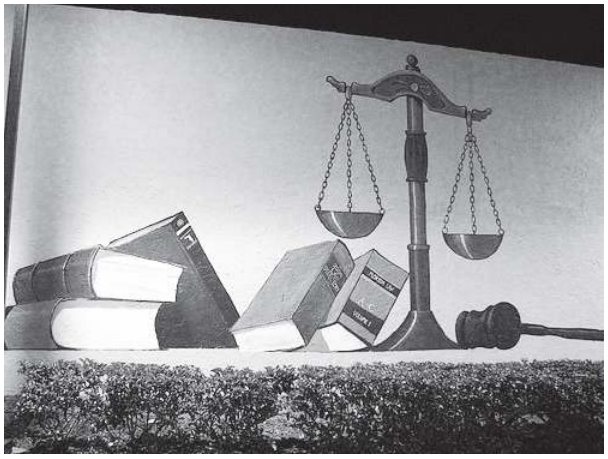

Photo credit: srqpix via VisualHunt.com/CC BY

Following a stint in the U.S. House of Representatives, controversial and outspoken Edward I. Koch (1924-) served as mayor of New York City from 1977 to 1989. He was elected after campaigning on an anti-crime and anti-spending platform. Koch, who now presides over a popular TV courtroom show, has written two autobiographical books, Mayor (1984) and Politics (1985). He also co-authored the book His Eminence and Hizzoner (1989) with the equally controversial John Cardinal O'Connor. The following essay was published in the New Republic in 1985.

Last December [1984] a man named Robert Lee Willie, who had been convicted of raping and murdering an 18-year-old woman, was executed in the Louisiana state prison. In a statement issued several minutes before his death, Mr. Willie said: "Killing people is wrong...It makes no difference whether it's citizens, countries, or governments. Killing is wrong." Two weeks later in South Carolina, an admitted killer named Joseph Carl Shaw was put to death for murdering two teenagers. In an appeal to the governor for clemency, Mr. Shaw wrote: "Killing is wrong when I did it. Killing is wrong when you do it. I hope you have the courage and moral strength to stop the killing."

It is a curiosity of modern life that we find ourselves being lectured on morality by cold-blooded killers. Mr. Willie previously had been convicted of aggravated rape, aggravated kidnapping, and the murders of a Louisiana deputy and a man from Missouri. Mr. Shaw committed another murder a week before the two for which he was executed, and admitted mutilating the body of the 14-year-old girl he killed. I can't help wondering what prompted these murderers to speak out against killing as they entered the death-house door. Did their newfound reverence for life stem from the realization that they were about to lose their own?

Life is indeed precious, and I believe the death penalty helps to affirm this fact. Had the death penalty been a real possibility in the minds of these murderers, they might well have stayed their hand. They might have shown moral awareness before their victims died, and not after. Consider the tragic death of Rosa Velez, who happened to be home when a man named Luis Vera burglarized her apartment in Brooklyn. "Yeah, I show her," Vera admitted. "She knew me, and I knew I wouldn't go to the chair."

During my 22 years in public service, I have heard the pros and cons of capital punishment expressed with special intensity. As a district leader, councilman, congressman, and mayor, I have represented constituencies generally thought of as liberal. Because I support the death penalty for heinous crimes of murder, I have sometimes been the subject of emotional and outraged attacks by voters who find my position reprehensible or worse. I have listened to their ideas. I have weighed their objections carefully. I still support the death penalty. The reasons I maintained my position can be best understood by examining the arguments most frequently heard in opposition.

1. The death penalty is "barbaric." Sometimes opponents of capital punishment horrify us with tales of lingering death on the gallows, of faulty electric chairs, or of agony in the gas chamber. Partly in response to such protests, several states such as North Carolina and Texas switched to execution by lethal injection. The condemned person is put to death painlessly, without ropes, voltage, bullets, or gas. Did this answer the objections of death penalty opponents? Of course not. On June 22, 1984, the New York Times published an editorial that sarcastically attacked the new "hygienic" method of death by injection, and stated that "execution can never be made humane through science." So it's not the method that really troubles opponents. It's the death itself they consider barbaric.

Admittedly, capital punishment is not a pleasant topic. However, one does not have to like the death penalty in order to support it any more than one must like radical surgery, radiation, or chemotherapy in order to find necessary these attempts at curing cancer. Ultimately we may learn how to cure cancer with a simple pill. Unfortunately, that day has not yet arrived. Today we are faced with the choice of letting the cancer spread or trying to cure it with the methods available, methods that one day will almost certainly be considered barbaric. But to give up and do nothing would be far more barbaric and would certainly delay the discovery of an eventual cure. The analogy between cancer and murder is imperfect, because murder is not the "disease" we are trying to cure. The disease is injustice. We may not like the death penalty, but it must be available to punish crimes of coldblooded murder, cases in which any other form of punishment would be inadequate and, therefore, unjust. If we create a society in which injustice is not tolerated, incidents of murder – the most flagrant form of injustice – will diminish.

2. No other major democracy uses the death penalty. No other major democracy – in fact, few other countries of any description – are plagued by a murder rate such as that in the United States. Fewer and fewer Americans can remember the days when unlocked doors were the norm and murder was a rare and terrible offense. In American the murder rate climbed 122 percent between 1963 and 1980. During that same period, the murder rate in New York City increased by almost 400 percent, and the statistics are even worse in many other cities. A study at M.I.T. showed that based on 1970 homicide rates a person who lived in a large American city ran a greater risk of being murdered than an American soldier in World War II ran of being killed in combat. It is not surprising that the laws of each country differ according to differing conditions and traditions. If other countries had our murder problem, the cry for capital punishment would be just as loud as it is here. And I daresay that any other major democracy where 75 percent of the people supported the death penalty would soon enact it into law.

3. An innocent person might be executed by mistake. Consider the work of Adam Bedau, one of the most implacable foes of capital punishment in this country. According to Mr. Bedau, it is "false sentimentality to argue that the death penalty should be abolished because of the abstract possibility that an innocent person might be executed." He cites a study of the 7,000 executions in this country from 1893 to 1971, and concludes that the record fails to show that such cases occur. The main point, however, is this. If government functioned only when the possibility of error didn't exist, government wouldn't function at all. Human life deserves special protection, and one of the best ways to guarantee that protection is to assure that convicted murderers do not kill again. Only the death penalty can accomplish this end. In a recent case in New Jersey, a man named Richard Biegenwald was freed from prison after serving 18 years for murder; since his release he has been convicted of committing four murders. A prisoner named Lemuel Smith, while serving four life sentences for murder (plus two life sentences for kidnapping and robbery) in New York's Green Haven Prison, lured a woman corrections officer into the chaplain's office and strangled her. He then mutilated and dismembered her body. An additional life sentence for Smith is meaningless. Because New York has no death penalty statue, Smith has effectively been given a license to kill.

But the problem of multiple murder is not confined to the nation's penitentiaries. In 1981, 91 police officers were killed in the line of duty in this country. Seven percent of those arrested in the cases that have been solved had a previous arrest for murder. In New York City in 1976 and 1977, 85 persons arrested for homicide had a previous arrest for murder. Six of these individuals had two previous arrests for murder, and one had four previous murder arrests. During those two years the New York police were arresting for murder persons with a previous arrest for murder on the average of one every 8.5 days. This is not surprising when we learn that

in 1975, for example, the median time served in Massachusetts for homicide was less than two and a half years. In 1976 a study sponsored by the Twentieth Century Fund found that the average time served in the United States for first degree murder is ten years. The median time served may be considerably lower.

4. Capital punishment cheapens the value of human life. On the contrary, it can be easily demonstrated that the death penalty strengthens the value of human life. If the penalty for rape were lowered, clearly it would signal a lessened regard for the victims' suffering, humiliation, and personal integrity. It would cheapen their horrific experience, and expose them to an increased danger of recurrence. When we lower the penalty for murder, it signals a lessened regard for the value of the victim's life. Some critics of capital punishment, such as columnist Jimmy Breslin, have suggested that a life sentence is actually a harsher penalty for murder than death. This is sophistic nonsense. A few killers may decide not to appeal a death sentence, but the overwhelming majority make every effort to stay alive. It is by exacting the highest penalty for the taking of human life that we affirm the highest value of human life.

5. The death penalty is applied in a discriminatory manner. This factor no longer seems to be the problem it once was. The appeals process for a condemned prisoner is lengthy and painstaking. Every effort is made to see that the verdict and sentence were fairly arrived at. However, assertions of discrimination are not an argument for ending the death penalty but for extending it. It is not justice to exclude everyone from the penalty of the law if a few are found to be so favored. Justice requires that the law be applied equally to all.

6. Thou shalt not kill. The Bible is our greatest source of moral inspiration. Opponents of the death penalty frequently cite the sixth of the Ten Commandments in an attempt to prove that capital punishment is divinely proscribed. In the original Hebrew, however, the Sixth Commandment reads, "Thou Shalt Not Commit Murder," and the Torah specifies capital punishment for a variety of offenses. The biblical viewpoint has been upheld by philosophers throughout history. The greatest thinkers of the nineteenth century – Kant, Locke, Hobbes, Rousseau, Montesquieu, and Mill – agreed that natural law properly authorizes the sovereign to take life in order to vindicate justice. Only Jeremy Bentham was ambivalent. Washington, Jefferson, and Franklin endorsed it. Abraham Lincoln authorized executions for deserters in wartime. Alexis de Tocqueville, who expressed profound respect for American institutions, believed that the death penalty was indispensable to the support of social order. The United States Constitution, widely admired as one of the seminal achievements in the history of humanity, condemns cruel and inhuman punishment, but does not condemn capital punishment.

7. The death penalty is state-sanctioned murder. This is the defense with which Messrs. Willie and Shaw hoped to soften the resolve of those who sentenced them to death. By saying in effect, "You're no better than I am," the murderer seeks to bring his accusers down to his own level. It is also a popular argument among opponents of capital punishment, but a transparently false one. Simply put, the state has rights that the private individual does not. In a democracy, those rights are given to the state by the electorate. The execution of a lawfully condemned killer is no more an act of murder than is legal imprisonment an act of kidnapping. If an individual forces a neighbor to pay him money under threat of punishment, it's called extortion. If the state does it, it's called taxation. Rights and responsibilities surrendered by the individual are what give the state its power to govern. This contract is the foundation of civilization itself.

Everyone wants his or her rights, and will defend them jealously. Not everyone, however, wants responsibilities, especially the painful responsibilities that come with law enforcement. Twenty-one years ago a woman named Kitty Genovese was assaulted and murdered on a street in New York. Dozens of neighbors heard her cries for help but did nothing to assist her. They didn't even call the police. In such a climate the criminal understandably grows bolder. In the presence of moral cowardice, he lectures us on our supposed failings and tries to equate his crimes with our quest for justice.

The death of anyone – even a convicted killer – diminishes us all. But we are diminished even more by a justice system that fails to function. It is an illusion to let ourselves believe that doing away with capital punishment removes the murderer's deed from our conscience. The rights of society are paramount. When we protect guilty lives, we give up innocent lives in exchange. When opponents of capital punishment say to the state: "I will not let you kill in my name," they are also saying to murderers: "You can kill in your own name as long as I have an excuse for not getting involved."

It is hard to imagine anything worse than being murdered while neighbors do nothing. But something worse exists. When those same neighbors shrink back from justly punishing the murderer, the victim dies twice.

An Exercise in Generating Solid Reasons: Death Penalty Debate

Key to successful arguments are solid reasons. Follow the steps and form the basis for an argument regarding the death penalty. You may even form teams and hold an in-class debate.

1. Review the following cites and articles: www.deathpenaltyinfo.org (search for Supreme Court Justices statements); www.innocenceproject.org; and the following Argument by Edward Koch, for mayor of New York City.
2. Form an opinion with four specific reasons for your position.
3. Begin with a working thesis stated at the top of your page, then outline briefly each of your four reasons. For each of your four reasons, include two pieces of evidence you might use to support each reason, citing them in parentheses as you would if you included them in an essay.

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2.7.7: Sample Student Essays

Penny Grimes

Prof. Polliard

English 101

28 April 2016

Restrooms for All

On June 26th 2016 the Supreme Court ruled in favor of marriage equality, making same sex marriage legal in all 50 states (Somander). This was a huge step for the LGBTQ+ community, giving may individuals the courage to "come out," many also felt encouraged to publically identify with a sexual orientation other than heterosexual or a gender other than the one assigned to them at birth. While marriage equality has opened many doors for change and the ability to raise social consciousness and awareness, there are still many unresolved issues.

One of the most overlooked communities in the LGBTQ+ acronym is the transgender community. "Transgender is an umbrella term for person whose gender identify, gender expression or behavior does not conform to that typically associated with the sex to which they were assigned at birth" ("Answers to Your Questions"). Above many issues and discriminations that the transgender community faces, one has caused much of a controversy over the past couple of years. Should transgender individuals be allowed to use the bathroom of their choice? Many argue that allowing transgender individuals to choose bathrooms based on their personal gender identification could be a dangerous advantage to predators and although it is a reasonable concern, the reasons why transgender individuals should be allowed to use the bathroom of their choice outweigh this concern. Helping them with transition, paving the road to end discrimination against the transgender community, and ending the stigma that surround transgender individuals are just a few of the reasons why we should give them the right to choose the bathroom of the gender they identify with.

According to Lambda Legal, for a transgender individual in transition, using a public restroom is an essential part of transitioning.

The most critical aspect of gender transition, according to the internationally- recognized medical protocol set by the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, is to ensure that a transgender person is able to live, be seen and be treated by others in a matter consistent with the person's gender identity. Getting used to using the appropriate restroom is an important part of this process. Moreover, transgender people must take this step well before proceeding—if at all—to medical interventions involving hormones or surgery. ("FAQ")

Before a transgender individual decides to seek medical intervention, it is essential for them that society sees them as the gender they identify as. By not allowing them to choose the bathroom they feel the most comfortable in, we are adding to the psychological damage the misgendering can cause; it is a reminder that the world doesn't see them as the gender they feel comfortable in.

By giving the transgender community the right to choose, society would be taking a big step forward in paving the road to ending the discrimination that the transgender community faces daily. According to a survey held in 2011 by the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, it was found that "26 percent of transgender students had been denied restroom access in educational settings, and 22 percent of transgender employees reported being denied restroom access at work" (Stringer). Highlighting and eliminating the discrimination that the transgender community faces would be an enormous step to creating an accepting and welcoming society to not only transgender individuals, but also every other community that falls in the LGBTQ+ acronym.

Additionally, by giving transgender individuals the right to choose, we would be helping destroy the negative stigma that surrounds this community. Many people often fear things that they do not understand, and when this fear is let run rampant, the actions that lead are in many cases severe. "In 2009, 17 percent of all reported violent hate crimes against LGBTQ+ people were directed against those who identified themselves as transgender, with most (11 percent of all hate crimes) identifying as transgender women. The remainder identified as transgender men, gender-queer, gender questioning, or intersex" ("Responding to Transgender Victims"). It is vital, for the safety and overall well-being of transgender individuals, that society takes action sooner than later. It is time to destroy this box that we have placed the LGBTQ+ community in and move forward into a more accepting society.

Eighteen states, including California, Colorado, and Oregon, have "employment laws that explicitly protect employees on the basis of gender identity" ("FAQ"). However, it does not mean that the fight is over. There are still many concerns from the general public; some believe that giving the transgender community the right to choose will give predators an advantage, and that women will be at a higher risk of being sexually harassed, but these myths can easily be debunked; "there is no evidence that gender-segregated bathrooms are 'safer' for cisgender women than unisex bathrooms. And besides, there are laws protecting people from criminal conduct in public restrooms" (FAQ). These harassment concerns that the general public have about gender neutral bathrooms are incidents that transgender individuals face every day of their lives; "53% of 6,450 transgender people reported being harassed or disrespected in a place of public accommodation in a recent survey conducted by the National Center of Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force" (FAQ). Though fear of the unknown and bigotry can be hard to correct, it is time society starts making more of an effort to improve the everyday life of transgender individuals.

By taking this monumental step forward, we will open a million and one opportunities to bring social consciousness and awareness to the numerous amounts of flaws the system has when it comes to members of the LGBTQ+ community. We will help eliminate the stigma surrounding the transgender community and pave the road to ending overall discrimination for transgender individuals. This step is essential if we want to evolve as a society. Discrimination is harmful; equality is not.

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*This student essay includes access dates and URLs which MLA 8th edition leaves up to the writer or instructor.

Grader's Comments:

- Good use of a two-paragraph introduction strategy
- Strong thesis with corresponding topic sentences to direct the flow of ideas.
- Although a rebuttal is present, the writer could have expanded on it.
- Minor errors in conventions—commas, apostrophes, representation of dates/days (e.g. change "12th" to 12)
- Avoid first person (e.g. "We")

Questions for Discussion and Analysis

Answer the following questions regarding the essay. Be complete in your explanations and cite examples or quotes in support of your answer. Use complete sentences with proper grammar, spelling and punctuation.

1. Where is the thesis statement and is it placed effectively?
2. What opposing viewpoints are included in the essay? How could the writer have countered those concerns more effectively?
3. Evaluating the writer's use of sources, were the scholarly and credible? Why or why not?

Paulina Garcia

Prof. Marianne Botos

ENG101

5 May 2016

A Wisconsin man, Jeffrey Dahmer, “removed [his victims] flesh with acid, bleached the skeleton and kept it in his wardrobe, he also kept the victims biceps and placed them in a freezer for later consumption” (Blanco, “Jeffrey”). Another Wisconsin man, Edward Gein, decapitated a woman, then hung her upside down by ropes at her wrists in his shed, only to later stash her head in a burlap sack in his house along with human face masks, skulls on bedposts, organs in the refrigerator, and a lampshade made from the skin of a human face (Blanco, “Edward”). Then, there is also the case of Robert Hansen, a man from Idaho who abducted woman and released them naked into the Alaskan woods, only to hunt them down and kill them (D’Oro). All three were cases where the defendant did not receive the capital punishment. Instead, two were given a life sentence for the 38 known victims’ lives that they took, and the second Wisconsin man was found not guilty by reason of insanity. Those cases and similar cases have caused massive controversy throughout American history. Was the punishment appropriate? Could they have been deterred? Should their past be taken into consideration? It’s fair to say there has been no common ground regarding cases as extreme as those mentioned before.

Capital punishment means inevitably taking someone else’s life and speculating about what a life is worth and how much value it truly possesses. Is life really priceless or is it in the range of $7 million to $9 million as the U.S. Office of Management and Budget states (Partnoy)? Taking into account Dahmer’s 17 victims would mean he took an equivalent of $119 million to $153 million worth of human life. In Arizona, that would have made him worthy of capital punishment 43 times since the death row cost according to the Arizona Department of Corrections is $3,523,012.85 (Rummell). Even though the death penalty puts into question a person’s values and morals, the benefits it produces and the awareness it brings to a person’s life is ultimately more significant.

Those against allowing capital punishment to be permitted view it as a heinous crime, and in a way it is. It’s robbing individuals of their right to live a long and meaningful life. Then, there exists the possibility of rehabilitation, giving the defendants a second chance at life and steering them into the right direction. That would be the ideal outcome of every situation, having criminals reevaluate their lifestyles and becoming model citizens within their society. Supreme Court Justice Stephen G. Breyer has been vocal on his standpoint, in which he argues that the death penalty is “flawed, expensive, subject to manipulation, applied disproportionately to minorities, not an effective deterrent and, at the end of the day, irreversible” (Qtd in Sainz). However, there have been proven studies in Texas from Duke University that affirm “from 1994 through 2005, each execution… was associated with… a decrease of up to 2.5 murders” (Mulhausen).

That being the case, Edward Koch, who served as mayor of New York City for three terms, stated, “If government functioned only when the possibility of error didn’t exist, government wouldn’t function at all.” Even though there’s a small chance of someone getting convicted by error, it does not stand on enough grounds to stop the death penalty all together. Koch later on conducted a study of 7,000 executions throughout 78 years in this country, concluding that the record fails to show a case of an innocent person being executed. This type of punishment gives a certain value to the defendant of the victims’ life and what could have been of it. Therefore, if there is no example set as to the value people’s rights have or their life value, then a murderer might not think twice about the decision to kill, thus causing families to not receive the closure or justice they hope for and deserve. Koch highlights how much “Human life deserves special protection, and one of the best ways to guarantee that protection is to assure that convicted murderers do not kill again.” In part it produces a greater outcome for the community as it deters criminals from repeating heinous crimes and bringing harm to others.

Then there are those who use the Eighth Amendment against using capital punishment. The amendment states that “Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted” (U.S. Const. Amend XIII). The lethal injection that is given consists of three drugs: “sodium thiopental (a barbiturate to induce anesthesia), pancuronium bromide (a muscle relaxant that paralyzes all the muscles of the body) and potassium chloride (a salt that speeds the heart until it stops)” (Greenemeier). At one point the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that “lethal injection did not create an unacceptable risk of severe pain and did not violate the Eighth Amendment…” (Hudson). Later on, Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia pointed out how “If the death penalty did not violate the 8th Amendment when the 8th Amendment was adopted, it doesn’t violate it today” (Qtd in Sainz). All death row inmates go through a trial and are indicted by a jury of their peers, meaning they are given the same rights as any other defendant. Also, death row inmates are typically given the choice of their capital punishment unless the state they reside in only has one option for capital punishment. For example, Arizona provides the option of lethal injection or the gas chamber. Lethal injection consists of the exact same three drugs used in euthanasia (“Methods”). Lethal injection is legal in four states and various countries (“Where”). Thus, it should not be considered a cruel nor unusual punishment.

The death penalty is not something light and simple that any case should be eligible for. There are factors that have to be met for eligibility for the death penalty. First, at least in the state of Arizona, there must be a first-degree murder, including pre-meditated and felony murder. Then, it must be accompanied by at least one of the considerable aggravating factors (Kirchmeier). A few of the factors listed include committing the offense in an especially heinous or cruel manner, the murdered person was fifteen years of age or older than seventy, done with the intent of promoting criminal street gangs, there was no moral or legal justification, or it was committed for payment of anything of pecuniary value (Kirchmeier). The list goes on, and the factors mentioned do not paint the picture of a model citizen or the possibility of becoming one. Even when committing such a despicable crime, the Constitution ensures that no person shall be deprived of life without due process (U.S.Const. Amend V). It gives the defendant a chance to defend his actions against his peers, but nonetheless, some crimes are too barbarous to deserve a second chance when the victim was not given that equal opportunity.

Most importantly, people are punished for the crime(s) they committed, not for the person they claim to be after the incident. For example, a criminal can claim to be rehabilitated and a changed person after the crime has been done, but that does not necessarily mean it is true. It does not eliminate the fact that the crime has been done, a life has been taken, and there is no rehabilitation for bringing back a victim to their family, friends, or life. Criminals should be given a punishment proportional to their crime and actions. Robert Blecker, a New York Law School professor and death penalty advocate, constantly reaffirms in his documentary, Robert Blecker Wants Me Dead, that the past counts and defendants should be connected to their crime, serving whatever punishment seems proportional to the offense. This documentary portrays a Tennessee man, Daryl Holton, who murdered his three sons and their half-sister. All throughout the film Holton is visited by Robert Blecker and seems to ignore that what he did was wrong. In Holton's mind, his actions were justified because he would rather they go up to heaven than live in the horrible conditions they were in and possibly grow up to be criminals. Holton was a stern believer that he did the right thing; he never budged on his standpoint (Robert). For a case as extreme as Holton's, it is clear that rehabilitation would not have been the best option because it was tied into his values and morals. Capital punishment is not meant for just any criminal but neither is the opportunity of a second chance.

If a crime is so despicable and inhumane that capital punishment would be proportional then that is the justice that needs to be served. It is unjust for those who have to live in the aftermath of the crime, the victim's family and friends, to see their loved ones' murderer given more rights than the person they'll be putting in a coffin and lowering into the ground. Worse is the knowledge that after twenty-five years, the murderer might be released into society and live the life their victim did not get a chance to or even again bring heinous tragedy to others. It is an unjust non-punishment for criminals whose crimes are so heinous it makes them eligible for capital punishment. It gives them something their victim does not have nor will he or she ever have, a life.

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U.S. Constitution. Amend. V.

U.S. Constitution. Amend. XIII.

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Grader’s Comments:

- Good use of probing questions
- Excellent variety of sources
- Smart use of specific and graphic examples to gain readers’ attention
- When an error exists in the original source, MLA requires the writer acknowledge the error by inserting “[sic]” after the error

Questions for Discussion and Analysis

Answer the following questions regarding the essay. Be complete in your explanations and cite examples or quotes in support of your answer. Use complete sentences with proper grammar, spelling and punctuation.

1. According to the essay, what is the definition of capital punishment?
2. What four reasons does the student argue in support of the thesis?
3. List three different types of experts used and cited in the essay.
4. After considering the argument, what is your position on capitol punishment? Explain, providing your own reasons.

Ima Student

Professor Good

English 101

18 June 2016

Stars and Stripes Forever and the Freedom to Light It on Fire

An artist sticks a U.S. flag in a toilet bowl and entitles her work “The American Dream Gone To Pot.” Another artist drapes a flag on the floor and asks the question “What is the Proper Way to Display the U.S. Flag?” while encouraging viewers to make a choice whether to step on the flag that is spread on the floor. In 1969, a man protests the shooting of civil rights activist James Meredeth, by publicly burning a flag while declaring, “If they did that to Meredeth, we don’t need an American flag” (qtd. in Ponessa, “Flag” 1510). Congress is upset by the lack of respect for the greatest symbol of this nation, and it now wants to pass an amendment which would prohibit flag burning or desecration. It proposes a constitutional amendment that would give Congress and the states the authority to pass laws prohibiting flag desecration (Ponessa, “House” 1646). Despite apparently overwhelming popular support, the measure still has many vocal critics who say it will infringe on the First Amendment right to free speech. “We’re going to the heart and soul of the right of freedom of expression as protected in the Constitution,” ranking Democrat John Conyers Jr. of Michigan said. “It is difficult to conceive of a more poorly drafted proposal” (qtd. in Ponessa, “House” 1646). Barney Frank, D-Mass., who has said that the Constitution should not be amended frivolously, added, “I think we are making a well- intentioned mistake” (qtd. in Ponessa, “House” 1646).

Just what is this well-intentioned mistake all about? It is about the American flag: a piece of material but more than just a vivid scrap of material; it is an icon of freedom, liberty, and justice for all. The American flag is a piece of cloth with thirteen red and white stripes and fifty white stars on a blue square, a piece of cloth that has been through two World Wars and numerous other battles; a piece of cloth that was even flown to the moon. The flag stands for everything America is. It is as American as America itself. The Stars and Stripes wave for both the respectful and disrespectful citizens of this country. It stands for liberty and justice for all, for freedom of speech, freedom of expression, perhaps even freedom to burn and desecrate this beloved symbol. Although the American flag is worthy of great esteem, the government cannot take away the right to desecrate the flag without taking away all that it stands for – freedom.

Opponents of the amendment view physically defacing the flag as a despicable act, and indeed it is. It brings dishonor to the memory of those who have given their lives to defend its ideals. The flag stands for all that American has been through – its hopes and its dreams. It is a symbol of unity, or at least the stated desire to be united. “Mankind lives by symbols, and the flag is worth respecting. It represents our shared experience, our connection to America’s past and future and our responsibility for one another, regardless of class, age or race” (Leo 17). However, flag desecration is a form of expression, and the government cannot strip away the right to express oneself, simply because the act is vulgar. As the Supreme Court stated in 1989, “If there is a bedrock principle underlying the First Amendment, it is that the government may not prohibit the expression of an idea simply because society finds the idea itself offensive or disagreeable” (Apel).

Therefore, society must strive to see that flag burning and desecration cannot demolish the true glory of the flag. Attempts to mock the flag through crude art work and brazen acts of desecration cannot destroy the real power that stands behind this American symbol. The Webster’s Dictionary definition of desecration is to take away the sacredness of, to treat as not sacred; to profane. Setting “Old Glory” on fire, or stuffing it in a toilet bowl and calling it “art” are acts of desecration. However, as the Arizona Republic observes, “It takes more than harsh words and nasty graphic art to dilute [the flag’s] power. It is clearly one of the strongest symbols ever created” (“Old Glory”).

Furthermore, people are burning the flag less and less frequently. Talk of banning flag desecration seems to be happening more than actual flag burnings. Thus, it would be easier to just ignore the occasional flag burnings, rather than write a prohibition against it into the constitution. For example, there are only 45 such occurrences on record since 1969... and since the Supreme Court in 1989 overturned a verdict against a flag burner in Texas v. Johnson, not more than eight occurrences per year have been recorded (Buckley 75). William F. Buckley, Jr. sarcastically cracked, “Why go to the Constitution to prohibit something that happens as rarely as an eclipse of the sun?” (75). The number of people eager to burn a flag to call attention to a cause or to themselves is very small. By one account, only three flag burnings are known to have occurred since 1993 (Leo 17). As John Leo, reporting for U.S. News & World Report points out, “It is politically much smarter to ignore the occasional flag burner. Without an arrest and big emotional reaction, the burning comes to nothing” (17). “We need to be explaining to people that amending the Constitution is a radical solution to a very small problem,” said Paul McMasters, Freedom Forum’s First Amendment ombudsman (qtd. in Hernandez 13).

Beyond being merely a radical solution, the proposed amendment to prohibit flag burning and desecration would suffocate freedom of speech. This right is guaranteed to anyone on U.S. soil (including illegal immigrants). “...the anti-flag amendment violates the right to free expression guaranteed of the First Amendment (Hernandez 13). The Supreme Court considers burning the American Flag an act which is protected by the First Amendment right to free speech. The only way Congress could make such anti-flag desecration laws pass constitutional muster is to amend the very document that protects these rights (Apel). Senator Ted Kennedy stated, “The words of the first amendment are simple and majestic: ‘Congress shall make no law abridging freedom of speech.’ The proposed constitutional amendment would undermine that fundamental liberty” (Apel). “It [the proposed amendment] would devalue the Bill of Rights that for two centuries has encouraged tolerance of all views and the freedom to speak one’s mind without fear of going to jail,” states Bill Ketter, editor of the Qunicy, Mass., Patriot Ledger (qtd. in Hernandez 13).

The most important argument for not banning flag desecration is that respect for the flag cannot be legislated. It has to grow out of the lives of its citizens (Leo 17). For example, not everyone in America loves, respects, and honors their country, but that is what makes this nation so dynamic. People can be who they want to be and think what they want to think. The very essence of America is that people are not stifled or bound by chains to love her. People have freedoms. And the right to free speech and free-expression is one of those freedoms. Sen. Bob Kerrey, D-Neb. Observes that “...although flag burning is a despicable act, respecting the right of individuals to express themselves is part of patriotism” (qtd. in Ponessa, “Flag” 1510). The proposed amendment would not

change anyone's thinking concerning the flag, for rules do not change minds – rules just set new standards. Those that want to desecrate the flag will continue to do so, and those that respect the flag will continue to do so. "...the critics fail to recognize that the United States was born on dissent. Our country is great, unlike other nations, because we have allowed our government to be criticized and we safeguard freedom of speech for everyone" ("Old Glory" B6). The irony behind saying that people cannot deface the flag is that the government has to come up with a rule, a ban, a law – whereas the whole philosophy behind the flag is liberty and justice for all.

To see someone blasphemously "rip" the flag to pieces can be shocking and quite sad, but by passing an amendment to prohibit flag burning, the government unravels all that the flag stands for. An amendment would only punish those that desecrate the flag, it would not change their hearts or sway them to view the flag in a more respectful manner. It is only a "Grand Old Flag' as long as it waves for the free and the brave, and both the respectful and disrespectful citizens of this nation. It is stars and stripes forever as long as those stars and stripes represent true freedom.

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Grader's Comments:

- Strong opening with good attention grabber
- Clear thesis with strong assertion of position
- Well organized progression of four reasons
- Respectful tone throughout essay with food pathos, logos and ethos
- Conclusion could be stronger

Questions for Discussion and Analysis

Answer the following questions regarding the essay. Be complete in your explanations and cite examples or quotes in support of your answer. Use complete sentences with proper grammar, spelling and punctuation.

1. What is the thesis of the essay?
2. Look up and write down the definition of "desecrate." What is your opinion about whether or not an individual or group has the right to desecrate the American flag?
3. Of the reasons presented, which is the strongest? The weakest? Explain why.

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2.7.8: Tips for Writing the Argument Essay

Just as in causal analysis, students often attempt to address issues that are more suited to a 10-page research paper. Think about setting boundaries on your argument. For example, most people when they here the term “gun control,” begin an argument about the meaning of the Second Amendment and whether or not guns should be banned. This happens before the term “gun control” is even defined. Instead of writing about the larger topic, focus on the specific topic under the larger umbrella of the issue, e.g. smart guns, universal background checks, gun licenses, and disqualifying factors in ownership (mental illness, suspected terrorist ties, and felony convictions).

Topic Ideas

- Self-driving cars and legal implications
- Legalizing prostitution
- Marijuana and federal vs local laws
- Concealed weapons and permitting
- Guns on college campuses
- Homeschooling

Chapter Questions for Comprehension

Answer the following questions regarding developing the argument.

1. Describe in one or two sentences the types of evidence you need for a convincing argument essay.
2. Describe the three types of appeals: rational, emotional and ethical. Why does a good argument use all three?

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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SECTION OVERVIEW

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Topic hierarchy

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3.1.7: Interjections

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3.1.1: Nouns

A noun is the part of speech that refers to persons, places, things, or ideas. Nouns appear after adjectives, after articles, as a subject of a sentence, as an object of a preposition, and as a direct or indirect object.

There are many different kinds of nouns.

- **Common nouns** are any person, place, or thing. Common nouns are not capitalized unless they start a sentence or title.
  Example: city, policeman, desk.
- **Proper nouns** are the name of a specific person, place, or thing. Proper nouns are capitalized. Personal names are the best examples of proper nouns.
  Example: Nicolas, Idaho, Daily News.
- **Collective nouns** are used to name groups. Even when a collective noun is in the singular form, it can be used to refer to a group.
  Example: team, herd, jury

Nouns are either concrete or abstract.

- **Concrete nouns** words that represent objects one can see, hear, touch, smell, or taste.
- **Abstract nouns** are anything one cannot see, hear, touch, smell, or taste.

Types of Nouns	Now, you label the nouns.
Tom = proper, concrete table = common, concrete honesty = abstract desk = common, concrete gaggle = collective door = common, concrete conscience = abstract	air = store = Stephen King = fleet = girl = love = floor =

Singular and Plural

In order to show whether a noun is singular or plural, change the noun's spelling. A noun will take the plural inflection "-s" for most words in English. But, there might be irregular plural nouns as well. Some of the examples of irregular nouns are given below:

- boy/boys
- child/children
- woman/women
- man/men
- syllabus/syllabi
- ox/oxen
- deer/deer

If you are unsure how to change a word into the plural form, check your dictionary.

Pronouns

A pronoun is a word that often replaces a noun. The word or group of words that a pronoun replaces or refers to is called the antecedent of the pronoun.

Example 3.1.1.1:

- The dog is old. *It* walks slowly.
  In this sentence, the word "it" replaces "the dog." Dog is the antecedent. The pronoun should always be near the antecedent it refers to.

- Wow, that boy can throw a football. *He* must have thrown it 60 yards.
  In this sentence, the word "he" replaces "that boy." Boy is the antecedent.

There are several types of pronouns: personal, possessive, intensive, reflexive, relative, interrogative, demonstrative, and indefinite.

- **Personal pronouns** are those that refer to specific people or things: *I, he, she, we, us, they.*
  Example: After *they* finished shopping, *they* put the groceries in the trunk.
- **Possessive pronouns** indicate ownership: *My, mine, your, our, theirs.*
  Example: *My* brother bought a red car.
- **Intensive pronouns** always include a form of self and appear next to the antecedent.
  Example: The President *himself* called to congratulate me.
  An intensive pronoun can be removed from a sentence without damage. Use intensive pronouns sparingly, only to emphasize.
- **Reflexive pronouns** always include a form of self and do not appear next to the antecedent.
  Example: We shopped *ourselves* to death.
- **Relative pronouns** introduce subordinate clauses and function as adjectives.
  Example: The man *who* yelled at us to get off his lawn did not even own the property.
- **Interrogative pronouns** introduce questions: *who, which.*
  Examples: *Who* was that? *Who* will help me? *Which* do you prefer?
- **Demonstrative pronouns** point out specific persons, places, things or ideas: *that, those, this, these.*
  Example: *This* is my dog.
- **Indefinite pronouns** refer to non-specific people or things: *all, both, any, few, everyone, each, nobody, some, several, neither.*
  Example: *Several* people cheered after the solo.

Exercise 3.1.1.1

Identify the bold word per its pronoun type.

1. **Many** cars were in Walmart's parking lot on Christmas Eve. _____
2. **I** like to walk in the park. _____
3. I really want **that** last piece of pizza. _____
4. I'm hoping **my** work ethic leads to a promotion. _____
5. Brad Pitt, **himself**, walked into the cafeteria. _____
6. **Who** is Brad Pitt? _____
7. Brad Pitt is the actor **who** starred in *Interview with a Vampire*. _____
8. I'm paying back my car loan by **myself**. _____

Tips on Noun, Pronoun, and Antecedent Use

- The **pronoun** and its **antecedent** (the noun or pronoun to which the pronoun refers) should agree; they must both be singular or plural.
  Examples: My *dog* finished *her* food. (Both are singular) The *dogs* fought for *their* food. (Both are plural)
- **Collective nouns** should be used as singular unless they are obviously plural.
  Example: The *jury* gave *its* verdict.
- **Compound antecedents** connected by and should be used as plural.
  Example: *Jack and Jill are* getting married.
- Some antecedents are indefinite (*anyone, each, everyone, nobody, somebody*) and although imply a singular subject, can take they.
  Example: *Somebody* better take out the trash or they will be in trouble.
- The antecedent should be clear. The following is incorrect.
  Example: When she set the *picture* on the glass *table, it* broke.
  By using "it" after two nouns, the reference is unclear. Which item broke? The picture or the table? When reading your writing, ask yourself these types of clarifying questions. If you are unclear as to which noun is the antecedent, it will be unclear for the reader as well. In the above case, the glass table would have broken since it was the noun referred to closest to the pronoun.

A special note on deciding whether to use we or us:

- If you are unsure as to which pronoun to use, try omitting the antecedent. Or, look to see where the pronoun is being used. Example: *We* need a more affordable textbook. (*We* belongs on the subject side.) It makes much more sense to *us*. (*Us* belongs on the predicate side.)

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3.1.2: Verbs

A verb is the main word in the predicate of a sentence. The verb beginning the predicate will be an action, a helping, or a linking verb.

- **Action verbs** denote movement.
  Example: Josh *threw* the ball. Jason *kicked* the football.
  Action verbs can usually be seen but not always.
  Example: Paul *daydreamed* during English class.
- **Linking verbs** connect the subject to either an adjective or a noun (phrase)
  Examples: Jill *was* serious. (Serious is an adjective.) Jamal *is* a student. ("A student" is a noun phrase.)
- **Linking verbs** link the relationship between the subject and the rest of the sentence. This type of verb explains the connection between the subject and its complement. The most common linking verb is "to be" and its forms: *am, is, are, were, being, might, etc*. True linking verbs are any form of "be" and act as the main verb in a sentence.
- **Helping verbs** start the predicate and assists another verb.
  Example: Laktfi *is* helping Jane with her homework.

am	been	does	may
is	be	didd	might
are	have	shall	must
was	has	will	can
were	had	should	could
being	do	would	

- Words like *was* can be either linking verbs or helping verbs depending on what follows.
  Examples: Charisma *was* happy. (*Was* is a linking verb because happy is an adjective). Charisma *was missing* her mother. (Was is a helping verb because it is assisting the word *missing*).

Exercise 3.1.2.1

Label the underlined verb as either action, helping, or linking.

1. John is going to need help with his homework. _____
2. Susan was trying to help him. _____
3. Bill thinks he knows everything. _____
4. Richard is happy watching the classroom activities. _____
5. Rashid runs from class the minute the bell rings. _____

Tips on Verb Use

- Verbs need to agree with their subjects in number (singular or plural) and in person (first, second, or third). Find the verb and ask "who or what" is doing the action of that verb.
- Verbs need to agree with compound subjects. To make verbs agree with their compound subjects, edit as follows:
  Incorrect: A pencil, a backpack, and a notebook **was** issued to each student.
  Corrected: A pencil, a backpack, and a notebook **were** issued to each student.
- Verbs will never agree with nouns that are in prepositional phrases. To make verbs agree with their subjects, edit as follows:
  Incorrect: The direction of the three plays **are** the topic of my talk.
  Corrected: The direction of the three plays **is** the topic of my talk.
  The subject of my talk is "direction", not "plays".

- In the English language, verbs usually follow subjects. But when this order is reversed, the writer must make the verb agree with the subject, not with a noun that happens to precede it. Edit as follows:
  Incorrect: Beside the house **stands** sheds filled with tools.
  Corrected: Beside the house **stand** sheds filled with tools.
  Because the subject is "sheds"; it is plural, so the verb must be" stand."

Verb Tenses

Tense in a verb helps to show when the action expressed by a verb takes place. The three simple tenses are the present tense, past tense, and future tense.

- **Present tense** expresses an unchanging, repeated, or reoccurring action or situation that exists only now. It can also represent a widespread truth.
  Examples: The mountains *are* tall and white. (Unchanging action) Every year, the school council *elects* new members. (Recurring action) Pb *is* the chemical symbol for lead. (Widespread truth)
- **Past tense** expresses an action or situation that was started and finished in the past. Most past tense verbs end in -ed. The irregular verbs have special past tense forms which must be memorized.
  Examples: W.W.II *ended* in 1945. (Regular -ed past tense) Ernest Hemingway *wrote* "The Old Man and the Sea." (Irregular form)
- **Future tense** expresses an action or situation that will occur in the future. This tense is formed by using *will* or *shall with* the simple form of the verb.
  Example: The speaker of the House *will* finish her term in May of 2012.
- The **future tense** can also be expressed by using am, is, or are with going to.
  Example: The surgeon *is going to* perform the first bypass in Minnesota.
- The **present tense** form can also be used with an adverb or adverbial phrase to show future time.
  Example: The president speaks *tomorrow*. (Tomorrow is a future time adverb.)

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3.1.3: Adjectives

Adjectives modify or limit the meaning of nouns or pronouns, usually by describing, quantifying, or identifying. An adjective answers the question *what kind*, *which one*, *how many*, or *how much.*

- A **describing adjective** would be “Josh threw the *yellow* ball.”
- A **quantifying adjective** would be “We caught *several* sunfish last weekend.”
- An **identifying adjective** would be “Carol tried hard to win *that* race.”

The most widely recognized adjectives are those words, such as *big*, *old*, and *tired*, that actually describe people, places, or things. These words can themselves be modified with adverbs, as in the phrase “very big.”

Besides being used to modify a meaning, adjectives can be used to compare items.

- To compare (comparative) two nouns using an adjective, add “-er” to the adjective.
  Example: Michelle’s new car is *bigger* than Susan’s.
- Some adjectives, often those words of three syllables or more, do not always take the “-er” form. Instead, keep the adjective the same and add the word *more* in front of it.
  Example: Michelle’s new car is more expensive than Susan’s.
- To compare (superlative) three nouns or more using an adjective, add “-est” to the adjective.
  Example: Michelle’s new truck is the *biggest* in the parking lot.
- Some adjectives, often those words of three syllables or more, do not always take the “-est” form. Instead, keep the adjective the same and add the word *most* in front of it.
  Example: If Michelle’s new car is the *most* expensive, she must be working hard to make the payments.

Adjectives are most often used before a noun.

- **Articles**: *a, an, the.*
- **Demonstratives**: *this, that, these, those.*
- **Possessive pronouns**: *my, our, your, her, his, its, their, whose.*
- **Possessive nouns**: *John's, the teacher's.*
- **Quantifiers**: *all, few, many, several, some, every, each, any, etc.*
- **Cardinal Numbers**: *one, two, fifty, etc.*
- **Ordinal Numbers**: *first, second, last, next, etc.*
- Example: *A* dog, *this* dog, *my* dog, *John’s* dog, *all* dogs, *one* dog, *the first* dog...

Exercise 3.1.3.1

Underline the eight adjectives in the following sentence.

Then, answer the questions. Basia wanted a newer purse than she already had to show off at the birthday party tonight, so she bought the biggest one she could find at the dollar store.

1. Write the comparative adjective _____.
2. Write the superlative adjective _____.
3. Write the four articles (you will use the same word more than once) _____, _____, _____, ____.

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3.1.4: Adverbs

Adverbs are modifiers or descriptive words, phrases, or clauses that bring detail to your sentences. An adverb answers the question *where, when, how* or *to what extent*. They modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. Many adverbs end in "-ly" except for *always, never, very,* and *well*. The most commonly used adverb is *not*.

Difference between Adverbs and Adjectives

Adjectives and adverbs answer different questions.

An **adjective** modifies a noun or pronoun and answers these questions:

- Which: The *latest* magazine arrived.
- What kind: A *huge* difference remained.
- How many: The *three* books were different.

An **adverb** modifies a verb and answers these questions:

- When: *Tomorrow*, the storm will quit.
- How often: Students change majors *frequently*.
- Where: The class is held *here* today.

When choosing between an adjective and adverb, determine the word being modified and then figure out its part of speech.

Forming adverbs

Often adverbs are formed from adjectives, but some are not derived from other words such as *again, almost, always, never, here, there, now, often, seldom, well*. The adverbs that are derived from adjectives can be formed by adding the suffix "-ly" to the ending.

- *beautifully*
- *strangely*
- *cleverly*
- *respectfully*

Remember that an "-ly" does not make the word an adverb. Some adjectives also end in "-ly" such as *friendly and lovely*.

Placement

The location of the adverb in a sentence can change the rhythm and emphasis dramatically.

- *Originally*, the Star Wars movie series had just three installments.
- The Star Wars movie series *originally* had just three installments.

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3.1.5: Conjunctions

Conjunctions join words, phrases, or clauses within a sentence.

- The **coordinating conjunctions** *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so* are easily remembered by the acronym FANBOYS. When these seven short words link two independent clauses together within one sentence, each coordinating conjunction signals a specific relationship between the independent clauses it joins.
- **For** signals that the second thought is a statement of causation relative to the first thought or that the second thought should be considered as significantly informing the first thought.
  Example: Each workplace conflict is unique, *for* each context is unique.
- **And** signals addition and extension. Used with a comma between two independent clauses, it tells the reader that the thoughts expressed in those clauses should be considered together and with equal weight.
  Example: Each workplace conflict is unique, *and* each requires its own assessment.
- **Nor** links two complete thoughts expressed as negatives, indicating that neither is an option.
  Example: Serious conflicts cannot be solved by ignoring them, *nor* can they be solved by attempting to legislate past them.
- **But** expresses contrast. It tells readers that the thought expressed in the second independent clause is in opposition to, or otherwise different from, the thought expressed in the first independent clause.
  Example: Each workplace conflict is unique, *but* several general principles apply to finding solutions.
- **Or** conveys option/choice or consequence (as in the sense of “or else”) between the two thoughts.
  Example: Conflicts may be resolved with one mediated discussion, *or* extended negotiation may be required to bring about consensus.
- **Yet** tells the reader that the thought expressed in the second independent clause is in opposition or contrast to the first. It also can indicate simultaneity, in effect saying to the reader, “At the same time, after you’ve read the first thought, you should also consider this thought.”
  Example: Workplace conflicts can ultimately be opportunities for growth, *yet* most managers approach them with dread and apprehension.
- **So** signals that the second thought is a statement of effect or consequence relative to the first thought.
  Example: Workplace conflicts can ultimately be opportunities for growth, *so* managers should approach them confidently.

Further distinctions in coordinating conjunction usage are as follows:

  - I like apples *and* oranges. (joining words)
  - Under the table *and* by the chair is the apple I dropped. (joining phrases)
  - I like apples, *but* I prefer oranges. (joining clauses)

- **Correlative Conjunctions** come in pairs such as *either...or, neither...nor, not only...but also*. These conjunctions also connect two equal grammatical elements.
  Example: I will have *either* pasta *or* pizza for dinner.
- **Subordinating Conjunctions** *After, although, as if, because, even though, once, in order that*, and *rather than* are some common subordinating conjunctions. These are conjunctions that introduce a subordinate clause and illustrate a relationship with the rest of the sentence.
  Example: *Although* I would rather party tonight, I will go to the library instead.
  Note the comma after the subordinate clause.
  Example: I will go to the library tonight *although* I would rather party.
- *Note how the subordinate conjunction, when not used to introduce, does not get a comma.*
- **Conjunctive Adverbs** are used to show a relationship between two independent clauses (complete sentences). Some examples are *accordingly, furthermore, therefore, however.*
  Example: I always brush my teeth; *therefore*, I have no cavities.

Exercise 3.1.5.1

Punctuate the following sentences and underline the subordinating and/or coordinating conjunctions. (Some are correct)

1. Lars and Helga wanted to throw a pool party on Saturday night.
2. They invited many of their friends although it felt very last minute.
3. Because they had little money they decided to ask their friends to bring food and drinks.
4. They wound up with too much food and they decided to have a pool party on Sunday, too.
5. Everyone chipping in was a great idea therefore they will follow the same plan next time.
6. Neither Lars nor Helga expected such a good turnout.

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3.1.6: Prepositions

Prepositions are words that come before a noun or pronoun that form a phrase often indicating a position or place. Here is a list of some common prepositions:

about	behind	for	over
above	below	in	past
after	beside	into	regarding
along	between	like	since
among	by	of	with
as	despite	onto	
before	during	opposite	

Example 3.1.6.1:

He brought his furniture *into the* ***apartment***.

The prepositional phrase will end with either a noun or pronoun called the object of the preposition.

Here is a list of some common **compound prepositions**:

according to	as well as	because of
except for	instead of	with regard to
in front of	due to	
next to	in spite of	

Exercise 3.1.6.1

Cross out the prepositional phrases.

1. The thoughts of the wife were that the furniture belonged somewhere else.
2. By the time she spoke up, it was too late.
3. Most of the furniture will go in the bedroom.

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3.1.7: Interjections

The word “interjection” literally means “thrown in between.” Interjections express emotion and are capable of standing alone. Common interjections are *Ugh!* or *Wow! Oh! Hey! Ow!*

Interjections are often followed by an exclamation mark (!). Or, they can be followed by a comma (,). It depends on the importance of the emotion.

Example 3.1.7.1:

- *Hey!* That barn is on fire.
- *Hey*, I broke a nail.

Even when interjections are a part of a sentence, they don’t directly relate to the grammar of that sentence.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

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Topic hierarchy

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3.2.1: Voice

Languages have different levels of formality that vary with the purpose, the audience, and the situation.

Informal voice or first person, is much more relaxed. In informal voice, slang is often used. In many instances, the writer's opinion is evident. "Voice" can be defined as "how the writer's personality and attitude toward the topic are revealed to the audience." Voice, in this definition, is what makes one writer sound different from another.

Formal voice or third person, is professional. Think *Newsweek* rather than *People* magazine. This "voice" is more formal than spoken English and the writer usually only uses first person in quotes. Often, outside sources are used to prove points.

Active and Passive Voice

In the **active voice**, the subject performs the action. A clause with an active, transitive verb will be in the form of subject-verb-object.
Example: The student *finished* the exercise.

In the **passive voice**, the subject receives the action. For a passive verb, the tense and subject-verb agreement are always shown through the auxiliary verb "to be."
Example: The exercise *was finished* by the student.

Active Voice	Passive Voice
The teacher *referred to* "voice" as a grammatical term.	"Voice" **was referred to** as a grammatical term by the teacher.
The man *yelled at* the waiter.	The waiter *was yelled at* by the man.
Millions of people *lived in* the houses.	The houses *were lived in* by millions of people.

Uses of "That"

That in the English language serves four different syntactic functions.

1. Demonstrative determiner
   Example: *That* house is for sale.
2. Demonstrative pronoun
   Example: *That* is my car.
3. Demonstrative pronoun functioning as a noun
   Example: *That* works for me.
4. Relative pronoun
   Example: The book *that* I read was interesting.

Using "A" and "An"

Determining which word to use, either *a* or *an*, is based on the first sound of the word that follows it. When a word starts with a **consonant sound**, use *a* before it. When the word begins with a **vowel sound**, use *an* before it. Be careful; sometimes the first letter of the word is not the first sound of the word (see *hour* and *unicorn* below).

Example 3.2.1.1:

- *a* show
- *an* amazing show
- *an* octopus
- *a* huge octopus
- *an* hour (the h is silent)
- *a* house
- *an* apple
- *a* red apple

- *a* unicorn *(unicorn begins with a ‘y’ sound)*
- *an* angry unicorn

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3.2.2: Commas

Commas *join*, *emphasize*, *contain*, and *separate*.

- They work with a coordinating conjunction to **join two independent clauses** within a sentence.
  Example: Latoya threw the basketball, and it sailed through the net.
- They **emphasize introductory elements** at the beginning of a sentence or clause.
  Example: Humiliated, she fled he diner.
- They **set off cumulative elements** at the end of a sentence or clause.
  Example: Nine senators changed their vote, passing the bill.
- They work in pairs to **contain restrictive modifiers** within a sentence.
  Example: The committee, heading by Dr. Suarez, met weekly to develop a budget.
- They work in pairs to **contain parenthetical expressions** within a sentence.
  Example: The candidate, much to the committee's surprise, voluntarily revealed her position on several key controversies.
- They **separate a dependent clause at the beginning of a sentence** from the independent clause following it.
  Example: When it started to rain, Sue wished she had her umbrella.
- They **separate two or more adjectives** that independently describe the same noun.
  Example: An open, exploratory, and inclusive spirit marked the meeting.
  If you can put the word "and" and it makes sense, the comma usage is correct.
- They **separate quotations** from their attributions.
  Examples: "Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly, and applying the wrong remedies," said Groucho Marx.
  "In a time of universal deceit," writes George Orwell, "telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act."
- They **separate items in a list**.
  Example: The position requires expertise in building consensus, formulating policy, and developing long-term goals.

The final comma, the one before "and" or "or," is known as the Oxford comma, Harvard comma, or serial comma. The Oxford comma should always be used where it is needed to avoid confusion (for example where one or more items in the list already include the word "and"). Otherwise it is optional.

Commas also separate elements in dates, numbers, personal titles, and addresses.

Use commas to separate the day of the week from the month and to set off a year from the rest of the sentence.

- On Friday, February 13, 2015, we will be having our annual Valentine's Day dance.
- On December 12, 1890, orders for the arrest of Sitting Bull were sent.
- Graduation is set for May 20, 2016.

You do not need to use a comma when giving only the month and the year:

- The next presidential election will take place in November 2016.

Use commas to separate numbers into groups of three when they are more than four digits long. The comma is optional when the number is four digits long:

- 2,400 (or 2400)
- 50,000
- 340,000

Do not use a comma in street numbers or page numbers.

- The table appears on page 1397.
- The fire occurred at 5509 Avenida Valencia.

When following a name with a title, use a comma (if the title is at the end of the sentence) or two (if the title is in the middle of the sentence) to separate the title from the rest of the sentence.

- Earnings far exceeded projections last quarter according to Hitomi Masamura, vice president.

- Paul Hjort, D.C., practices chiropractic medicine in Flagstaff.

Separate each element of an address with commas. However, do not use a comma before a ZIP or other postal code.

- Lady Gaga performed in Phoenix, Arizona.
- Write to the program advisor at 18401 N. 32nd Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85032.

While there are many different ways to use commas in writing, most comma usages fall into three situations. If you know the basic rule for these three cases, you should be set for comma usage.

- Put a comma before a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) that separates two independent clauses.
  Example: I wanted to drive to the mall, but my car wouldn't start.
- Put a comma after introductory words, phrases, or clauses in a sentence.
  Example: Although it was a good offer, I felt that I needed to explore other options.
- Use commas to set off elements that interrupt or add information in a sentence.
  Example: Tommy, my older brother, loved to punch me for telling his secrets.

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3.2.3: Semicolons and Colons

Semicolons

A semicolon is can be used in three different types of sentence structures.

- To **join** two independent clauses.
  Example: Several environmental organizations recognized the treaty; few endorsed it.
- To **join** two independent clauses when a conjunctive adverb is used.
  Example: Several environmental organizations recognized the treaty; however, few endorsed it.
- To **separate** items in a list if the items in the list already necessitate a comma.
  Example: She has a son, Mike Nach, of Arizona; a daughter, Emily Rosa, of Colorado; and a sister, Sara Evans, of Minnesota

Colons

Colons are used to draw attention to certain words. They are used after an independent clause to direct attention to a list, appositive, or quotation. They are used between independent clauses when the second clause summarizes or emphasizes the first clause or after the greeting in a formal letter.

Case	Example	Note
List	• I have three sisters: Catherine, Sarah, and Mary. • The sandwich requires several ingredients: bread, butter, cheese, ham, and tomatoes.	
Appositive	My mom just won an award: Mom of the Year.	
Answers the question	There was only one possible explanation: The train had never arrived.	
Quotation	Homer Simpson is famous for his grunted expression: "Doh!"	
Between independent clauses	Life is like a box of chocolates: you never know what you're going to get.	
Introduction of a definition	Hypernym of a word: a word having a wider meaning than the given one.	Is a special case of appositive.
After business salutation	Dear Sir or Madam:	
In a dialogue	• Patient: Doctor, I feel like a pair of curtains. • Doctor: Pull yourself together!	
Separation of title from subtitle	Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope	
Separation of the chapter and the verse numbers of religious scriptures	• John 3:14–16 (or John III:14–16) • The Qur'an, Sura 5:18	
Separation within time of the day	• The concert finished at 23:45. • This file was last modified today at 11:15a.m.	Standard time vs military time

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3.2.4: Apostrophes

The primary functions for apostrophes are to form possessives and to stand in for missing letters in a contraction. Apostrophes are only very rarely used to form plurals.

- Use **possessive forms** when you want to indicate ownership, or "belonging to." Possessives are almost always formed by adding an apostrophe and an "s" to the end of a noun (a person, place, or thing).

Example 3.2.4.1:

- Mike's bike is in the yard.
- Phoenix's temperatures bring lots of visitors in winter.
- The table's legs were broken.

- Remember, add an "'s" when the noun does not end in an "s" (driver's) or when the noun is singular and ends in an "s" (Lois's).
- If the noun is plural but not possessive and ends in "s," you don't need to add an apostrophe (diplomas instead of diploma's).
- Nouns also change to express possession (ownership) by using an apostrophe followed by the letter "s" ('s). This can denote singular or plural possessive.

Following are examples of possessive apostrophe use:

- The student's attempts to solve the problem were rewarded.
  The above sentence means one student made an attempt.
- The students' attempts to solve the problem were rewarded.
  The above sentence means more than one student made an attempt.

If you are making an irregular plural noun possessive, the apostrophe comes before the "s" because the word is already plural.

- children/children's (plural)

If a singular common noun ends in "s," add "'s."

- The *boss's* temper was legendary among his employees.
- The *witness's* version of the story has several inconsistencies.

Proper nouns ending in "s" differ depending on whether you refer to the *Chicago Manual of Style* or, say, the *Associated Press Stylebook*.

- *Chris's* book was lost. (*Chicago Manual of Style*)
- *Chris'* book was lost. (*Associated Press Stylebook*)

Apostrophes with Compound Nouns

If a compound noun uses dashes, place the apostrophe after the last noun.

- My *brother-in-law's* house backs up to Tonto National Forest.

Joint Possession

If there is a compound noun, add the possessive apostrophe to the last noun.

- I went to see *Anthony and George's* new apartment.
  The apartment belongs to both Anthony and George.

If the compound noun indicates individual possession, add the apostrophe to both nouns. For example, if you have a compound subject, like Jose and Anna, and they own something together, it would look like this:

- *Jose and Anna's* home is on Third Street.

However, if Jose and Anna have different homes, it would look like this:

- *Jose's* and *Anna's* homes are on Third Street.

Here are a few more possessive examples:

- The *amendment's* language clarifies the terms left undefined in the original law.
  In this case, "language" corresponds to "amendment"; "terms" is plural.
- A review of the *month's* headlines reveals nine front-page pieces about the local school board election.
  Here, "headlines" correspond to "month"; "headlines" and "pieces" are plural.
- Sara *Jones's* study of language use and class is considered a classic in the field.
- "Study" corresponds to "Jones"; the apostrophe 's must be added to a proper noun that ends in "s"

A Word About Confusion with Plurals and Possessives

Plural words that end in "s" are not necessarily possessive so do not take apostrophes.

- Three key *ideas* emerged in the introduction.
- The organization was restructured after *decades* of poor performance.
- All *animals* have an innate evolutionary drive to pass along genes to offspring.

But plurals that are also possessive do use apostrophes. Notice how the position of the apostrophe moves depending on whether the plural ends with "s" or not.

- The book traces the *Kennedys'* influence on national politics.
- The library science degree offers a special emphasis in *children's* literature.
- The board changes the policy after the *stakeholders'* objections.

Apostrophes and Missing Letters

Apostrophes are also used to stand in for missing letters in a contraction:

- The conclusion *doesn't* [does not] follow from the evidence.
- Remove the test tubes from the sterilizer when the *cycle's* [cycle is] finished.
- This committee will file a final report when *we're* [we are] done with the applications.

In addition, apostrophes are used to stand for missing letters in "shortened" or slang words:

- *'Tis* [it is] the season to be jolly.

Common Mistakes

Do not use an apostrophe to form the plurals of numbers or acronyms.

- 1980s
- eights
- three CEOs
- these JPEGs

Distinguish between plural and possessive dates.

- The 1970s' music was the best.
  The 1970s own that music.
- The 1970s are but a memory to many of us.
  The 1970s is plural but does not own a memory.

Exercise 3.2.4.1

Add apostrophes (or not) to the following sentences.

1. Johns book is on the floor.
2. The childrens playground is a next to the grocery store.
3. The 1990s was a time of turmoil.
4. The Smiths dog broke free from his leash.

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3.2.5: Quotation Marks

Quotation marks are used to mark direct quotations. This is to give the original writer or speaker credit for their work. If you are paraphrasing, you do not need quotation marks. (See Chapter 8 for additional explanation and examples.)

- If you are using a long quotation (long is constituted by four or more typed lines), instead of quotation marks, you should indent the quotation ten spaces (making it a block quote) and introduce with a colon.
- If your quote has a quote within it, the inner quote needs one quotation mark and the outer quote needs two quotation marks.
- Use quotation marks around the titles of short works such as newspapers and magazine articles, poems, short stories, songs and chapters.
- Periods and commas should be placed inside the quotation marks. Question marks and exclamation points should be placed inside the quotation marks, unless the punctuation applies to the whole sentence (not just the quote). Colons and semicolons should be placed outside the quotation marks.
- You can set off words by using quotation marks instead of italicizing or underlining them.

Using Quoted Material within your Own Writing

- If a quotation is introduced formally, use a colon.
- If a quotation is being used with “he said” or “she said,” use a comma.
- If a quotation is blended into the writer's sentence, you can use a comma, although no punctuation may be more appropriate.
- If a quotation is used at the beginning of a sentence, use a comma after the quote unless the quote ends in a question mark or exclamation point.
- If you choose to break up the quotation with your own words, use commas to offset the quotation from your explanation.

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3.2.6: Hyphens and Dashes

Dashes (“—,”) are used to mark an interruption within a sentence, while **hyphens** (“-“) are used to join two parts of a compound word, or to indicate that a word has been split at the end of a line. A dash is approximately as long as two hyphens.

Dashes are used to mark an interruption within a sentence. They are used in much the same way as parentheses.
Example: Three unlikely companions—a canary, an eagle, and a parrot—flew by my window in an odd flock.

A **hyphen** joins two parts of a compound word.
Example: governor-elect, twenty-five, half-baked.

Hyphens can also be used to make compound words more understandable. Consider these words:

- Man-eating dog
- Man eating dog

The first example describes a particular type of dog (man-eating). The second example, alas, suggests that a man is eating a dog.

Or consider the case of the flaming-red pickup truck, as opposed to its more alarming cousin, the flaming red pickup truck.

In general, if the first of two adjectives is describing the second, and not the noun following, you should use a hyphen: deep-blue water, good-tasting hamburger, happy-faced child.

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3.2.7: Parentheses and Capitalization

Parentheses

Parentheses can be used to enclose an interjected, explanatory, or qualifying remark, mathematical quantities, etc. The words placed inside the brackets are not necessary for the interrupted sentence to be complete but instead set off incidental/accompanying information.

- Be sure to call me (extension 2104) when you get this message.
- Copyright affects how much regulation is enforced (Lessig 2004).
- Be sure to (1) brush your teeth, (2) floss, and (3) gargle with mouthwash.

Capitalization

Basic principles of capitalization dictate that common nouns are not capitalized; proper nouns are capitalized.

- **Proper nouns**: Capitalize nouns that are the unique identification for a particular person, place, or thing: Michael, Minnesota, North America.
- **Proper names**: Capitalize common nouns like party only when they are part of the full name for the person, place or thing. Consider the following examples:
  - I am a member of the Democratic Party.
  - The Democratic and Republican parties are the two major parties in the United States.
    The word parties would be lower-cased when being used in a plural setting
- **Sentences**: Capitalize the first word of every sentence including quoted statements and direct questions.
- **Composition**: Capitalize the first, last and most important words in the names of books, movies, plays, poems, operas, songs, radio and television programs, and the like: Family Guy, Game of Thrones, Phantom of the Opera.
- **Titles**: Capitalize formal titles only when used in front of a name, not when used after the name: Associate Professor John Doe / John Doe, associate professor.
- **Academic titles**: Capitalize and spell out formal titles only when they precede a name: Chancellor David Nachriener.

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3.2.8: Homonyms

Homonyms are words that sound alike but that two words that don't always have the same meaning. The most often commonly confused words are provided here with examples. If you are ever in doubt which one to use, check your dictionary.

Affect, Effect

Affect is most commonly a verb, usually meaning "influence." (An easy way to remember this is that *affect* starts with an "a," as does *action*.) As a noun, it is a psychological term for emotion.

Effect is most common as a noun meaning "result." *Effect* used as a verb means to "bring about" some kind of change.

Example 3.2.8.1:

The game *affected* the standings. Its *effect* was overwhelming. It *effected* a change in the *affect* of the winning team's captain.

Afterward, Afterwards, Afterword

Afterward and **afterwards** are synonymous adverbs meaning that an event occurs later than another. An **afterword** is an epilogue.

Aid, Aide

Aid is a noun meaning "assistance" or a verb meaning "assist."

An **aide** is a person who serves or offers assistance.

Example 3.2.8.2:

The aide will aid the victim.

It's, Its

It's is a contraction, short for either "it is" or "it has."

Its is the possessive form of "it." This usually means that the following noun phrase belongs to "it." It is important to recognize that "its" in the possessive form does not have an apostrophe; it is in the same category as "his."

Example 3.2.8.3:

- *It's* [It is] my dog.
- What is *its* [possessive pronoun] name?
- The computer crashed a few minutes ago, and it's [it has] done it again.

Lay, Lie

Lay is the action word.

Lie is the state of being or a telling someone something untruthful on purpose.

Example 3.2.8.4:

- I will *lay* the book on the desk.
- I plan to *lie* in bed most of Saturday.
- Jim will probably *lie* to get out of being punished for breaking the window.

To, Too, Two

To is generally used to describe a relationship between things. It is also used as an infinitive verb, as in "I love **to** eat."

Example 3.2.8.5:

Matt is going *to* the doctor.

Too is usually used when you are describing an excess or is used when noting something is in addition.

Example 3.2.8.6:

- I usually eat *too* much on Thanksgiving.
- Joe cleaned the house, washed the car, and mowed the lawn, *too*.

Two is the word you use for the number **2**.

Example 3.2.8.7:

You have *two* minutes left before class starts.

Then, Than

Then indicates time.

Example 3.2.8.8:

First we went to dinner, and *then* we went to the show.

Than is comparative.

Example 3.2.8.9:

I would rather see the comedy *than* see the horror movie.

Versus, Verses

Versus indicates opposition.

Verses is the plural of verse, as related to poetry.

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3.2.9: Subject and Verb

Subject agreement is that the agreement of subjects and verbs.

- **Singular**: The *whale*, which doesn't mature sexually until six or seven years old and which has only one calf per year, is at risk for extinction because *it reproduces* so slowly.
- **Plural**: *During election season*, several civic *groups* sponsor public *debates* in which *candidates* present their views and audience *members ask questions*.
- **Singular**: *Digging* a few inches into the dunes, even at 750 feet above the valley floor, *reveals* wet sand.
- **Plural**: The *dunes comprise* small *rocks* and dry, sandy *soil* that constantly *form* strange designs under the ever-present wind.

What Is Subject-Verb Agreement?

Subject-verb requires that the main verb - the verb starting the predicate - complements the "root" noun regardless of what other information is in the way (i.e. prepositional phrases, especially ones that begin with "of").

Example 3.2.9.1:

- *Characteristics* of the middle child often *include* an equitable temperament and high feelings of security and self-esteem.
- The opportunity *cost* of loaning out the funds *is* usually reflected in the interest rate.
- A certain *percentage* of the cars produced by major manufacturers *meets* stricter emission standards in order for the company to sell their products in regulated regions.

Other guidelines for making subjects and verbs agree include:

- Non-count nouns — those that don't have a singular or plural form, such as *furniture, baggage, poetry, melancholy* — take a singular verb.
- Two or more singular nouns joined by an "and" take a plural verb: A timely, relevant *topic* and an *environment* of trust *produce* a good class discussion.
- When two nouns differing in number are joined by "or," the verb should take the form of the noun closest to it: Most viewers of the painting assume that either the monkey's *antics* or the handler's *chagrin* causes the young men's laughter.

Rules

Pronouns (words such as *it, her, them, this, someone, who, him, they, themselves, herself*, etc.) replace specific nouns (persons, places, or things). Like subjects and verbs, pronouns and nouns need to agree in **number**: in whether they are singular or plural. They also need to agree in **gender**: masculine, feminine, or inclusive (both).

Three specific instances, though, can cause problems:

1. The nouns "each" and "one" are singular and take singular pronouns; "either" or "neither" is singular unless it specifically refers to plural alternatives.
2. When using singular nouns that refer to both sexes or for which the gender is not known, use both masculine and feminine pronouns together (*him or her, he or she, himself or herself, his or her*) or rewrite the sentence to make the noun and the pronoun both plural. (If all of the members of a group are of one gender, it is acceptable to use the male or female pronoun, as in "*Each* member of the football team will take his gear onto the bus.")
3. Some nouns can be either singular or plural: *audience, group, team, unit, class*, and others. Use a singular pronoun if the group is acting as a unit, as in "The *audience* expressed *its* appreciation with loud applause." Use a plural pronoun if the group is acting as individual members, as in "The *team* went *their* separate ways, some showering, some leaving the stadium, some drinking champagne, and some going home to sleep." [In the second example, it's a good idea to write "team members" to be clear.]

The words "they" and "their" are third-person plural personal pronouns in Modern English. The singular "they" and "their" is used as a gender-neutral singular rather than as a plural pronoun, but the correctness of this usage is disputed.

Example 3.2.9.2:

- Every one of the studies indicated ~~their~~ **its** methodology.
- Neither Jackson nor Juarez believed ~~they~~ **he** had been represented unfairly.
- Each researcher included a control group with ~~their his~~ **his or her** test group.
- By 1999, the lacrosse team had outgrown ~~their~~ **its** space.
- Neither a crocodile nor a lion ~~are~~ **is** a suitable pet.
- Either Ed or Bill ~~are~~ **is** a plumber.

When the individual nouns are plural, standard noun/verb agreement applies:

- Neither crocodiles nor lions ~~is~~ **are** suitable pets.
- Either Ed and Bill or Ted and Jeff ~~is~~ **are** plumbers.

Unnecessary Tense Shift

Verbs are action words. "Tense" refers to the time when an action takes place: past, present, or future. Necessary tense shifts simply make it clear to your reader when actions have taken, are taking, or will take place. When you "shift tense unnecessarily," however, it means you change the times when actions are taking place within a section of text in a way that doesn't seem to make sense. Notice how the tense changes cause confusion in the following examples:

- In February 2003, the Sefton City Council passed an ordinance that *limited* the number of dogs city residents *could keep* on their property to three. Several residents *objected* and formally *petitioned* the council to repeal the ordinance, but the council *upheld* it. Their reasoning *is* that having more than three dogs *creates* potentially dangerous situations. In November 2004, however, changes in the Council's membership *resulted* in the ordinance being repealed.
- While St. Cloud *struggles* with keeping rental housing from dominating the housing market, other communities in central Minnesota *undertook* several initiatives to build more apartments and condominiums.

The best way to find unnecessary tense shifts is to read a piece of writing through one time just looking for tense and asking yourself whether each verb tense accurately reflects the time period it took place, takes place, or will take place in. Start by using a highlighter to mark each verb, and then ask yourself if the "time" is correct for each one. The correction:

- In February 2003, the Sefton City Council *passed* an ordinance that *limited* the number of dogs city residents *could keep* on their property to three. Several residents *objected* and formally *petitioned* the council to repeal the ordinance, but the council *upheld* it. Their reasoning *was* that having more than three dogs *creates* potentially dangerous situations. In November 2004, however, changes in the Council's membership *resulted* in the ordinance being repealed.

(No reason exists to believe that those who then thought that three or more dogs in a household created a dangerous situation have changed their minds or that dogs' behavior in a group of three or more has changed. The composition of the council had changed, and the composition of the city council having changed, so the city council voted differently).

The following example shows that the action took place in the past:

- While St. Cloud *struggled* with keeping rental housing from dominating the housing market, other communities in central Minnesota *undertook* several initiatives to build more apartments and condominiums.

This following example shows the action is taking place in the present or is referring to a current situation:

- While St. Cloud *struggles* with keeping rental housing from dominating the housing market, other communities in central Minnesota *are undertaking* several initiatives to build more apartments and condominiums.

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3.2.10: Sentences

Types of Sentences

A sentence is a complete thought (also called an independent clause) containing a subject and a predicate. There are four sentence types: simple, compound, complex, and compound complex. Varying sentence structure within a piece of writing helps keep the reader engaged. Too many sentences written in the same manner can cause the reader to start skimming.

Simple Sentences are independent clauses utilizing only one subject/predicate structure.

- Josef loves pizza.
- Josef loves pizza for breakfast. (A prepositional phrase may be added.)
- Josef and Yolanda love pizza. (A compound subject is acceptable.)
- Josef loves pizza and eats it for breakfast. (A compound predicate is acceptable.)
- Josef and Yolanda love pizza and eat it for breakfast. (Both a compound subject and predicate is acceptable.)

Compound Sentences combine two sentences into one.

- Josef loves pizza, **but** Yolanda prefers spaghetti. (Use of a coordinating conjunction FANBOYS.)
- Josef loves pizza; Yolanda prefers spaghetti. (Use of a semi-colon. This structure should only be used if the sentences are short and highly related.)
- Rosa is willing to pay for the pizza; **nevertheless**, Rafael will warm up last night's spaghetti. (Conjunctive adverb. Use a semi-colon in front and a comma after.)

Complex Sentences use both a dependent clause and an independent clause.

- *Although* Rosa is willing to pay for the pizza, Rafael will warm up last night's spaghetti.
- Rafael chooses to warm up last night's spaghetti *because* he does not like pizza.

Compound/Complex Sentences have two or more independent clauses and one dependent clause.

- *Because* Rosa is willing to pay for the pizza, Rafael decided not to warm up the spaghetti, **and** he will eat with her tonight.

Exercise 3.2.10.1

Identify the sentences per their type

1. If Doug wants a new car, he'll have to get a second job. _____
2. Doug's new car cost a lot of money. _____
3. Doug loves his new car, but his mom thinks he paid too much. _____
4. He borrowed money from her. _____
5. . Since he started working the second job, he's had less time to party, and he misses being with his friends. _____

Sentence Mood

The **indicative** mood expresses an assertion, denial, or question.

Example: He is not vacationing in Spain.

The **imperative** mood expresses command, prohibition, entreaty, or advice.

Example: Go visit him.

The **subjunctive** mood expresses doubt or something contrary to fact.

Example: If I were working in Spain, I'd appreciate visits from family members.

Sentence Purpose

A **declarative sentence** is used to make a statement.

Example: I like your shoes.

An **imperative sentence** is used to make a request or demand

Example: Give me your shoes.

An **interrogative sentence** is used to ask a question.

Example: Where did you get your shoes?

An **exclamatory sentence** - used to make an exclamation:

Example: It is past time to throw away those smelly socks!

Clauses

There are two kinds of clauses.

The **independent clause** is a simple sentence containing a subject and a predicate.

Example: Anya thinks she has too much homework.

The **dependent clause** is information added to the sentence by either a subordinate conjunction or a relative pronoun. Relative pronouns include *who*, *which*, *that* or *whose*.

Example 3.2.10.1:

- Anya, *who* thinks she has too much homework, is struggling to get it all done.
- *Because* Anya has too much homework, she struggles to get it all done.

Fragments

A **fragment** is a grouping of words that do not form a complete thought. While fragments sometimes work in first person narrations, they do not belong in college or professional writing except in quotes. Often, in dialogue, this is appropriate.

Example: His mother scolded him when he finally got home. “About time!”

There is no subject or verb in the mother’s declaration. The subject “It” and the verb “is” is inferred.

There are five sentence beginnings that often create a fragment:

1. To and a verb—To get to the nearest exit.
2. Dependent words—Because I was late.
3. “Ing” phrases—Hanging by a thread.
4. Prepositions—Under the car seat.
5. Examples and explanations—For example, ketchup and mustard.

Multiple ways exist to fix fragments:

- hooking up the fragment to the sentence before or after it (whichever one it seems to relate to), often using a comma, colon, or dash;
- adding the missing actor (noun) or action (verb); or
- fleshing out the thought to express what was previously not “spelled out.”

As an editing strategy, sometimes writers can spot fragments if they read the paper aloud from the last sentence back to the first.

The Run-On Sentence

There are two types of run-on sentences: a **fused sentence** and a **comma splice**.

The **fused sentence** has two complete thoughts next to each other without punctuation. The technical grammatical definition of a run-on sentence is one that fuses, or “runs together,” two or more independent clauses.

Incorrect: He ordered pizza for everyone he did not have the money to pay for it all.

The **comma splice** run on sentence has a comma separating the two complete thoughts.

Incorrect: He ordered pizza for everyone, he did not have the money to pay for it all.

Fixing run-on sentences

Once you find a run-on sentence and notice where the two independent clauses "collide," you can then decide on how best to separate the clauses:

- You can make two complete sentences by inserting a period; this is the strongest level of separation.
- You can use a semicolon between the two clauses if they are of equal importance, and you want your reader to consider the points together. (See previous bullet point)
- You can use a semicolon with a transition word to indicate a specific relation between the two clauses.
- You can use a coordinating conjunction and a comma, also to indicate a relationship.
- Or, you can add a word to one clause to make it dependent.

Example 3.2.10.2:

Here are a variety of examples in correct sentence form:

- He ordered pizza for everyone. **He** did not have the money to pay for it all.
- He ordered pizza for everyone, **but** he did not have the money to pay for it all.
- He ordered pizza for everyone; he did not have the money to pay for it all.
- He ordered pizza for everyone; **however**, he did not have the money to pay for it all.
- He ordered pizza for everyone, **although** he did not have the money to pay for it all.

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3.2.11: Modifiers

Dangling modifiers

A common way to save words and combine ideas is by starting a sentence with a phrase, a **modifier**, that provides additional information about an element in the sentence without having to make a whole separate sentence to state it. The rule for using modifiers at the beginning of a sentence is that **the thing being modified must immediately follow the modifier**. Sometimes this requires you to rearrange the sentence; other times you have to "spell out" what is being modified if you didn't include it. Three examples help illustrate:

Example 3.2.11.1:

1. Covering most of Minnesota, the illustration showed the glacier that left the state with its thousands of lakes.

In this sentence, the meaning seems to imply that the illustration rather than the glacier covered most of Minnesota.

Corrected:

Covering most of Minnesota, the glacier left the state with its thousands of lakes, as depicted on the illustration.

2. Trekking across the desert, fierce winds swirled around the riders.

In this sentence, the meaning implies that the fierce winds were trekking across the desert)

Corrected:

Trekking across the desert, the riders were assaulted by fierce winds. OR As the riders trekked across the desert, fierce winds swirled around them.

3. First coined in 1980, historian Linda Kerber used the term "republican motherhood" to describe a phenomenon occurring after the Revolutionary War in which women were encouraged to promote the ideals of liberty and democracy to their children.

Corrected:

First coined in 1980, the term "republican motherhood" was used by historian Linda Kerber to describe a phenomenon occurring after the Revolutionary War in which women were encouraged to promote the ideals of liberty and democracy to their children.

Misplaced Modifiers

A **misplaced modifier's** referent is present and accounted for, but as its name implies, the modifier itself is out of place within the sentence, such that it seems to modify another referent in the sentence, resulting in ambiguity or confusion. The following examples illustrate the point:

Example 3.2.11.2:

1. Erik couldn't ride his bicycle with a broken leg.

Corrected:

With his broken leg, Erik couldn't ride his bicycle

The incorrect version seems to indicate that the bicycle had a broken leg.

2. The little girl walked the dog wearing a tutu.

Corrected:

Still wearing a tutu, the little girl walked the dog.

The incorrect version seems to imply that the dog could be wearing the tutu.

3. Just don't stand there.

Corrected:

Don't just stand there.

The incorrect version places the modifier “just” after the understood “you” rather than next to the verb it actually modifies.

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