INTRODUCTION TO COLLEGE COMPOSITION



Lumen Learning

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Licensing

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

1: Types of Reading Material

Topic hierarchy

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1.2: Outcome: Types of Reading Material
1.3: Comparing Genres, Example 1
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1.9: Self Check: Types of Reading

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1.1: Introduction: Reading

Skills to Develop

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

Why should we analyze academic reading strategies?



***Figure* 1.1.1**

Our society takes basic literacy skills for granted. Much of our culture relies on the ability to read (and write) and take part in the communication that reading allows.

Imagine for a few moments that this wasn't the case. The following video demonstrates what life is like, when half of adult society is excluded from the ability to read.



This video references how these women's lives changed, or were in the process of changing, because they gained the ability to read. Take a few moments and reflect on what *you're* able to do now, because you can read. What daily activities of yours rely on this skill?

Now, consider what you would like to be able to do, that your current reading ability doesn't allow for right now. What benefits will stronger reading habits bring you in the next few years?

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1.2: Outcome: Types of Reading Material

Skills to Develop

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

Analyze various types of reading material

When major events happen, we expect to hear conversations about it in many different arenas around us. Take the 2016 U.S. Presidential campaign: discussions spawned from the very interesting candidates ripple through many parts of daily life.

Even when the subject is the same (everyone talking about Donald Trump's presidential bid, as an example), we expect the tone and the purpose of the conversation to shift, depending on who's talking. Conversations with family members might be quite different than those with local community or religious leaders. That's only natural.

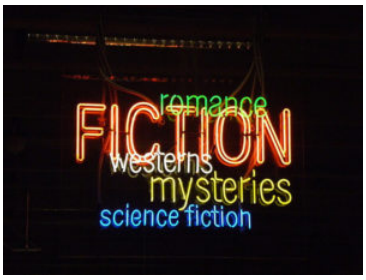


***Figure* 1.2.1**

The same is true with different written resources: even when the topic is the same, differences in genre result in texts that can have more differences than similarities. **Genre**, or categories of written text that share common features, help us form expectations before we start to read, and shape our reading experience.

Knowing what to expect about the purpose and form of a text you pick up to read, will help you be open to the specific content it contains. As your needs change, you also can change the type of genre you're reading to better suit your purposes. For instance, reference works like encyclopedias help us get a basic understanding of a topic, while news articles will help us understand the topic as it factors in current events.

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1.3: Comparing Genres, Example 1

Introduction

In the next few pages, you'll read excerpts from different types of sources. Before knowing much about the much about the pieces, like who wrote them or where they were first published, consider what you learn about them just from these snippets.

"ELECTRIC AND PLUG-IN HYBRIDS"

Learning Objectives

After reading this module, students should be able to

- outline the traditional dependence of transportation on oil and the internal combustion engine
- understand two alternatives to oil as a transportation fuel: hydrogen and electricity
- understand the dual use of oil and electricity in hybrid vehicles and their impact on energy efficiency and carbon emissions

Introduction

Since the early 20th Century, oil and the **internal combustion engine** have dominated transportation. The fortunes of oil and vehicles have been intertwined, with oil racing to meet the energy demands of the ever growing power and number of personal vehicles, vehicles driving farther in response to growing interstate highway opportunities for long distance personal travel and freight shipping, and greater personal mobility producing living patterns in far-flung suburbs that require oil and cars to function. In recent and future years, the greatest transportation growth will be in developing countries where the need and the market for transportation is growing rapidly. China has an emerging middle class that is larger than the entire population of the United States, a sign that developing countries will soon direct or strongly influence the emergence of new technologies designed to serve their needs. Beyond deploying new technologies, developing countries have a potentially large second advantage: they need not follow the same development path through outdated intermediate technologies taken by the developed world. Leapfrogging directly to the most advanced technologies avoids legacy infrastructures and long turnover times, allowing innovation and deployment on an accelerated scale.

Exercise 1.3.1

Question for consideration:

As you read through the passage above, what distinguishing features about the text stand out to you?

Answer

Features you noted might include:

- separate "Learning Objectives" and "Introduction" section
- use of the word "students" in Learning Objectives
- bullet list in Learning Objectives
- hyperlink on phrase "internal combustion engine"
- long sentences
- complex and varied sentence structure
- formal tone

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1.4: Comparing Genres, Example 2

Introduction

Again, read through the excerpt below, which is the opening to a longer text. What do you notice while reading, without knowing much about the source overall?

"WILL THE TESLA MODEL 3 RECHARGE THE U.S. ELECTRIC VEHICLE MARKET?"

Few product launches in recent memory have captured as much attention as last week's unveiling of the Tesla Model 3 electric vehicle (EV), Tesla's first vehicle pitched at the mass market.

Orders were flooding in even before Tesla CEO Elon Musk revealed the car to a giddy audience last Thursday evening, with prospective buyers queuing at Tesla stores throughout the day to place a deposit on a vehicle they might not even receive for two years or more.

Musk made the case for EVs being "**really important for the future of the world**," combating rising greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution.

The Model 3 is really important for the future of Tesla and the future of EVs. It promises the sales growth that automotive wunderkind Tesla needs to survive and renews interest in a technology that is yet to have significant real-world impact. Yet even with the introduction of Tesla's flashy new sedan, more pieces need to be in place before the EV market goes truly mainstream.

Battery prices dropping

When the Chevrolet Volt plug-in hybrid and Nissan Leaf battery-electric vehicle hit U.S. showrooms in December 2010, the price of gasoline was rising, and so were expectations for the future of EVs.

Shortly after, President Obama articulated the goal of **having one million EVs on U.S. roads** by 2015, and committed billions of investment in EV manufacturing capacity, recharging infrastructure deployment and vehicle purchase incentives.

Exercise 1.4.1

Question for consideration:

As you read through the passage above, what distinguishing features about the text stand out to you?

Answer

Features you noted might include:

- title is in the form of a question
- seems to focus on current events
- short paragraphs, often only 1 sentence long
- sentences are fairly long and complex
- two hyperlinked phrases section header, "Battery Prices Dropping"
- formal tone

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1.5: Comparing Genres, Example 3

Introduction

Once more, read through the excerpt below. What do you notice while reading, without knowing much about the source overall?

“CANNIBALISM IN THE CARS”

I visited St. Louis lately, and on my way West, after changing cars at Terre Haute, Indiana, a mild, benevolent-looking gentleman of about forty-five, or maybe fifty, came in at one of the way-stations and sat down beside me. We talked together pleasantly on various subjects for an hour, perhaps, and I found him exceedingly intelligent and entertaining. When he learned that I was from Washington, he immediately began to ask questions about various public men, and about Congressional affairs; and I saw very shortly that I was conversing with a man who was perfectly familiar with the ins and outs of political life at the Capital, even to the ways and manners, and customs of procedure of Senators and Representatives in the Chambers of the national Legislature. Presently two men halted near us for a single moment, and one said to the other:

“Harris, if you’ll do that for me, I’ll never forget you, my boy.”

My new comrade’s eye lighted pleasantly. The words had touched upon a happy memory, I thought. Then his face settled into thoughtfulness—almost into gloom. He turned to me and said,

“Let me tell you a story; let me give you a secret chapter of my life—a chapter that has never been referred to by me since its events transpired. Listen patiently, and promise that you will not interrupt me.”

I said I would not, and he related the following strange adventure, speaking sometimes with animation, sometimes with melancholy, but always with feeling and earnestness.

Exercise 1.5.1

Question for consideration:

As you read through the passage above, what distinguishing features about the text stand out to you?

Answer

Features you noted might include:

- has an unusual, interesting title
- uses first-person pronoun (“I”)
- includes dialogue
- uses old-fashioned language
- tells a story
- introduces characters

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1.6: Comparing Genres, Example 4

Introduction

Once more, read through the excerpt below. What do you notice while reading, without knowing much about the source overall?

“HYBRID VEHICLE”

A **hybrid vehicle** uses two or more distinct types of power, such as internal combustion engine+electric motor,[1] e.g. in diesel-electric trains using diesel engines and electricity from overhead lines, and submarines that use diesels when surfaced and batteries when submerged. Other means to store energy include pressurized fluid, in **hydraulic hybrids**.

Heavy vehicles

Hybrid **power trains** use **diesel-electric** or **turbo-electric** to power railway locomotives, buses, heavy goods vehicles, mobile **hydraulic machinery**, and ships. A **diesel**/**turbine engine** drives an electric generator or hydraulic pump, which powers electric/hydraulic motor(s) – strictly an electric/hydraulic transmission (not a hybrid), unless it can accept power from outside. With large vehicles conversion losses decrease, and the advantages in distributing power through wires or pipes rather than mechanical elements become more prominent, especially when powering multiple drives — e.g. driven wheels or propellers. Until recently most heavy vehicles had little secondary energy storage, e.g. batteries/**hydraulic accumulators** — excepting non-nuclear **submarines**, one of the oldest production hybrids, running on diesels while surfaced and batteries when submerged. Both series and parallel setups were used in WW2 submarines.

Exercise 1.6.1

Question for consideration:

As you read through the passage above, what distinguishing features about the text stand out to you?

Answer

Features you noted might include:

- two alternative suggestions for reading at the top
- several hyperlink text phrases
- use of footnotes
- phrase “hybrid vehicle” in bold
- formal tone
- technical language
- section header, “Heavy vehicles”
- historical and present-day information

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1.7: Comparing Genres, Example 5

Introduction

One last time, read through the excerpt below. What do you notice while reading, without knowing much about the source overall?

"THE INFLUENCE OF INTERSECTIONS ON FUEL CONSUMPTION IN URBAN ARTERIAL ROAD TRAFFIC: A SINGLE VEHICLE TEST IN HARBIN, CHINA"

Abstract

The calculating method for fuel consumption (*FC*) was put forward and calibrated and the characteristics of the fuel consumption on intersections were analyzed based on 18 groups of vehicular operating data which were acquired from the test experiment of a single vehicle along the urban arterial roads in Harbin, China. The results obtained show that 50.36% of the fuel consumption for the test vehicle was used at the area of intersections compared with 28.9% of the influencing distance and 68.5% of the running time; and 78.4% of them was burnt at the stages of acceleration and idling. Meanwhile, the type (c) of the vehicular operating status was illustrated to be the worst way of reducing fuel consumption, the causes were analyzed and four improvement strategies were put forward.

Introduction

Statistically, one-third of the gasoline was exhausted by autos worldwide each year; and energy supply had become one of huge challenges for human beings. Consequently, 3 main fuel consumption reduction technologies were put forward and implemented from the aspects of vehicles, driving behaviors and traffic management and control respectively. Above all, advanced engine technologies, which were usually improved by auto makers and researchers, were gradually applied including hybrid electric engine, and turbocharger technology. For instance, hybrid electric vehicles (HEVs) or plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) were proved to be successful to reduce the fuel consumption; many relative strategies and methods were proposed to save the HEVs fuel consumption. Hu *et al*. and Yang *et al*. addressed the electrochemical energy buffers and robust coordinated control applied for the HEVs separately and the results showed that the proposed strategy could improve the fuel economy [1,2]. Hu *et al*. and Li *et al*. discussed the two optimization-based and dynamic programming-based global optimal energy management strategies for the plug-in hybrid electric bus (PHEBs) [3,4]; Sun *et al*. developed a PHEVs energy management algorithm to achieve enhanced fuel economy under different traffic flow information conditions [5]. Zheng *et al*. analyzed the effect of battery temperature on fuel consumption of fuel cell hybrid vehicles (FCHVs) [6]; Hu *et al*. discussed the optimal dimensioning or longevity-conscious dimensioning and power management for the fuel cell hybrid buses (FCHBs) with the method of convex programming and the findings showed that they are optimal and efficient [7,8]. Meanwhile, stop-start technology (STT) can save about 5~15% fuel consumption [9]; and the turbocharger technology can also reduce fuel consumption for the vehicles and be used widely.

Exercise 1.7.1

Question for consideration:

As you read through the passage above, what distinguishing features about the text stand out to you?

Answer

Features you noted might include:

- long title, with a colon indicating a subtitle
- has an abstract and introduction section
- technical language, with abbreviations for common terms like (FA)
- includes percentages and statistics
- footnotes and in-text citations
- formal tone
- long, complex sentences and paragraphs

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1.8: Comparing Genres, Conclusion

Even though the previous pages all were about cars in some way, you no doubt realized they were very different in tone, style, and quality.

Let's take a closer look at each.

Example 1

"Electric and Plug-in Hybrids," by George Crabtree, came from OpenStax CNX, a textbook publisher.



Figure 1.8.1

The full source demonstrates some features common to textbooks:

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

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

Example 2

"Will the Tesla Model 3 recharge the U.S. electric vehicle market?" by David Keith, came from *The Conversation*, an online news source.



Figure 1.8.2

The full article demonstrates some features common to journalism:

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

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

Example 3

"Cannibalism in the Cars," by Mark Twain, came from a collection of his short stories, *Sketches New and Old*.

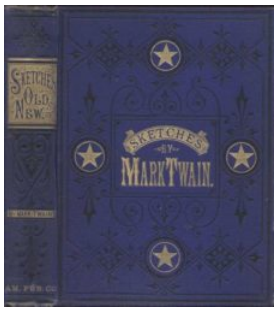


Figure **1.8.3**

The full story demonstrates some features common to literature:

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

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

Example 4

"Hybrid vehicle" came from ***Wikipedia***, the well-known online encyclopedia.



Figure **1.8.4**

The full story demonstrates some features common to reference material:

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

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

Example 5

"The Influence of Intersections on Fuel Consumption in Urban Arterial Road Traffic: A Single Vehicle Test in Harbin, China," by Lina Wu, Yusheng Ci, Jiangwei Chu, and Hongsheng Zhang, came from ***PLoS One***, an online academic journal.



Figure **1.8.5**

The full article demonstrates some features common to academic journal content:

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

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

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1.9: Self Check: Types of Reading

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2: Reading Strategies

Topic hierarchy

2.1: Outcome: Reading Strategies
2.2: Rhetorical Context
2.3: Previewing
2.4: Active Reading
2.5: Summarizing
2.6: Reviewing
2.7: Self Check: Reading Strategies

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2.1: Outcome: Reading Strategies

Skills to Develop

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

Analyze general reading strategies

We know intuitively that reading is good for us, though sometimes it can feel like a chore–especially when it's required for school. The following video emphasizes the benefits that reading can bring, by literally changing the way our brain works. While we won't necessarily learn how to do Kung Fu just by studying a book, reading about an activity apparently makes the pathway towards acquiring that new skill much easier!



Reading for education is a bit of a different activity than reading for pleasure. Effective reading for educational purposes doesn't consist of just looking at a text once and then putting it away. Instead, successful reading in education is a series of interrelated activities that involve interacting with a text several times, in differing ways. The rest of this section walks through those activities, and how they will help you become a stronger student.

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2.2: Rhetorical Context

The following video demonstrates how external factors influence a piece of writing, even before the first word is written down.

The video focuses on the use of rhetoric from the viewpoint as a writer. As you watch, consider how the same elements hold true from the viewpoint as a reader.



As a reader, pay attention to these factors that shaped the document. Consider:

- What do I know about the **author**, just by reading this text? How does the author's experience or education shape the reading?
- What do I know about the **goals** for this work, just by reading this text? How do these goals influence what actually appears in the text?
- What do I know about the **intended audience** for this work? Am I a member of that intended audience?

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2.3: Previewing

Reading Strategy: Previewing

What It Is

Previewing is a strategy that readers use to recall prior knowledge and set a purpose for reading. It calls for readers to skim a text before reading, looking for various features and information that will help as they return to read it in detail later.

Why Use It

According to research, previewing a text can improve comprehension (Graves, Cooke, & LaBerge, 1983, cited in Paris et al., 1991).

Previewing a text helps readers prepare for what they are about to read and set a purpose for reading.

The **genre** determines the reader's methods for previewing:

- Readers preview nonfiction to find out what they know about the subject and what they want to find out. It also helps them understand how an author has organized information.
- Readers preview biography to determine something about the person in the biography, the time period, and some possible places and events in the life of the person.
- Readers preview fiction to determine characters, setting, and plot. They also preview to make predictions about story's problems and solutions.

When To Use It

Previewing is a strategy readers use before and during reading.

How To Use It

When readers preview a text before they read, they first ask themselves whether the text is fiction or nonfiction.

- If the text is fiction or biography, readers look at the title, chapter headings, introductory notes, and illustrations for a better understanding of the content and possible settings or events.
- If the text is nonfiction, readers look at text features and illustrations (and their captions) to determine subject matter and to recall prior knowledge, to decide what they know about the subject. Previewing also helps readers figure out what they don't know and what they want to find out.

How to Preview

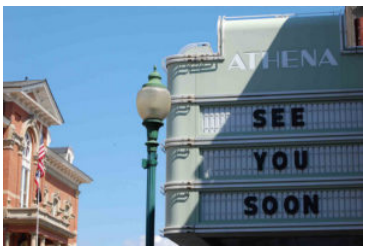


***Figure* 2.3.1** - *Consider previewing a text as similar to watching a movie preview.*

Think of previewing a text as similar to creating a movie trailer. A successful preview for either a movie or a reading experience will capture what the overall work is going to be about, generally what expectations the audience can have of the experience to come, how the piece is structured, and what kinds of patterns will emerge.

Previewing engages your prior experience, and asks you to think about what you already know about this subject matter, or this author, or this publication. Then anticipate what new information might be ahead of you when you return to read this text more closely.

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2.4: Active Reading

A Two-Way Street: Reading as Conversation

Think of every text your instructor assigns as one half of a conversation between you and the writer. Good conversations achieve a balance between listening and responding. This give-and-take process drives human discourse. While one participant speaks, the other listens. But while the listener appears passive on the surface, he's most likely already preparing his response. He may evaluate what his partner says, testing it for how closely it matches his own ideas, accepting or rejecting part or all of the statement. When he does respond, he expresses his reaction, or asks a question about something he doesn't yet understand. Active reading mirrors this process closely. An active reader "listens" to the text, evaluating what the writer says, checking to see if it matches or differs from his current understanding of the issue or idea. He asks pertinent questions if something remains unclear, looking for answers in subsequent sections of the text. His final goal, of course, is to make a statement of his own, in the form of the essay he will eventually produce.

Retracing Your Steps: Read Every Text (at least) Twice

In fact, reading is in many ways better than conversation, because, like writing, it is recursive: you can revisit a text over and over, whereas the spoken word, unless recorded, disappears into the past, often along with part—or all—of the message the speaker was attempting to convey. When you read, you can move forward and backward in time, making sure you've captured every nuance. You should read the text more than once, first for a general understanding, and then for a detailed analysis; your first read-through may raise questions only a second reading can reveal the answers to.

Marking the Trail: Annotation

An active reader views the text as a living document, always incomplete. She reads with pen in hand, ready to write her observations, her questions, and her tentative answers in the margins. We call this annotation, the act of writing notes to oneself in the blank spaces of the page. It's not the same as underlining or highlighting, neither of which promotes active reading. A simple line underneath a passage contains no information; it merely indicates—vaguely—that you found a certain passage more important than the surrounding text. Annotation, on the other hand, is a record of your active responses to the text during the act of reading. A simple phrase summarizing a paragraph, a pointed question, or an emphatic expression of approval or disbelief all indicate spirited engagement with the text, which is the cornerstone of active reading.



***Figure* 2.4.1**

Pace Yourself: Know Your Limitations and Eliminate Distractions

You can't hike the Appalachian Trail in a day. Similarly, you can't expect to sustain active reading longer than your mind and body will allow. Active reading requires energy and attention as well as devotion. Short rest periods between readings allow you to

maintain focus and deliberate on what you have learned. If you remain diligent in your reading practice, you'll find that you can read actively for longer periods of time. But don't push yourself past the point at which you stop paying attention. If your mind begins to wander, take ten minutes away from the text to relax. Ideally, you should read gradually, scheduling an hour or two every day for reading, rather than leaving your assignments until the last minute. You can't hope to gain full or even partial comprehension of a text with a deadline looming overhead.

When and where you read can be as important as how long you read. Plan your reading sessions for hours when your mental energy is at its height—usually during daylight hours. Likewise, you should select an optimal location, preferably one free of distractions. Loud music, the flickering of a TV screen, and the din of conversation tend to divert your attention from the task at hand. Even a momentary distraction, like a quick phone call or a friend asking a question, can interrupt the conversation you are having with your assigned text.

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2.5: Summarizing

Introduction

Are you familiar with the phrase, *the best way to learn something is to teach it to someone else*?

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

Summarizing–condensing someone else's ideas and putting it into your own shortened form–allows you to be sure that you've accurately captured the main idea of the text you're reading.

How to Write Summary Statements

Use these processes to help you write summary statements:

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

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

These summary statements will be very useful to draw from in the final step of the reading process, **reviewing**.

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

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

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2.6: Reviewing

Introduction

Reviewing is the final stage in the academic reading process. All the other steps you've taken while reading–previewing, active reading, and summarizing–put the content into your head. Reviewing helps seal it in place, and makes sure it stays accessible when you need the information later.

You can use a variety of strategies to review:

- quiz yourself using your questions
- review a chapter map you made while previewing or actively reading
- expand the map
- create vocabulary cards
- recall the information in writing or out loud

As you review, monitor your learning.

- What do you know well?
- What still needs reinforcement?

Reviewing in Action

The following section shows what it looks like to review a text, using the summary notes this reader took in previous reading steps.

In the days after I finish reading the chapter, I need to actively review the information and start to learn it well. Since I used the two-column note taking method while I was reading, I decide to quiz myself by covering the right side of my note page and asking myself the questions on the left. If possible, I recite my response aloud or write the answer on a scrap of paper. Then I check my answer against my notes. If I recall the answer correctly, I give myself a checkmark (✓); if incorrect, I give myself an X (✘).

What is a **Mistake** in contract law?	• Legal definition: a circumstance where parties to a contract have entered an agreement that doesn't reflect the parties' actual intentions. ✓ ◦ occurs if parties have a false idea about an important element or didn't agree about a key term of the contract. ✘
Example of a Mistake?	• Ex., if seller offers to sell car to buyer at a certain price but then recognizes the car was underpriced after the sale was complete, the court would *not* nullify the agreement based on mistake. ✘ ◦ Seller cannot prove to the court a state of mind when offer was made. ✘ ◦ Exception: if conditions are clearly out of line, the court may rule in favour of seller unless there was negligence on seller's part. ✘

I work through the remainder of my notes in the same way. I repeat this process over several study sessions since I know I won't have mastered the material after looking at it only once or twice! After a number of review periods, I am able to clearly see which areas I know and where I still need work.

What is a **Mistake** in contract law?	• Legal definition: a circumstance where parties to a contract have entered an agreement that doesn't reflect the parties' actual intentions. ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ◦ occurs if parties have a false idea about an important element or didn't agree about a key term of the contract. ✘✘ ✓ ✓
Example of a Mistake?	• Ex., if seller offers to sell car to buyer at a certain price but then recognizes the car was underpriced after the sale was complete, the court would *not* nullify the agreement based on mistake. ✘ ✓✓ ✓ ◦ Seller cannot prove to the court a state of mind when offer was made. ✘ ✓ ✓ ✓ ◦ Exception: if conditions are clearly out of line, the court may rule in favour of seller unless there was negligence on seller's part. ✘ ✘ ✓ ✓

For variety in my study periods, I might also use my chapter map to test my recall of ideas. I might focus on one major topic and try to recall the sub-points and details related to that topic. Alternatively, I might put a section of the map, such as "Misrepresentation," onto another page and expand the details there. I might also create vocabulary cards for specific terminology that I need to know. I can easily carry a bundle of cards with me and review when I have a few spare minutes.

Sample vocab card:

Front of card

MISTAKE (in contract law)

Back of card

Definition: a circumstance where parties to a contract have entered an agreement that doesn't reflect the parties' actual intentions. • Ex., if seller offers to sell car to buyer at a certain price but then recognizes the car was underpriced after the sale was complete, the court would not nullify the agreement based on mistake.

These different review methods will help me to thoroughly understand and learn my course material. Regular review will also help me monitor my learning, helping me identify what I know well and what still needs work.

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2.7: Self Check: Reading Strategies

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

3: Specialized Reading Strategies

Topic hierarchy

3.1: Outcome: Specialized Reading Strategies
3.2: Online Reading Tips
3.3: How to Read Effectively in the Sciences
3.4: How to Read Effectively in the Social Sciences
3.5: How to Read Effectively in Math
3.6: Reading Tables and Graphs
3.7: Self Check: Specialized Reading Strategies

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3.1: Outcome: Specialized Reading Strategies

Skills to Develop

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

Introduction

The reading process discussed earlier in this module applies to any kind of reading you'll do for school. Beyond the general strategies of previewing, active reading, summarizing, and reviewing, however, you'll find that specific types of reading will place specific demands on you.

Examine the three items below. All are typical of types of reading you'll need to do in different college classes you take. As you can see, they each require a different set of skills to read and interpret correctly.

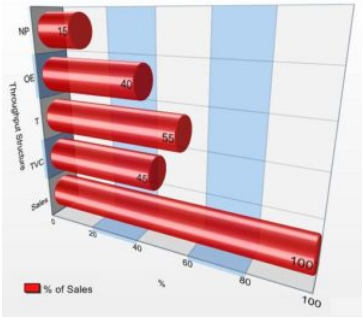


***Figure* 3.1.1** - *Chart of an example of Throughput Accounting structure*

SIGNALING IN YEAST

Yeasts are single-celled eukaryotes; therefore, they have a nucleus and organelles characteristic of more complex life forms. Comparisons of the genomes of yeasts, nematode worms, fruit flies, and humans illustrate the evolution of increasingly-complex signaling systems that allow for the efficient inner workings that keep humans and other complex life forms functioning correctly.

The components and processes found in yeast signals are similar to those of cell-surface receptor signals in multicellular organisms. Budding yeasts are able to participate in a process that is similar to sexual reproduction that entails two haploid cells combining to form a diploid cell . In order to find another haploid yeast cell that is prepared to mate, budding yeasts secrete a signaling molecule called mating factor. When mating factor binds to cell-surface receptors in other yeast cells that are nearby, they stop their normal growth cycles and initiate a cell signaling cascade that includes protein kinases and GTP-binding proteins that are similar to G-proteins.

IDENTIFY THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE GRAPH OF A LINEAR EQUATION AND LINEAR INEQUALITY

Recall that solutions to linear inequalities are whole sets of numbers, rather than just one number, like you find with solutions to equalities (equations).

Here is an example from the section on solving linear inequalities:

Solve for p.

$$\begin{array}{r} 4p+5<29 \\ 4p+5<29 \\ \quad -5 \quad -5 \\ \hline \frac{4}{4}p \quad < \frac{24}{4} \\ p<6 \end{array} \tag{3.1.1}$$

You can interpret the solution as p can be any number less than six. Now recall that we can graph equations of lines by defining the outputs, y, and the inputs, x, and writing an equation.

The following pages in this section will offer targeted advice for approaching different categories of the text and images you'll encounter.

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3.2: Online Reading Tips

Reading on a Screen



***Figure* 3.2.1**

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

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

Eliminate distractions to maintain focus

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

Set a time limit

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

Identify *why* you are reading

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

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

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

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

Preview before you read

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

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

Get prepared to take notes

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

Take notes

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

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

Read difficult material out loud

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

Conclusion

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

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3.3: How to Read Effectively in the Sciences

Explore Your Science Textbook

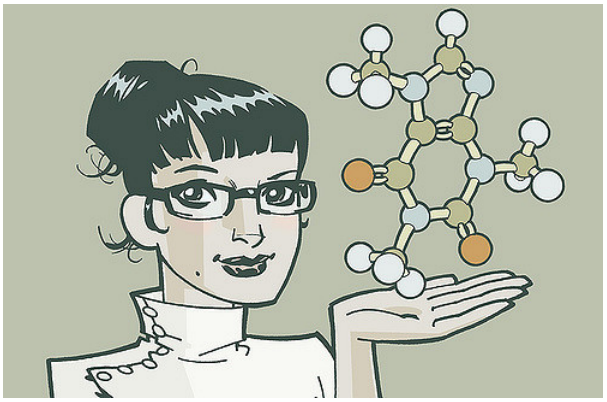


***Figure* 3.3.1**

Explore The Textbook

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

Explore Your Assignments

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

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

Check The Vocabulary

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

Analyze For Comprehension

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

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

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

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

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

- What is the question or problem?

- How was the question answered?
- How do we know it was answered?

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

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

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

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

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



***Figure* 3.3.2**

Synthesize For Understanding

Taking Notes is important for several reasons:

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

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3.4: How to Read Effectively in the Social Sciences

How to work through long reading assignments

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

Organize reading over the weeks and months.



***Figure* 3.4.1**

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

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

These are often the most important parts of any text because the author often signals his or her major themes and arguments. It is necessary, however, to look over, sometimes very carefully and completely, the central portions of the text to identify the evidence provided for the major themes/ theses. Often, the topic (first) sentences of paragraphs provide the links in the author's argument.

Pre-reading (of a book or article):

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

Mechanics of reading and note taking

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

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

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

Analytical reading

1. Classify the book or article according to kind and subject matter. Into what genre does that work fit? What is the book about?
2. Number the major parts in their order and relations. Outline these as you have outlined the whole.
3. Define the specific problem or problems the author has tried to solve. What question does the author claim to address? You might also want to think about how this reading fits into the course. Why did the instructor place the reading at this point in the course? What is the topic on the syllabus? How does this reading provide an answer or information for this topic?
4. What theoretical statements does the author make? A theoretical statement proposes a relationship. For example, structural theories of deviance suggest that deviance (that which is to be explained) is a consequence of the structure (organization of the parts) of a society. In other words, social structure produces deviance.
5. What are the concepts and variables used? Become familiar with the author by defining key words. Know the details of the argument. In the example above: what is social structure? What is meant by deviance? Do structural theorists/ writers assume the reader knows what is meant by social structure? Do you need to find out what this means in order to understand the reading?
6. How does the author's argument/ position compare with that of others who address the same question or related questions? Where are the points of similarity and difference
7. What value judgments does the author make? What values does the author assume readers will share? What assumptions does the author make that may be contestable?
8. What is the author's methodology? (Here you should be concerned not only with the methods used but the kinds of arguments implied or given about what methods are more or less appropriate.) What constitutes evidence in this reading? Know the author's arguments by finding them in, or constructing them out of, sequences of sentences.
9. Determine which of the problems the author has solved and which she has not. Of those not solved, decide which the author knows she has failed to solve. If you disagree with the author, on what basis do you rest your disagreement? Is the author uninformed, misinformed, illogical, imprecise, or incomplete? Criticize fairly; do not pass judgment based on personal opinion, taste, or preference. Is the argument internally consistent? Does the evidence (both that presented by the author and other evidence in the field) support the argument?

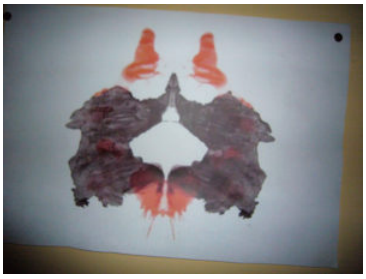


***Figure* 3.4.2**

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3.5: How to Read Effectively in Math

Introduction

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

When reading explanatory material in a math text…

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

Forget About Speed Reading

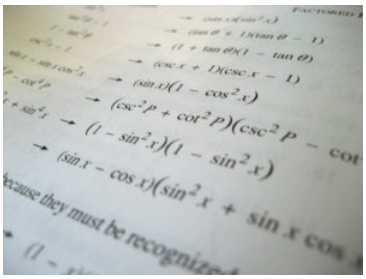


***Figure* 3.5.1**

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

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

When looking at mathematics (equations and numerical expressions)…

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

Read with pencil and paper in hand

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

Go over problems that the author has worked out in detail

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

How to work a solved problem in the textbook

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

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

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

Math texts with visual illustrations

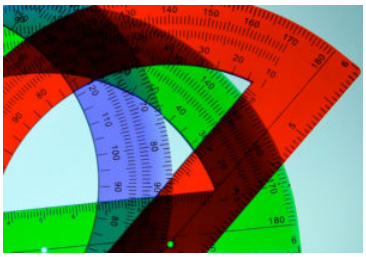


***Figure* 3.5.2**

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

Conclusion

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

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

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

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3.6: Reading Tables and Graphs

The video below breaks down elements of tables, charts, and graphs. It shows how visual elements can be adjusted to give different impressions of the same information.



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3.7: Self Check: Specialized Reading Strategies

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: Vocabulary

Topic hierarchy

4.1: Outcome: Vocabulary
4.2: Context Clues
4.3: Structural Analysis
4.4: Using Reference Tools
4.5: How to Increase Your Vocabulary
4.6: Self Check: Vocabulary

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4.1: Outcome: Vocabulary

Skills to Develop

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

Analyze vocabulary usage

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

> *"**Jabberwocky**"*
>
> *'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves*
> *Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;*
> *All mimsy were the borogoves,*
> *And the mome raths outgrabe.*
>
> *"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!*
> *The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!*
> *Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun*
> *The frumious Bandersnatch!"*
>
> *He took his vorpal sword in hand:*
> *Long time the manxome foe he sought—*
> *So rested he by the Tumtum tree,*
> *And stood awhile in thought.*
>
> *And as in uffish thought he stood,*
> *The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,*
> *Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,*
> *And burbled as it came!*
>
> *One, two! One, two! and through and through*
> *The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!*
> *He left it dead, and with its head*
> *He went galumphing back.*
>
> *"And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?*
> *Come to my arms, my beamish boy!*
> *O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!"*
> *He chortled in his joy.*
>
> *'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves*
> *Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;*
> *All mimsy were the borogoves,*
> *And the mome raths outgrabe.*



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

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

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

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

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4.2: Context Clues

No matter what course or program you are taking, you will have new vocabulary and terminology to learn. While many people turn quickly to their dictionaries for the meanings of new words, this is not always a necessary strategy. Instead, it can be more meaningful to try to reason out the meaning of the word, based on what we already know about it.

When authors write, they often give **context clues** to readers to suggest the meanings of new or difficult words. Context clues usually give you a sense of a word's meaning, so you can continue reading without referring to a dictionary. There are five main types of context clues that may be embedded in sentences.

1. **Definitions or Restatements**
   - The author directly defines the new word within the sentence. This strategy is commonly used in textbook material.
   - e.g. "When people contravene – break or violate – a law in Canada, they can expect to face legal consequences."
   - *Explanation:* "Break or violate" is the definition of the word "contravene".
2. **Synonyms**
   - The author uses a word or phrase with a similar meaning to suggest the meaning of the new word.
   - e.g. "Following his death by accidental drug overdose, actor Heath Ledger posthumously received an Oscar for best supporting actor for his portrayal of The Joker in The Dark Knight."
   - *Explanation:* "Following his death" has a similar meaning to the word "posthumously."
3. **Antonyms**
   - The author uses a word or phrase with an opposite meaning to suggest the meaning of the new word.
   - e.g. "I really don't appreciate your duplicity. I expect you to give me an honest response from now on."
   - *Explanation:* "Honest response" has the opposite meaning of "duplicity" since the speaker expects a different behaviour from the other person from that point on.
4. **Examples**
   - The author provides examples or illustrations of the new word to suggest its meaning.
   - e.g. "Bats, owls, raccoons, and crickets are chiefly nocturnal creatures."
   - *Explanation:* "Bats, owls, raccoons, and crickets" are examples of "nocturnal creatures" (creatures of the night).
5. **General Inference**
   - The author provides enough information in a sentence that the word's meaning can be inferred.
   - e.g. "It would be an egregious mistake to wear a dirty t-shirt and shabby blue jeans to a funeral."
   - *Explanation:* Although "egregious" is not specifically defined, most people would infer that it is inappropriate or offensive to wear worn out clothing at a funeral.

PUT IT TO WORK

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

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4.3: Structural Analysis

Structural analysis is the process of breaking words down into their basic parts to determine word meaning. Structural analysis is a powerful vocabulary tool since knowledge of a few word parts can give you clues to the meanings of a large number of words. Although the meaning suggested by the word parts may not be exact, this process can often help you understand the word well enough that you can continue reading without significant interruption.

When using structural analysis, the reader breaks words down into their basic parts:

- **Prefixes** – word parts located at the beginning of a word to change meaning
- **Roots** – the basic meaningful part of a word
- **Suffixes** – word parts attached to the end of a word; suffixes often alter the part of speech of the word

For example, the word bicyclist can be broken down as follows:

- bi – prefix meaning two
- cycle – root meaning wheel
- ist – a noun suffix meaning 'a person who'

Therefore, structural analysis suggests that a bicyclist is a person on two wheels – a meaning which is close to the word's formal definition.



***Figure* 4.3.1**

Consider the word part –cide. Though it cannot stand as a word by itself, it does have meaning: *to kill*. Think about the many words in our language that include the word part –cide. Knowing this one word part gives us knowledge about many words.

INFIXES

In English, there are really only suffixes and prefixes (part of a larger class called affixes). Other languages have things called infixes. They go *in* the middles of the word. *Piano*, *pianisimo*, *pianisisimo*, etc.

English only has one infix:

- "abso-friggin-lutely"
- "get it to-freaking-gether"

To further develop this skill, refer to the convenient reference sheet **Structural Analysis: Common Word Parts**, for a list of some common prefixes, roots, and suffixes along with their meanings and examples of words that use them.

PUT IT TO WORK

For practice of this skill, try the **Structural Analysis Exercises** from Lethbridge College.

Although structural analysis is a technique that can be used by anyone, there are definitely certain disciplines that use it more extensively. The medical field, in particular, uses terminology grounded firmly in structural analysis. Check out the following sites to learn some common word parts found in the medical field:

- **Building Medical Terms: The Digestive System** – This site helps you build and learn terms related to the digestive system.

- **Medical Terminology from SweetHaven Publishing Services**
- Medical Terminology Systems, Sixth Edition Audio Exercises – This site helps you learn a variety of word parts related to medical terminology.
- **Medword Resources Medical Terminology Basics** – This site contains lists of medical prefixes, suffixes, combining forms, crossword puzzles, and more.
- Medical Terminology at Sheppard Software

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4.4: Using Reference Tools

The Dictionary

Select a Dictionary That's Right for You

With so many different dictionary options out there, this video offers good advice in finding one that fits your personal needs. Though this video only addresses print dictionaries, the same principles apply to online dictionaries, as well.

Selecting the Right Meaning of the Word

Once you've found the dictionary that you find most helpful, you'll still need to be able to determine how to know which of multiple definitions is the one you need at a given time. This video helps you make that determination, and also demonstrates the common features that dictionary definitions include to help you.

The Thesaurus



***Figure* 4.4.1**

Unlike a dictionary, a thesaurus will not provide a definition of the word you look up. Instead, it offers a collection of synonyms–words with similar meanings. It may also offer a list of antonyms–words with opposite meanings.

Sometimes reading a dictionary definition for a word only gets us partial understanding of a word, especially if we encounter it used in a new way in our reading. Checking a thesaurus for that word will help us develop a broader sense of how the word might be applied in this particular situation.

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4.5: How to Increase Your Vocabulary

It’s one thing to expose yourself to new words–it’s another to internalize these new words and make them part of your working vocabulary.

Enjoy the public service video shared below, originally filmed in 1948. Feel free to laugh at its more artificial elements.



Though dated, this video does offer good advice for how to develop a stronger working vocabulary. How would you update these tips to the 21st Century?

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4.6: Self Check: Vocabulary

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

5: Thesis

Topic hierarchy

5.1: Outcome: Thesis

5.2: Explicit Versus Implicit Thesis Statements

5.3: Thesis and Topic Sentences

5.4: Self Check: Thesis

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5.1: Outcome: Thesis

Skills to Develop

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

Analyze thesis ideas of texts

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



***Figure* 5.1.1**

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

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

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

5.1: Outcome: Thesis is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

5.2: Explicit Versus Implicit Thesis Statements

The following video defines the key terms explicit and implicit, as they relate to thesis statements and other ideas present in what you read. It also introduces the excellent idea of the **reading voice** and the **thinking voice** that strong readers use as they work through a text.

To help keep you on your toes, the author of this video challenges you to find her spelling mistake in one of her cards along the way!



According to author Pavel Zemliansky,

> *Arguments then, can be explicit and implicit, or implied. Explicit arguments contain noticeable and definable thesis statements and lots of specific proofs. Implicit arguments, on the other hand, work by weaving together facts and narratives, logic and emotion, personal experiences and statistics. Unlike explicit arguments, implicit ones do not have a one-sentence thesis statement. Instead, authors of implicit arguments use evidence of many different kinds in effective and creative ways to build and convey their point of view to their audience. Research is essential for creative effective arguments of both kinds.*

Even if what you're reading is an informative text, rather than an argumentative one, it might still rely on an implicit thesis statement. It might ask you to piece together the overall purpose of the text based on a series of content along the way.

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5.3: Thesis and Topic Sentences

You'll remember that the first step of the reading process, **previewing,** allows you to get a big-picture view of the document you're reading. This way, you can begin to understand the structure of the overall text.

A later step in the reading process, **summarizing**, allows you to encapsulate what a paragraph, section, or the whole document is about. When summarizing individual paragraphs, it's likely that your summary ends up looking like a paraphrase of that paragraph's **topic sentence**.

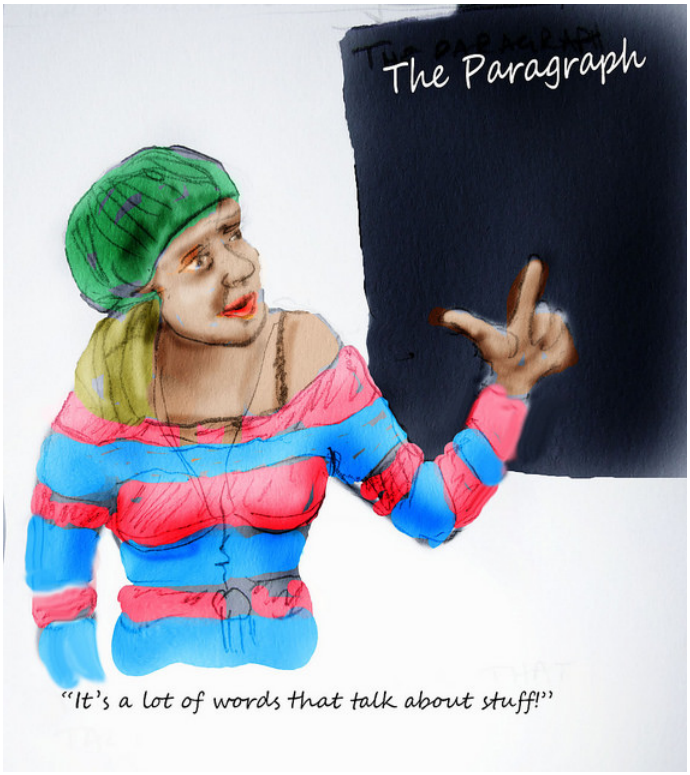


***Figure* 5.3.1**

A paragraph is composed of multiple sentences focused on a single, clearly-defined topic. There should be exactly one main idea per paragraph, so whenever an author moves on to a new idea, he or she will start a new paragraph. For example, this paragraph defines what a paragraph is, and now we will start a new paragraph to deal with a new idea: how a paragraph is structured.

Paragraphs are actually organized much like persuasive papers are. Just like a paper has a **thesis statement** followed by a body of supportive evidence, paragraphs have a topic sentence followed by several sentences of support or explanation. If you look at this paragraph, for example, you will see that it starts with a clear topic sentence letting you know that paragraphs follow a structure similar to that of papers. The next sentence explains how a paragraph is like a paper, and then two more sentences show how this paragraph follows that structure. All of these sentences are clearly connected to the main idea.

The topic sentence of a paragraph serves two purposes: first, it lets readers know what the paragraph is going to be about; second, it highlights the connection between the present paragraph and the one that came before. The topic sentence of this paragraph explains to a reader what a topic sentence does, fulfilling the first function. It also tells you that this paragraph is going to talk about one particular aspect of the previous paragraph's main idea: we are now moving from the general structure of the paragraph to the particular role of the topic sentence.

After the topic sentence introduces the main idea, the remainder of the sentences in a paragraph should support or explain this topic. These additional sentences might detail the author's position on the topic. They might also provide examples, statistics, or other evidence to support that position. At the end of the paragraph, the author may include some sort of conclusion or a transition

that sets up the next idea he or she will be discussing (for example, you can see this clearly in the last sentence of the third paragraph).

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5.4: Self Check: Thesis

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

6: Supporting Claims

Topic hierarchy

6.1: Outcome: Supporting Claims

6.2: Point, Illustration, Explanation

6.3: Logos, Ethos, Pathos

6.4: Self Check: Supporting Claims

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6.1: Outcome: Supporting Claims

Skills to Develop

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

Analyze supporting claims of texts

We've examined the relationship between a text's thesis statement and its overall organization, through the idea of topic sentences in body paragraphs. But of course body paragraphs have a lot more "stuff" in them than just topic sentences. This section will examine in more detail what that "stuff" is made of.

First, watch this video that details the relationship between a topic sentence and supporting details, using the metaphor of a house. The video establishes the difference between major and minor details, which will be useful to apply in coming discussions.



(The video has instrumental guitar for audio, but no spoken words, so can be watched without sound if desired.)

The following image shows the visual relationship between the overall thesis, topic sentences, and supporting ideas:

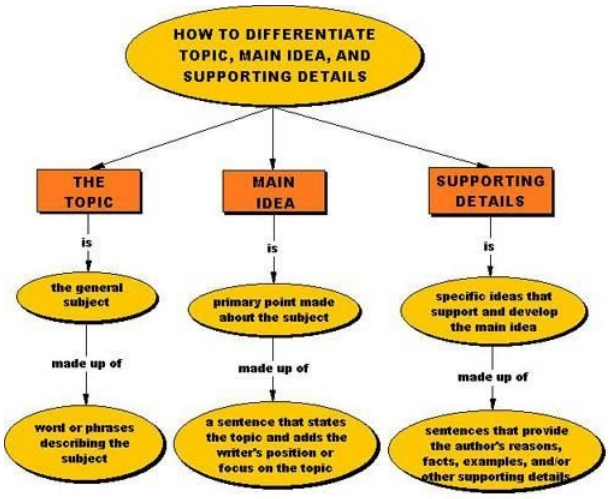


***Figure* 6.1.1**

While this image shows where a topic sentence might reside in the paragraph, in relation to the rest of the supporting details:

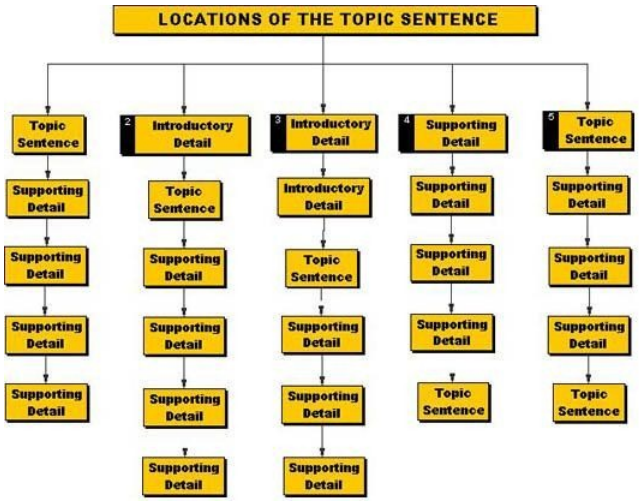


***Figure* 6.1.2**

In #5 of the sequence above, the topic sentence is rephrased between the opening and closing of the paragraph, to reinforce the concept more strongly.

What exactly these supporting details consist of will be examined in more detail as we move into this section.

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6.2: Point, Illustration, Explanation

How does the structure of a body paragraph support a thesis?

Many authors use the PIE format to structure their essays. **PIE = point, illustration, explanation.** The point furthers a thesis or claim, the illustration provides support for the point, and the explanation tells the audience why the evidence provided furthers the point and/or the thesis.



***Figure* 6.2.1**

For example, in his argument against the +/- grading system at Radford, student-writer Tareq Hajj makes the **Point** that "Without the A+, students with high grades in the class would be less motivated to work even harder in order to increase their grades."

He **Illustrates** with a quote from a professor who argues, "'(students) have less incentive to try'" (Fesheraki, 2013).

Hajj then **Explains** that "not providing [the most motivated students] with additional motivation of a higher grade … is inequitable."

Through his explanation, Hajj links back to his claim that "A plus-minus grading scale … should not be used at Radford University"because, as he explains, it is "inequitable." The PIE structure of his paragraph has served to support his thesis.

ALL CLAIMS NEED EVIDENCE

Ever heard the phrase "everyone is entitled to his opinion"? It is indeed true that people are free to believe whatever they wish. However, the mere fact that a person believes something is not an argument in support of a position. If a text's goal is to communicate effectively, it must provide valid explanations and sufficient and relevant evidence to convince its audience to accept that position. In other words, "every author is entitled to his opinion, but no author is entitled to have his opinion go unchallenged."

What are the types of evidence?

Any text should provide illustrations for each of its points, but it is especially important to provide reliable evidence in an academic argument. This evidence can be based on **primary source material or data** (the author's own experience and/or interviews, surveys, polls, experiments, that she may have created and administered). Evidence can also stem from **secondary source material or data**(books, journals, newspapers, magazines, websites or surveys, experiments, statistics, polls, and other data collected by others).

Let's say, for example, that you are reading an argument that college instructors should let students use cell phones in class. Primary source material might include a survey the author administered that asks students if policies forbidding cell phone usage actually stop them from using their phones in class. Secondary sources might include articles about the issue from *Faculty Focus* or *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

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6.3: Logos, Ethos, Pathos

What kinds of support do authors use?

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



Figure **6.3.1**

Logical Appeals

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

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

Authoritative Appeals

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

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

Emotional Appeals

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

- personal anecdotes

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

As you can see, there is some overlap on these lists. One technique might work simultaneously on multiple levels.

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

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6.4: Self Check: Supporting Claims

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

7: Logic and Structure

Topic hierarchy

7.1: An Overview of the Rhetorical Modes
7.2: Organizational Patterns
7.3: Inductive and Deductive Reasoning
7.4: Logical Fallacies
7.5: Self Check: Logic and Structure
7.6: Logic and Structure

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7.1: An Overview of the Rhetorical Modes

What are Rhetorical Modes?

We've talked earlier in the course about **genres**, different ways of categorizing specific types of reading. We examined the different genres of literature, textbooks, journalism, and academic writing.

Non-fiction writing can be further defined by sub-genres, sometimes referred to as the **rhetorical modes** of communication. These are categories of types of writing, and they help us, while reading, anticipate the structure and purpose of the text itself.

Some of the most common types of rhetorical modes are addressed in detail below. A piece of writing can consist solely of one rhetorical mode, but most often they are used in combination throughout a text.

Description

Occasionally writers organize an entire document according to a topic's physical characteristics. Frequently, however, description plays a part in an essay that has a broader purpose. For example, an engineer conducting an analysis of a bridge might organize a section of his report by describing what the bridge looks like, identifying its type, daily load, or year built. A doctor might describe a patient's physical characteristics, perhaps noting her weight, height, and family history. A teacher describing a class might mention the class title, course content, number of students, and semester.

Definition

Because definitions for words evolve over time, there are several dictionaries that track these changes, including *Oxford English Dictionary*, *A Dictionary of American English*, and *A Dictionary of Americanisms*.

Why Do People Write Definitions?

Creative people seek to develop new terms, concepts, and activities. A doctor might discover a biological or medical process, causing the need for a new name or concept. A scientist might discover a new chemical reaction, perhaps a particle smaller than a quark. An astronomer may discover a new star. For example, Walker Gipson is commonly credited with developing the term "cyberspace" to describe the way people become so obsessed and focused on playing video games.

Occasionally, readers will reject a writer's term, concept, or research finding. And, at times, a writer may present a humorous definition or apply a word in a new context, one that helps us look at our behavior in new ways.

DEFINITION IN ACTION

A nice illustration of definition in action is in the video below, where the word "innovation" is considered in a new way.



Comparing and Contrasting

Comparing and contrasting issues can be a powerful way to organize and understand knowledge. Typically, comparing and contrasting require you to define a class or category of objects and then define their similarities and differences.

Comparing and contrasting are very natural processes, a strategy we employ in our everyday lives to understand ideas and events. We learn new ideas by comparing the new ideas with what we've learned in the past. We understand differences between people and events by comparing new events and people to past people and events. Comparisons are often conducted to prove that one concept or object is superior to another. People selling a grant idea or business proposal or people marketing a product may compare and contrast one idea or product to another, advocating their position.

Classification

Occasionally, an entire document focuses on explaining a taxonomy–that is, a scheme of classification.

Why Classify Information?

To make knowledge, we routinely categorize information. A biologist might refer to the periodic table. A musician might speak about country music, new age music, jazz, or techno. A movie critic might talk about suspense, thriller, drama, or comedic movies. A religious studies professor might discuss Christian religions, Muslim sects, and Buddhist practices. As a college student, you might talk about specific colleges' sports teams according to the divisions their teams play in.

CLASSIFICATION IN ACTION

Here's another example, this time of classification. The following video categorizes characters from Marvel Comics into four types.



Narration

You'll encounter two uses of narrative in reading.

Chronological Narratives

Chronological narratives follow chronological time. For example, fiction writers often tell stories about people and events using dates, years, seasons, or even hours to define the progress of events. Historians tell stories about key people. Sociologists describe communities.

Some examples are found at the links listed:

1. **American Slave Narratives**.
2. North American Slave Narratives.
3. First-person Narratives of the American South.

Process Narratives

Process narratives explain how to do something or explain how something works. Process narratives are extremely common in many professional careers, including most engineering and scientific fields.

1. Number each step and substep in the process. Substeps might be lettered alphabetically. In some engineering and legal documents, each paragraph is numbered using the automatic numbering feature of most word processing tools. For example:

- Identify a common software application that you know well.
- Consider a feature of Microsoft Word. Make sure your teacher approves your topic
- Work through the process once, taking notes of what important steps are involved, what substeps exist within each major steps.

2. Provide visual pictures of major steps in the process.
3. Be sure you follow the correct chronological order by actually conducting the process based on your instructions.
4. Be sure you define key terms and concepts. Provide the background information your readers will need to understand the instructions.

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7.2: Organizational Patterns

The following video addresses six patterns of structure and development. These will be common in non-fiction, academic reading you'll do in college.



To recap, the six patterns in the video are

1. Simple listing
2. Order of importance
3. Chronological order
4. Spatial development
5. Cause and effect
6. Comparison and contrast

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7.3: Inductive and Deductive Reasoning

Another approach authors might take in presenting non-fiction, academic writing is based in logic. Especially in persuasive argument pieces, authors will present readers with a series of reasons why their thesis is correct.

The relationship between the thesis and the reasons to support that thesis can be introduced in two main ways: through **inductive reasoning**, and through **deductive reasoning**. Both are addressed in the video below.



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7.4: Logical Fallacies

Maybe you've heard a friend of yours say something like the scenario presented in this quick video:



As the video establishes, this is a case where logic is misapplied. Claiming that, because his cigarette-smoking grandfather lived a long life, studies don't mean anything about the relationships between smoking and cancer, is a pretty clear violation of logic. It presents an argument in what sounds like a logical way, but it's very easy to disprove.

Watch for similar misapplications of logic in reading you do (or television you watch, or conversations you participate in).

These misapplications of logic–known as **logical fallacies**–occur frequently in reading and in daily life. Read through the list below to explore some of the most common ones.

- **Hasty generalization**: argues from limited examples or a special case to a general rule.
  - Argument: Every person I've met has ten fingers; therefore, all people have ten fingers.
  - Problem: Those who have been met are not representative of the entire population.
- **Making the argument personal (*ad hominem*)**: attacking or discrediting the opposition's character.
  - Argument: What do you know about the U.S? You aren't even a citizen.
  - Problem: personal argument against an opponent, instead of against the opponent's argument.
- **Red herring**: intentionally or unintentionally misleading or distracting from the actual issue.
  - Argument: I think that we should make the academic requirements stricter for students. I recommend that you support this because we are in a budget crisis and we do not want our salaries affected.
  - Problem: Here the second sentence, though used to support the first, does not address the topic of the first sentence, and instead switches the focus to the quite different topic.
- **Fallacy of false cause (*non sequitur*)**: incorrectly assumes one thing is the cause of another. *Non Sequitur* is Latin for "It does not follow."
  - Argument: I hear the rain falling outside my window; therefore, the sun is not shining.
  - Problem: The conclusion is false because the sun can shine while it is raining.
- **If it comes before it is the cause**: believing that the order of events implies a causal relation.
  - Argument: It rained just before the car died. The rain caused the car to break down.
  - Problem: There may be no connection between the two events.
- **Two events co-occurring is not causation (*cum hoc ergo propter hoc*)**: believing that two events happening at the same time implies a causal relation.
  - Argument: More cows die in the summer. More ice cream is consumed in summer months. Therefore, the consumption of ice cream in the summer is killing cows.
  - Problem: No premise suggests the ice cream consumption is causing the deaths. The deaths and consumption could be unrelated, or something else could be causing both, such as summer heat.

- **Straw man**: creates the illusion of having refuted a proposition by replacing it with a superficially similar proposition (the "straw man"), and refuting it, without ever actually refuting the original.
  - Argument: *Person A*: Sunny days are good. *Person B*: If all days were sunny, we'd never have rain, and without rain, we'd have famine and death. Therefore, you are wrong.
  - Problem: B has misrepresented A's claim by falsely suggesting that A claimed that only sunny days are good, and then B refuted the misrepresented version of the claim, rather than refuting A's original assertion.
- **The false dilemma**: the listener is forced to make a choice between two things which are not really related or relevant.
  - Argument: If you are not with us, you are against us.
  - Problem: The presentation of a false choice often reflects a deliberate attempt to eliminate any middle ground.

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7.5: Self Check: Logic and Structure

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7.6: Logic and Structure

Skills to Develop

- Analyze patterns of logical organization in texts
- Analyze basic features of rhetorical patterns (narrative, comparison, definition, etc.)
- Analyze logical structures in argument (i.e., warrant, claim, evidence)
- Analyze logical fallacies

Analyze use of logic and structure in texts

The synopsis of "good writing" below is written from the perspective of a University Writing Center speaking to student writers. Consider their advice also from the perspective of a reader. Do the definitions of "good writing" here apply to what you've been reading in college so far? Can they help you analyze the text that you're reading, in order to understand it better now?

What Is Good Writing?

At the Writing Center, we're often asked "What makes good writing?" or "What makes someone a good writer?" Instructors wonder whether anyone can really be taught to write and why their students don't know how to write by now. To begin to understand what makes writing, and writers, "good," we need to ask the larger question "What is writing?"

It's easy to agree on the definition of writing if we limit it to something like "putting pen to paper" or "typing ideas into a computer." But if we look more closely at the elements of the act of writing, the definition comes to life. The following paragraphs might prompt your thinking about how writing happens for your students and for you.

WRITING IS A RESPONSE

We write because we are reacting to someone or something. While writing can feel like an isolating, individual act—just you and the computer or pad of paper—it is really a social act, a way in which we respond to the people and world around us. Writing happens in specific, often prescribed contexts. We are not just writing—we are always writing to an audience(s) for some particular purpose. When we write, we do so because we want, need, or have been required to create a fixed space for someone to receive and react to our ideas. Understanding this social or rhetorical context—who our readers may be, why they want to read our ideas, when and where they will be reading, how they might view us as writers—governs some of the choices we make. The writing context requires writers to have a sense of the reader's expectations and an awareness of conventions for a particular piece of writing. The context of the piece further determines the appropriate tone, level of vocabulary, kind and placement of evidence, genre, and sometimes even punctuation.

WRITING IS LINEAR

In order to communicate effectively, we need to order our words and ideas on the page in ways that make sense to a reader. We name this requirement in various ways: "grammar," "logic," or "flow." While we would all agree that organization is important, the process of lining up ideas is far from simple and is not always recognized as "writing." We assume that if a person has ideas, putting them on the page is a simple matter of recording them, when in fact the process is usually more complicated. As we've all experienced, our ideas do not necessarily arise in a linear form. We may have a scattering of related ideas, a hunch that something feels true, or some other sense that an idea is "right" before we have worked out the details. It is often through the act of writing that we begin to create the logical relationships that develop the idea into something that someone else may receive and perhaps find interesting. The process of putting ideas into words and arranging them for a reader helps us to see, create, and explore new connections. So not only does a writer need to "have" ideas, but the writer also has to put them in linear form, to "write" them for a reader, in order for those ideas to be meaningful. As a result, when we are writing, we often try to immediately fit our choices into linear structures (which may or may not suit our habits of mind).

WRITING IS RECURSIVE

As we write, we constantly rewrite. Sometimes we do this unconsciously, as we juggle words, then choose, delete, and choose again. Sometimes we do this rewriting very consciously and conscientiously as we reread a paragraph or page for clarity, coherence, or simply to see what we've just said and decide whether we like it. Having read, we rewrite the same phrases or ideas

to make a closer match to our intentions or to refine our discoveries through language. The process of writing and then reviewing, changing, and rewriting is a natural and important part of shaping expression for an anticipated audience. So while we are trying to put our words and ideas into a logical line, we are also circling round and back and over again.

WRITING IS BOTH SUBJECT AND OBJECT

We value writing because it reveals the personal choices a writer has made and thereby reveals something of her habits of mind, her ability to connect and shape ideas, and her ability to transform or change us as readers. We take writing as evidence of a subject or subjective position. Especially in an academic environment, we read written language as individual expression (whether or not multiple voices have informed the one voice we privilege on the page), as a volley from one individual mind to another. That said, writing also serves as an object for us, a "piece" or a "paper" whose shape, size, and function are determined by genre and conventions. While we don't think of writing as technology, it is also that; it allows us to remove a person's ideas from the confines of her head and fix those ideas in another place, a place where they will be evaluated according to standards, objectively. Here is where our sense of what counts as "good" writing develops. We have created objective (although highly contextualized) ideals for writing that include measures of appropriate voice, vocabulary, evidence, and arrangement. So while writing is very personal, or subjective, it creates an objective space, a place apart from the individual, and we measure it against objective standards derived from the context. It creates space both for the individual (the subject) and the idea (the object) to coexist so that we can both judge the merits of the individual voicing the idea and contend with the idea on the page.

WRITING IS DECISION MAKING

It may seem obvious, but in order to get something on the page, a writer chooses the words, the order of the words in the sentence, the grouping of sentences into paragraphs, and the order of the paragraphs within a piece. While there is an ordinariness about this —we make choices or decisions almost unconsciously about many things all day long—with writing, as we have all experienced, such decision-making can be a complex process, full of discovery, despair, determination, and deadlines. Making decisions about words and ideas can be a messy, fascinating, perplexing experience that often results in something mysterious, something the writer may not be sure "works" until she has auditioned it for a real reader.

WRITING IS A PROCESS

Contending with the decision-making, linearity, social context, subjectivity, and objectivity that constitute writing is a process that takes place over time and through language. When producing a piece of writing for an audience, experienced writers use systems they have developed. Each writer has an idiosyncratic combination of thinking, planning, drafting, and revising that, for him, means "writing" something. No matter how an individual describes his process (e.g., "First I think about my idea then dump thoughts onto the computer," or "I make an outline then work out topic sentences"), each person (usually unconsciously) negotiates the series of choices required in his individual context and produces a draft that begins to capture a representation of his ideas. For most people, this negotiation includes trial and error (this word or that?), false starts (beginning with an example that later proves misleading), contradictions (I can't say X because it may throw Y into question), sorting (how much do I need to say about this?), doubt about how the idea will be received, and satisfaction when they think they have cleared these hurdles successfully. For most people, this process happens through language. In other words, we use words to discover what, how, and why we believe. Research supports the adage "I don't know what I think until I read what I've said."

Altogether these elements make writing both an interesting and challenging act—one that is rich, complex, and valuable. What else is writing for you? Think about what the definitions discussed here miss and how you might complete the sentence "Writing is like…" From your experience as a writer, what else about writing seems essential? How is that connected to what you value about the process of writing and the final pieces that you produce?

For more information about student writing or to talk with someone about your writing assignments, contact Kimberly Abels **kabels@email.unc.edu** at the Writing Center.

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Video: Organizational Patterns
- Text: An Overview of the Rhetorical Modes
- Video: Inductive and Deductive Reasoning
- Text: Logical Fallacies

- Self Check: Logic and Structure
- Try It: Logic and Structure

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

8: Summary Skills

Topic hierarchy

8.1: Outcome: Summary Skills
8.2: Annotation
8.3: Paraphrasing a Thesis Statement
8.4: Using Quotations in a Summary
8.5: Summarizing Main Ideas and Details
8.6: Self Check: Summary Skills
8.7: Conclusion: Critical Reading

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8.1: Outcome: Summary Skills

Skills to Develop

- Analyze annotation strategies
- Analyze strategies to paraphrase a text's thesis statement
- Analyze strategies to identify and quote significant passages from a text
- Analyze strategies to distinguish a text's major claims from minor ones
- Analyze strategies to convey the essential features of a text to someone who hasn't read it

Analyze summary skills for reading comprehension

The ultimate demonstration of reading comprehension comes in the form of summary. Because of this, expect summaries to play a role in many college writing assignments.

If this causes you any anxiety, consider this helpful advice offered in the article "Relax–You Already Know How to Summarize!"



Figure **8.1.1**

A. **Summarizing is extremely easy for humans**, and even a small child almost instinctively knows how to summarize. (Any time a child "tattles" on another, she or he is probably summarizing.)
B. **Summarizing is a powerful learning tool**. Summarizing, like translating, forces you to "get in bed with the text," to become intimate with it.
C. **Summaries are specific, not hazy and lazy**. To describe September 11 as "a time when some terrorists took over a bunch of airplanes and rammed them into buildings" is not a fat-free summary. It already starved to death. The only thing to do with a summary like that is to give it a decent burial in the wastebasket and start over from scratch. In college-level work, the more specific names, dates and facts (who, what, when, where, why, how) that you include, the better the summary is.
D. **Never include any information or conclusions, no matter how obvious, that were not openly stated in the original text**. If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck and quacks like a duck but your original text failed to call it a duck, you cannot call it a duck in your summary either, as clear as it may be to you and to your readers that it is a duck.
E. **A summary should never have more than one short quote in every two or three paragraphs** of your own words. Summaries are primarily made of paraphrases, rather than direct quotes.
F. **Summarizing without the text in front of you is a workout for your working memory**. It is a useful study technique to prepare for university courses where you will need to read, understand, learn and give back a large amount of information or complex ideas and involved reasoning on closed-book essay exams. It will also be useful in the "real world," where you will have to put all your book-learning to work.
G. **If you really know a subject, you will be able to summarize it**. If you cannot summarize a subject, even if you have memorized all the facts about it, you can be absolutely sure that you have not learned it. And, if you truly learn the subject, you will still be able to summarize it months or years from now—if you cannot, we have failed. ("Cramming" for an exam is a bad joke—it is not and never was learning!)

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8.2: Annotation

> *…annotation is something we all do all the time and can include everything from footnotes to criticism, graffiti to fan fiction. What is social media but spaces where people annotate texts and images, the digital margins of our daily lives?*[1]

Thought about in the way of the quoted passage above, annotation is likely an activity you're already comfortable doing.

It is also a very helpful part of the active reading process, to keep you engaged with the text as you're reading it closely. This video emphasizes that role of annotation, with a few how-to tips.



Finally, annotation is a helpful component of summarizing. Taking notes to yourself while reading closely is the first step of mastering difficult concepts. This will allow you to then be able to interpret and explain those difficult concepts to others.

References

1. **Dean, Jeremy and Katherine Schulten. "Skills and Strategies: Annotating to Engage, Analyze, Connect and Create." *The New York Times*. 12 Nov 2015. Web. 20 May 2016.** ↵

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8.3: Paraphrasing a Thesis Statement

Introduction

We've discussed the fact that every piece of writing has a **thesis statement**, a sentence that captures the main idea of the text. Some are **explicit**–stated directly in the text itself. Others are **implicit**–implied by the content but not written in one distinct sentence.

A key part of understanding a thesis statement of a text is being able to express it in your own words. This paraphrase of a thesis is a key component in summarizing a reading accurately.

The following "How to Identify a Thesis Statement" video offers advice for locating a text's thesis statement. It asks you to write one or two sentences that summarize the text. When you write that summary, without looking at the text itself, you've actually paraphrased the thesis statement.



Tips for effective paraphrasing

- The statement must be in your own words.
- If you use any phrases that are in the original quote, place them in quotation marks.
- Add a citation—even if a paraphrase is in your own words, it is still someone else's idea.
- If you're having difficulty paraphrasing, make a short list of the quote's main idea(s) and words that relate to it. Incorporate these concepts and words in your paraphrase.

Example 8.3.1:

Compare this direct quote, which comes from an article in *The New York Times* discussing the relocation and redevelopment of a train station in New York City, with an effective paraphrase in the right column:

Original Quote	Effective Paraphrase
"New tracks aside, the challenge is at the bare minimum to bring light and air into this underground purgatory and, beyond that, to create for millions of people a new space worthy of New York, a civic hub in the spirit of the great demolished one, more attuned to the city's aspirations and democratic ideals." – Michael Kimmelman, *The New York Times*	One of the biggest issues facing Penn Station's revitalization is developing a brighter, airier space. It is an abysmal "underground purgatory," and with so many New Yorkers and tourists traveling in and out of its doors every day, should be reconstructed to better reflect the endeavors and passions of the city (Kimmelman).

Take note of these good practices!

- The paraphrase reflects the same ideas as the original quote, but is in its own words and writing style.
- The term "underground purgatory" is placed in quotes, as it is a unique phrase used in the original quote.
- There is a parenthetical citation, citing the source of the idea.

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8.4: Using Quotations in a Summary

Clearly, the primary goal of a summary is to interpret a source in your own words. That means that the bulk of a summary that you create should be unique language, not something that you can find in the source itself.

However, there are a few cases where using small, carefully-selected quotations will help strengthen the summary.

Consider these questions when assessing the potential usefulness of a source:



Figure 8.4.1

- does the potential quote contain words that are unique or odd?
- does the potential quote illustrate something special about the author's style?
- is the potential quote difficult to paraphrase?

If the answer to any of these is "yes," then integrating that quote in your summary might be useful.

Again, the act of annotating your source will be useful. Look through your notes you made while reading to identify phrases that jumped out to you, that might become quotations in a summary.

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8.5: Summarizing Main Ideas and Details

You'll remember from the "Supporting Claims" section earlier in this module that one way to analyze a reading is to distinguish its main ideas, its major supporting details, and its minor supporting details.

Review this video to remind yourself of the distinctions between these three things.



(The video has instrumental guitar for audio, but no spoken words, so can be watched without sound if desired.)

Looked at from the perspective of summarizing a source, the distinction between major and minor details becomes very important.

- Summaries naturally want to emphasize the main ideas of a source. All of the main ideas of a reading should be captured in a summary.
- Include major supporting details only if there is enough space, and if they help your audience understand the overall text more clearly.
- Leave out minor supporting details.

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8.6: Self Check: Summary Skills

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8.7: Conclusion: Critical Reading

Thinking about reading as a *process*, rather than a single activity, can be a large adjustment to make. It can feel cumbersome to review a text multiple times, with a different purpose in mind each time. It may not align to your image of reading something cover-to-cover once, putting it down, and moving on.



***Figure* 8.7.1**

Using the reading process is similar to acquiring any new skill. Think about when you first learned to hit a softball, or play piano, or even tie your shoes. The first few times you do it, it's clunky, awkward, and uncomfortable. Then you experience a success (you connect with the ball! you play "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star!" your shoes stay on your feet!) and things start to click. Gradually, the actions required become second nature.

Though it may not feel like it at first, the reading process will also soon become second nature, and make you feel good when you see it working.

It's important to allow yourself that time to feel uncomfortable. It's equally important to celebrate the small successes and the large ones, as they happen. Consider the following encouragements to help you master college-level reading.

- **Find a good reading space**. Make it a treat to visit this place with your reading material. Bring a drink you enjoy, find a comfortable place to sit, and make sure the lighting is just right.
- **Set times just to read**. Try to set aside time to read every day. Even if it just starts as ten minutes on a lunch break, twenty minutes on the bus, and fifteen minutes before bed at night, that's suddenly forty-five minutes that day you've spent reading. You can even turn this into a little game with yourself. **Phone apps like the ones recommended in this article** can help make this fun.
- **Reward your milestones**. Allow yourself a treat when you stick to your daily reading time goals, when you finish a complex reading, or you turn in an assignment that reflects your reading comprehension. Plan out the rewards ahead of time, so you know what you're working towards!

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

9: Topic Selection

Topic hierarchy

9.1: Why It Matters: Writing Process

9.2: Outcome: Topic Selection

9.3: Problems as Process

9.4: Strategies for Narrowing a Topic

9.5: Self Check: Topic Selection

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9.1: Why It Matters: Writing Process

Skills to Develop

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

Why is it necessary to analyze the process of writing?

You've likely heard the phrase "writing process" before, and the steps below may be familiar to you.

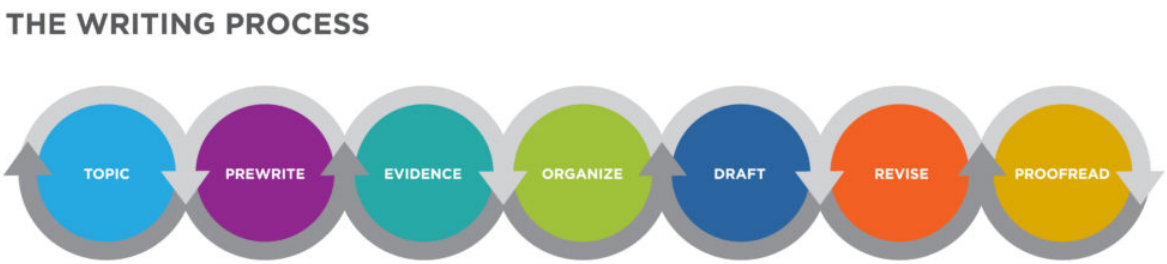


***Figure* 9.1.1**

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

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

The Writing Process, Illustrated

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



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

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

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9.2: Outcome: Topic Selection

Skills to Develop

- Analyze strategies for personalizing an assigned topic
- Analyze strategies for finding a focus for an unassigned topic
- Analyze strategies for moving from general to specific

Analyze topic selection activities



***Figure* 9.2.1**

The main character in the movie *Misery* is a writer named Paul Sheldon, who after a serious car accident is "rescued" by his self-proclaimed "number one fan," Annie Wilkes. Annie holds him captive, withholding pain medications and torturing him mentally and physically while demanding that he write a novel that brings her favorite character, Misery Chastaine, back to life. The movie trailer for *Misery* reads, "Now Paul Sheldon must write as if his life depended on it . . . because it does."

This is no one's ideal writing scenario, nor is it a common one, but the direct association of writing and suffering will not seem far-fetched to anyone who writes. Based on a Stephen King novella of the same name, *Misery* suggests that even a prolific writer like King, who has written screenplays, novels, short stories, and essays for the past thirty-five years, finds writing difficult, even painful.

Chances are, if you have ever written a paper, you've experienced the uneasiness caused by the combination of a blank page and a looming deadline. Though it may seem counterintuitive, one way to make the process of getting started on a new assignment easier is to look for something that troubles you. Seek out difficulty, find problems. All academic disciplines require students to identify, mull over, and sometimes solve challenging problems.

We all deal with problems of varying complexity on a daily basis. If we are successful in dealing with life's challenges, it's likely that we follow a particular process for meeting these challenges, whether we are conscious of it or not. Here is an example of this process:

Problem: My car broke down.

Questions that emerge from this problem: Can I fix it myself? If not, where should I take it to get it fixed? Whom can I trust? Could I get a recommendation from someone?How will I get around while my car is in the shop? In light of the estimate, is it worth getting it fixed or should I trade it in and buy another car?

What is at stake?: If you don't reflect on these questions and instead take your car to the first dealer you see, you might choose a mechanic who is notorious for overcharging or for sloppy work. Or you might be without wheels for awhile and unable to get to work. Precious time and your hard-earned cash are at stake here. In order to make an informed decision, we must sit with a problem and weigh our options.

Problems are an expected part of life, and our ability to deal with them can help determine our personal and professional success. In fact, recent studies suggest that the ability to wrestle with problems is what makes a successful leader. Successful leaders, according to Roger Martin, Dean of the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto, have one thing in common: the power of "integrative thinking." Martin borrows the words of F. Scott Fitzgerald, author of *The Great Gatsby*, to define integrative thinking as "the ability to hold two opposing ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function." According to Fitzgerald, integrative thinking is a sign of "first-rate intelligence"; according to Martin, who examined 50 successful managers for his book *The Opposable Mind: How Successful Leaders Win Through Integrative Thinking*, it is the sign of a successful leader. Integrative thinkers embrace complexity. They sit with problems, and don't accept only the easy answers. They

tap into the tension between two opposing ideas to produce a third idea. And, ultimately, they produce new insights and develop new alternatives. This habit of mind can and should be cultivated (Martin 62).

Identifying the right topic, and the right problem, is the first part of this habit of mind.



***Figure* 9.2.2**

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Text: Problems as Process
- Text: Strategies for Narrowing a Topic
- Self Check: Topic Selection
- Try It: Topic Selection

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9.3: Problems as Process

Let's focus further on how you might use problems to begin a writing assignment. Despite the fact that writing assignments vary from class to class, discipline to discipline, and university to university, looking for trouble can be an effective approach regardless of the assignment. In fact, sometimes writing prompts or essay questions direct you toward trouble. Here is an example of one such prompt:

Although Hegel differs from Rousseau in his hostility toward the notion of the noble savage and his rejection of origin stories, both Hegel and Rousseau are keen to understand contemporary civilization in light of historical processes. What is it, then, that allows them to come to such different conclusions about the present, with Hegel suggesting that freedom is on the march and Rousseau arguing that freedom is in retreat?[1]



***Figure* 9.3.1**

This essay question does the work of problem finding for the students. The instructor highlights the problem in the question by juxtaposing Rousseau's and Hegel's ideas and theoretical approaches. Most of you are probably familiar with the compare and contrast paper; this assignment essentially asks students to compare and contrast Rousseau and Hegel. By identifying a specific problem and posing a question, this instructor helps students avoid a common pitfall of the unsuccessful compare and contrast essay. Unsuccessful compare and contrast essays simply catalogue similarities and differences without developing an argument. While it is possible that your high school teacher did not expect you to develop an argument in a compare and contrast essay, your college professor expects you to do so, whether or not the assignment explicitly says so.

Sometimes it will be your responsibility to locate a problem. Here is an example of an assignment that specifically asks students to find a problem:



***Figure* 9.3.2**

Identify and examine a human rights topic about which you would like to know more. You are welcome to consult with your instructor for ideas. You should use Internet, library, and other sources to gather information on this topic; this is not a full-scale research paper, so you need to find a small number of adequately comprehensive sources. Your essay should

1. identify the issue
2. describe its scope and frequency in geographic, regime-type, temporal, socio-demographic, or other terms, as appropriate
3. identify the sense in which it is a human rights violation (of what article of what covenant)
4. tell us what you have been able to learn about its causes

5. identify political, social, cultural, economic or other factors that appear to contribute to its increase or decrease. You should critically assess biases or shortcomings in the information sources you used to research your topic.

While the prompt does not specifically use the term “problem,” it is clear that students are meant to focus on human rights “issues” or “violations” rather than successes in the area of human rights. In other words, these students have been sent out to look for trouble related to human rights.

Other writing assignments will not even hint at problems. For example:

> *Food plays a significant role in Edith Wharton’s Age of Innocence. For this paper you should construct a persuasive argument in which you consider how the depictions of food and the rituals surrounding it reflect and promote the larger themes of the novel. Consider the following questions: Who is depicted eating and why? What do they eat and how? What is Wharton doing with acts of eating in her text? How does she use depictions of food to create narrative effects? What are these effects? What narrative effects does she use depictions of food to create?*

While there is no direct or indirect mention of a problem in this particular assignment, your process and your product will benefit from a focus on a specific problem.



***Figure* 9.3.3**

At this point, you may be wondering “What’s all this about problems? What about thesis or argument?” Problems motivate good papers, and good problems will lead you to your thesis or argument. Theses do not fall from the sky. Finding a rich problem can be a big step in the direction of developing a compelling thesis.

References

1. Prominent European philosophers, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712– 1778) and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) are credited with laying the groundwork for Marxism. ↵

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9.4: Strategies for Narrowing a Topic

Introduction



***Figure* 9.4.1**

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

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

To narrow a topic, ask yourself the following questions.

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

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

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

Can you narrow your topic to a specific time period?

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

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

hint

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

Can you narrow your topic to a specific geographic area?

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

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

Can you narrow your topic to a specific event?

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

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

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9.5: Self Check: Topic Selection

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

10: Prewriting

Topic hierarchy

10.1: Outcome: Prewriting
10.2: Prewriting Strategies
10.3: Rhetorical Situation
10.4: Working Thesis Statement
10.5: Self Check: Prewriting

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10.1: Outcome: Prewriting

Skills to Develop

- Analyze purpose and defining characteristics of prewriting
- Analyze various prewriting strategies
- Analyze rhetorical context for the writing task
- Analyze the role of a working thesis statement

Analyze prewriting activities

The activities associated with prewriting might seem like they have little in common with formal, academic writing. Prewriting is, by its nature, loose and free-flowing. It's the most open-ended part of the writing process, open to creativity and experimentation. Because of that, some people might see it as silly: a step worth skipping to get to the more "serious" work of real writing.

Avoid that temptation. Prewriting IS fun, so take the time to enjoy that part. It allows you to fall in love with your topic, to find a way into the project that seems worthy of exploring in depth.

It is also very productive time. Raw content generated during prewriting can eliminate hours of hard labor further into the writing process. It's truly an investment that you'll thank yourself for later on.

This section explores kinds of prewriting activities and the purpose behind each, so that you can select which is appropriate for each new writing task you undertake.



Figure 10.1.1

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Text: Prewriting Strategies
- Video: Rhetorical Situation
- Text: Working Thesis Statement
- Self Check: Prewriting
- Try It: Prewriting

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10.2: Prewriting Strategies

Prewriting is the first stage in the writing process. When using a prewriting strategy, you jot your initial thoughts about a topic down on paper. Prewriting has no set structure or organization; it is usually just a collection of ideas that may find themselves in your paper over time. Prewriting is also a great way to get past writer's block — that period of time when you find you have no ideas or don't know how to put your thoughts together.

There is no right or wrong way to approach prewriting, but there are some strategies that can get you thinking.

Mind-mapping Strategy

Mind-mapping is very similar to freewriting, but the outcome often looks more like a list of ideas. This strategy is quite similar to brainstorming where the listed ideas may or may not be connected with arrows or lines. You should set a time limit of 5 to 10 minutes and jot down all the ideas you have about the topic. Instead of writing sentences, you are quickly jotting down ideas, perhaps showing connections and building a map of your thoughts. Here are some online tools that can help with this process:

- Check out **Inspiration Software** where you can use a free trial of their software for thirty days.
- Try **XMind**, a free mind mapping tool that runs on both Mac and PC computers.
- Use **Mindomo**, which is a collaborative mind-mapping tool. You may use the basic tool for free or pay a minimal fee for extra features.

MIND-MAPPING STRATEGY IN ACTION

Explore an example of mind-mapping created for the topic: *how can I reinvent myself with a new job role?*

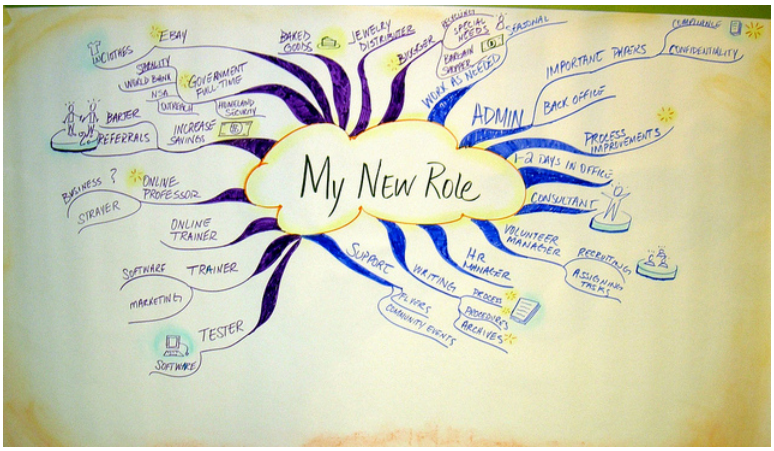


Figure **10.2.1**

Freewriting Strategy

Freewriting Strategy is the process of simply writing down any and all ideas about the topic that pop into your mind. Set a timer for yourself and write continuously for 5 or 10 minutes on your topic. If you run out of ideas, rewrite the last word or phrase on the page until another idea jumps into your thoughts. Keep writing, even if it doesn't make sense! At this point, you are just getting your ideas down on paper without editing or judging them. If you are trying to decide between topics, it is a good idea to freewrite on all of them to see which one provides you with the best ideas.

FREEWRITING IN ACTION

Explore an example of free-writing created for the topic: *What is the impact of traditional ecological knowledge on environmental management?*

Fire control, fire prevention, look at two different environments, contrasting ecosystems and the role of fire and impact on humans — Dene in Alberta — what is the role of fire in their environment? How does this contrast or compare with an African tribe? Didn't I read something about the Kissi tribe and how colonization affected their environment because the French outlawed their

land management practices? What is the landscape there? Savannah is much different than the Boreal forests of Canada, and might provide a good comparison. I need to look at the European view and how it affected both communities with their policies — How did it interfere or support the traditional use of fire in these communities? They didn't appreciate the knowledge of the people who were there before . . .

Questioning Strategy

This is a basic strategy, useful at many levels, that helps you jot down the basic important information about a topic.

QUESTIONING STRATEGY IN ACTION

Explore the answers created for the topic: *What is the impact of traditional ecological knowledge on environmental management?*

Who? The Dene and Kissi tribes from two different ecosystems were impacted by European colonizers and their fire management policies.

What? Consider the impact of fire on the peoples in both environments.

Where? Canadian policies and historical data compared to African policies and historical data.

When? As far back as the last ice age, there is evidence of how fire has impacted the land. I will focus on the impact of colonization and the policies that affected the land management practices of the indigenous peoples. I will also consider the current implications of controlling and preventing fires.

Why? This information is important because the knowledge from the indigenous peoples and their traditional practices provides important insights into how to improve current fire practices.

How? Look at historical and current records, such as Lewis, Wuerthner, Fairhead and Leach . . .

Note: Notice how this series of questions and answers is more developed than the same topic explored previously in Freewriting. This author has done a bit of preliminary reading on the subject between the two prewriting activities. This helps illustrate how prewriting can be useful to return to, even after later stages of the writing process.

Sketching Strategy

A picture is worth a thousand words. Your first thinking is done in pictures. So, if you are a visual learner and like to sketch out your thoughts, grab a pen and paper and draw what you are thinking. This strategy is especially effective if you are trying to conceptualize an idea or clarify relationships between parts of an idea.

Sketching involves drawing out your ideas using a pen and paper. One strategy that can be useful for planning comparison and contrast type papers is a **Venn diagram**. A Venn diagram is a strategy that uses two (or more) overlapping circles to show relationships between sets of ideas. The information written where two circles overlap is common to both ideas. The information written outside the overlapping area is information distinct to only one of the ideas.

SKETCHING STRATEGY IN ACTION

Explore the sketch of a Venn diagram created for the topic: *What is the impact of traditional ecological knowledge on environmental management?*

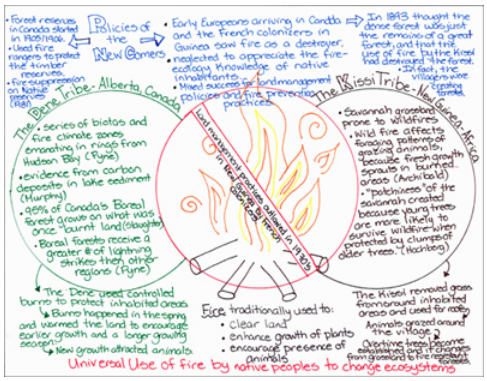


Figure 10.2.1

Note

Notice how this Venn Diagram is even more developed than the same topic explored previously in Freewriting and Questioning. This author has done even deeper research on the subject, demonstrated by the citations given after some facts here. Again, this helps illustrate how prewriting can be useful to return to, even after later stages of the writing process.

Whichever strategy you choose, be sure to save your prewriting work. You may want to revisit this stage of the writing process again to make sure that you captured all your thoughts in your outline or first draft.

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10.3: Rhetorical Situation

Another component of planning a writing project is to figure out the **rhetorical situation** you're responding to. The video below illustrates the role the rhetorical situation plays, and how you can analyze the needs you when faced with a new writing task.



Can you identify

- your purpose for writing?
- your target audience you hope to inform or influence?
- your context for writing in the first place?
- your background and experience that help shape what you think about this subject?

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10.4: Working Thesis Statement

Defining “thesis statement”



Figure 10.4.1

A thesis statement:

- tells the reader how you will interpret the significance of the subject matter under discussion.
- is a road map for the paper; in other words, it tells the reader what to expect from the rest of the paper.
- directly answers the question asked of you. A thesis is an interpretation of a question or subject, not the subject itself. The subject, or topic, of an essay might be World War II or *Moby Dick*; a thesis must then offer a way to understand the war or the novel.
- makes a claim that others might dispute.
- is usually a single sentence somewhere in your first paragraph that presents your argument to the reader. The rest of the paper (the body of the essay) gathers and organizes evidence that will persuade the reader of the logic of your interpretation.
- If your assignment asks you to take a position or develop a claim about a subject, you may need to convey that position or claim in a thesis statement near the beginning of your draft. The assignment may not explicitly state that you need a thesis statement because your instructor may assume you will include one.

If your assignment asks you to take a position or develop a claim about a subject, you may need to convey that position or claim in a thesis statement near the beginning of your draft. The assignment may not explicitly state that you need a thesis statement because your instructor may assume you will include one.

When in doubt, ask your instructor if the assignment requires a thesis statement. When an assignment asks you to analyze, to interpret, to compare and contrast, to demonstrate cause and effect, or to take a stand on an issue, it is likely that you are being asked to develop a thesis and to support it persuasively.

Writing a thesis statement

A thesis is the result of a lengthy thinking process. Formulating a thesis is not the first thing you do after reading an essay assignment. Before you develop an argument on any topic, you have to collect and organize evidence, look for possible relationships between known facts (such as surprising contrasts or similarities), and think about the significance of these relationships. Once you do this thinking, you will probably have a **working thesis statement**: a basic or main idea, an argument that you think you can support with evidence but that may need adjustment along the way.

Ensuring a thesis is strong



Figure 10.4.2

If there's time to get some feedback on your thesis, consult your teacher. Even if you do not have time to get advice elsewhere, you can do some thesis evaluation of your own. When reviewing your working thesis, ask yourself the following:

- Do I answer the question?
  - Re-reading the question prompt after constructing a working thesis can help you fix an argument that misses the focus of the question.
- Have I taken a position that others might challenge or oppose?
  - If your thesis simply states facts that no one would, or even could, disagree with, it's possible that you are simply providing a summary, rather than making an argument.
- Is my thesis statement specific enough?
  - Thesis statements that are too vague often do not have a strong argument. If your thesis contains words like "good" or "successful," see if you could be more specific: why is something "good"; what specifically makes something "successful"?
- Does my thesis pass the "So what?" test?
  - If a reader's first response is, "So what?" then you need to clarify, to forge a relationship, or to connect to a larger issue.
- Does my essay support my thesis specifically and without wandering?
  - If your thesis and the body of your essay do not seem to go together, one of them has to change. It's o.k. to change your working thesis to reflect things you have figured out in the course of writing your paper. Remember, always reassess and revise your writing as necessary.
- Does my thesis pass the "how and why?" test?
  - If a reader's first response is "how?" or "why?" your thesis may be too open-ended and lack guidance for the reader. See what you can add to give the reader a better take on your position right from the beginning.

Exercise 10.4.1

Suppose you are taking a course on 19th-century America, and the instructor hands out the following essay assignment: **Compare and contrast the reasons why the North and South fought the Civil War**.

1. At what stage of the writing process would you expect a student to write a statement like this?

> *The North and South fought the Civil War for many reasons, some of which were the same and some different.*

2. At what stage of the writing process would you expect a student to write a statement like this?

> *While both sides fought the Civil War over the issue of slavery, the North fought for moral reasons while the South fought to preserve its own institutions.*

3. At what stage of the writing process would you expect a student to write a statement like this?

> *While both Northerners and Southerners believed they fought against tyranny and oppression, Northerners focused on the oppression of slaves while Southerners defended their own right to self-government.*

Answer

1. This kind of statement is likely to appear early in a writing process, likely during initial prewriting activities. It restates the question without providing any additional information. It's not yet a thesis statement in any form, because it makes no original claims.

   A reader of this weak thesis might think, "What reasons? How are they the same? How are they different?"

2. This is a working thesis. It likely was written at the end of prewriting, during evidence-gathering, or early in the drafting process.

   Included in this working thesis is a reason for the war and some idea of how the two sides disagreed over this reason. Note that while this does make a claim, it's still a little vague.
3. This is a final draft of a thesis statement, likely written near the end of the writing process during revision and editing. It presents a way of interpreting evidence that illuminates the significance of the question. It is also an arguable claim–not every reader will automatically agree with this statement.

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10.5: Self Check: Prewriting

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

11: Finding Evidence

Topic hierarchy

11.1: Outcome: Finding Evidence

11.2: Selecting Evidence

11.3: Applying Evidence

11.4: Self Check: Finding Evidence

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11.1: Outcome: Finding Evidence

Skills to Develop

- Analyze experience or examples from personal life as they relate to a topic
- Analyze strategies for preliminary research on a topic
- Analyze strategies for synthesis of research and personal ideas
- Analyze effective techniques for quoting a source
- Analyze effective techniques for paraphrasing a source
- Analyze effective techniques for summarizing a source

Analyze activities to find evidence in support of a claim

Once a working thesis statement is in place, your essay has begun to establish a **claim**–something the project is stating to be true. No matter how elegant the claim itself is, though, it's only a small piece of the writing task. A claim by itself is powerless to influence a critically-thinking audience, and you should assume that any audience reading your work will be critical thinkers.

It's pretty alarming, and even insulting to readers, when evidence isn't provided to support a claim. Here's one study reflecting this in action:



Figure **11.1.1**

The Royal Society of Chemistry's magazine *Chemistry World* published an **article** in 2008 on a study of psychiatric drug ads in medical journals that found that over a third of the total claims made by drug ads are not actually supported by the studies they reference as evidence.

Taken on an ad by ad basis, the results are even more shocking:

42 out of the 53 ads (nearly 80 per cent) the researchers examined made at least one claim the team couldn't substantiate. 27 made a claim that was not supported by the data source cited by the ad. A further 15 contained claims that couldn't be verified by the team – usually because the ads provided no sources of data to back up their claims, or made claims that could not be verified because drug firms either failed to respond to the researchers' requests for trial data, or refused to supply it.

Six out of nine pharmaceutical companies – including GlaxoSmithKline, Pfizer, AstraZeneca and Shire – did not reply to the researchers, while Wyeth refused to send trial data.

'In these cases, we have to take their word [that their claims were supported by scientific evidence], which, personally, I would think is not a wise idea,' says author Glen ***Spielmans****. Only Janssen Pharmaceutica – makers of schizophrenia drug Risperdal (risperidone) – and medical device firm Cyberonics sent relevant studies to back up their claims.*

You'd think after spending all that time and effort to design and run trials which **consistently support** the manufacturer's product you could just reference your own studies, but apparently even that seems too excruciatingly transparent for the spin-happy industry.

When examined by critical readers, these advertisements that fail to provide support actually do more harm than good. Doctors will be much less likely to prescribe them as a result.

We'll explore the means to locate and apply appropriate evidence to your own writing, in the following pages.



***Figure* 11.1.2**

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Text: Selecting Evidence
- Text: Applying Evidence
- Self Check: Finding Evidence
- Try It: Finding Evidence

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11.2: Selecting Evidence

Consider the following article from The Writing Center at UNC-Chapel Hill, discussing how to locate and use evidence in a writing project.

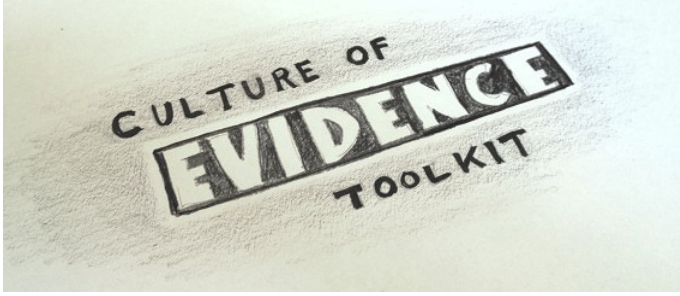


Figure **11.2.1**

INTRODUCTION

Many papers that you write in college will require you to **make an argument**; this means that you must take a position on the subject you are discussing and support that position with evidence. It's important that you use the right kind of evidence, that you use it effectively, and that you have an appropriate amount of it. If, for example, your philosophy professor didn't like it that you used a survey of public opinion as your primary evidence in your ethics paper, you need to find out more about what philosophers count as good evidence. If your instructor has told you that you need more analysis, suggested that you're "just listing" points or giving a "laundry list," or asked you how certain points are related to your argument, it may mean that you can do more to fully incorporate your evidence into your argument. Comments like "for example?," "proof?," "go deeper," or "expand" in the margins of your graded paper suggest that you may need more evidence. Let's take a look at each of these issues—understanding what counts as evidence, using evidence in your argument, and deciding whether you need more evidence.

WHAT COUNTS AS EVIDENCE?

Before you begin gathering information for possible use as evidence in your argument, you need to be sure that you understand the purpose of your assignment. If you are working on a project for a class, look carefully at the assignment prompt. It may give you clues about what sorts of evidence you will need. Does the instructor mention any particular books you should use in writing your paper or the names of any authors who have written about your topic? How long should your paper be (longer works may require more, or more varied, evidence)? What themes or topics come up in the text of the prompt? Our handout on **understanding writing assignments** can help you interpret your assignment. It's also a good idea to think over what has been said about the assignment in class and to talk with your instructor if you need clarification or guidance.

WHAT MATTERS TO INSTRUCTORS?

Instructors in different academic fields expect different kinds of arguments and evidence—your chemistry paper might include graphs, charts, statistics, and other quantitative data as evidence, whereas your English paper might include passages from a novel, examples of recurring symbols, or discussions of characterization in the novel. Consider what kinds of sources and evidence you have seen in course readings and lectures. You may wish to see whether the Writing Center has a handout regarding the specific academic field you're working in—for example, **literature**, **sociology**, or **history**.

WHAT ARE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES?

A note on terminology: many researchers distinguish between primary and secondary sources of evidence (in this case, "primary" means "first" or "original," not "most important"). Primary sources include original documents, photographs, interviews, and so forth. Secondary sources present information that has already been processed or interpreted by someone else. For example, if you are writing a paper about the movie "The Matrix," the movie itself, an interview with the director, and production photos could serve as primary sources of evidence. A movie review from a magazine or a collection of essays about the film would be secondary sources. Depending on the context, the same item could be either a primary or a secondary source: if I am writing about people's

relationships with animals, a collection of stories about animals might be a secondary source; if I am writing about how editors gather diverse stories into collections, the same book might now function as a primary source.

WHERE CAN I FIND EVIDENCE?

Here are some examples of sources of information and tips about how to use them in gathering evidence. Ask your instructor if you aren't sure whether a certain source would be appropriate for your paper.

PRINT AND ELECTRONIC SOURCES

Books, journals, websites, newspapers, magazines, and documentary films are some of the most common sources of evidence for academic writing. Our handout on **evaluating print sources** will help you choose your print sources wisely, and the library has a **tutorial** on evaluating both print sources and websites. A librarian can help you find sources that are appropriate for the type of assignment you are completing. Just visit the reference desk at Davis or the Undergraduate Library or chat with a librarian online (the library's IM screen name is undergradref).

OBSERVATION

Sometimes you can directly observe the thing you are interested in, by watching, listening to, touching, tasting, or smelling it. For example, if you were asked to write about Mozart's music, you could listen to it; if your topic was how businesses attract traffic, you might go and look at window displays at the mall.

INTERVIEWS

An interview is a good way to collect information that you can't find through any other type of research. An interview can provide an expert's opinion, biographical or first-hand experiences, and suggestions for further research.

SURVEYS

Surveys allow you to find out some of what a group of people thinks about a topic. Designing an effective survey and interpreting the data you get can be challenging, so it's a good idea to check with your instructor before creating or administering a survey.

EXPERIMENTS

Experimental data serve as the primary form of scientific evidence. For scientific experiments, you should follow the specific guidelines of the discipline you are studying. For writing in other fields, more informal experiments might be acceptable as evidence. For example, if you want to prove that food choices in a cafeteria are affected by gender norms, you might ask classmates to undermine those norms on purpose and observe how others react. What would happen if a football player were eating dinner with his teammates and he brought a small salad and diet drink to the table, all the while murmuring about his waistline and wondering how many fat grams the salad dressing contained?

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Using your own experiences can be a powerful way to appeal to your readers. You should, however, use personal experience only when it is appropriate to your topic, your writing goals, and your audience. Personal experience should not be your only form of evidence in most papers, and some disciplines frown on using personal experience at all. For example, a story about the microscope you received as a Christmas gift when you were nine years old is probably not applicable to your biology lab report.

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11.3: Applying Evidence

The “Evidence” handout from The Writing Center at UNC-Chapel Hill continues, offering guidance for how to select, refine, and apply evidence once you’ve located it.

USING EVIDENCE IN AN ARGUMENT

DOES EVIDENCE SPEAK FOR ITSELF?

Absolutely not. After you introduce evidence into your writing, you must say why and how this evidence supports your argument. In other words, you have to explain the significance of the evidence and its function in your paper. What turns a fact or piece of information into evidence is the connection it has with a larger claim or argument: evidence is always evidence *for* or *against* something, and you have to make that link clear.

As writers, we sometimes assume that our readers already know what we are talking about; we may be wary of elaborating too much because we think the point is obvious. But readers can’t read our minds: although they may be familiar with many of the ideas we are discussing, they don’t know what we are trying to do with those ideas unless we indicate it through explanations, organization, transitions, and so forth. Try to spell out the connections that you were making in your mind when you chose your evidence, decided where to place it in your paper, and drew conclusions based on it. Remember, you can always cut prose from your paper later if you decide that you are stating the obvious.

HERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK YOURSELF ABOUT A PARTICULAR BIT OF EVIDENCE:

1. O.k., I’ve just stated this point, but so what? Why is it interesting? Why should anyone care?
2. What does this information imply?
3. What are the consequences of thinking this way or looking at a problem this way?
4. I’ve just described what something is like or how I see it, but why is it like that?
5. I’ve just said that something happens-so how does it happen? How does it come to be the way it is?
6. Why is this information important? Why does it matter?
7. How is this idea related to my thesis? What connections exist between them? Does it support my thesis? If so, how does it do that?
8. Can I give an example to illustrate this point?

Answering these questions may help you explain how your evidence is related to your overall argument.

HOW CAN I INCORPORATE EVIDENCE INTO MY PAPER?

There are many ways to present your evidence. Often, your evidence will be included as text in the body of your paper, as a quotation, paraphrase, or summary. Sometimes you might include graphs, charts, or tables; excerpts from an interview; or photographs or illustrations with accompanying captions.

QUOTATIONS

When you quote, you are reproducing another writer’s words exactly as they appear on the page. Here are some tips to help you decide when to use quotations:

1. Quote if you can’t say it any better and the author’s words are particularly brilliant, witty, edgy, distinctive, a good illustration of a point you’re making, or otherwise interesting.
2. Quote if you are using a particularly authoritative source and you need the author’s expertise to back up your point.
3. Quote if you are analyzing diction, tone, or a writer’s use of a specific word or phrase.
4. Quote if you are taking a position that relies on the reader’s understanding exactly what another writer says about the topic.

Be sure to introduce each quotation you use, and always cite your sources. See our handout on **quotations** for more details on when to quote and how to format quotations.

Like all pieces of evidence, a quotation can’t speak for itself. If you end a paragraph with a quotation, that may be a sign that you have neglected to discuss the importance of the quotation in terms of your argument. It’s important to avoid “plop quotations,” that is, quotations that are just dropped into your paper without any introduction, discussion, or follow-up.

PARAPHRASING

When you paraphrase, you take a specific section of a text and put it into your own words. Putting it into your own words doesn't mean just changing or rearranging a few of the author's words: to paraphrase well and avoid plagiarism, try setting your source aside and restating the sentence or paragraph you have just read, as though you were describing it to another person. Paraphrasing is different than summary because a paraphrase focuses on a particular, fairly short bit of text (like a phrase, sentence, or paragraph). You'll need to indicate when you are paraphrasing someone else's text by citing your source correctly, just as you would with a quotation.

When might you want to paraphrase?

1. Paraphrase when you want to introduce a writer's position, but his or her original words aren't special enough to quote.
2. Paraphrase when you are supporting a particular point and need to draw on a certain place in a text that supports your point—for example, when one paragraph in a source is especially relevant.
3. Paraphrase when you want to present a writer's view on a topic that differs from your position or that of another writer; you can then refute writer's specific points in your own words after you paraphrase.
4. Paraphrase when you want to comment on a particular example that another writer uses.
5. Paraphrase when you need to present information that's unlikely to be questioned.

SUMMARY

When you summarize, you are offering an overview of an entire text, or at least a lengthy section of a text. Summary is useful when you are providing background information, grounding your own argument, or mentioning a source as a counter-argument. A summary is less nuanced than paraphrased material. It can be the most effective way to incorporate a large number of sources when you don't have a lot of space. When you are summarizing someone else's argument or ideas, be sure this is clear to the reader and cite your source appropriately.

STATISTICS, DATA, CHARTS, GRAPHS, PHOTOGRAPHS, ILLUSTRATIONS

Sometimes the best evidence for your argument is a hard fact or visual representation of a fact. This type of evidence can be a solid backbone for your argument, but you still need to create context for your reader and draw the connections you want him or her to make. Remember that statistics, data, charts, graph, photographs, and illustrations are all open to interpretation. Guide the reader through the interpretation process. Again, always, cite the origin of your evidence if you didn't produce the material you are using yourself.

DO I NEED MORE EVIDENCE?

Let's say that you've identified some appropriate sources, found some evidence, explained to the reader how it fits into your overall argument, incorporated it into your draft effectively, and cited your sources. How do you tell whether you've got enough evidence and whether it's working well in the service of a strong argument or analysis? Here are some techniques you can use to review your draft and assess your use of evidence.

MAKE A REVERSE OUTLINE

A reverse outline is a great technique for helping you see how each paragraph contributes to proving your thesis. When you make a reverse outline, you record the main ideas in each paragraph in a shorter (outline-like) form so that you can see at a glance what is in your paper. The reverse outline is helpful in at least three ways. First, it lets you see where you have dealt with too many topics in one paragraph (in general, you should have one main idea per paragraph). Second, the reverse outline can help you see where you need more evidence to prove your point or more analysis of that evidence. Third, the reverse outline can help you write your topic sentences: once you have decided what you want each paragraph to be about, you can write topic sentences that explain the topics of the paragraphs and state the relationship of each topic to the overall thesis of the paper.

For tips on making a reverse outline, see our handout on **organization**.

COLOR CODE YOUR PAPER

You will need three highlighters or colored pencils for this exercise. Use one color to highlight general assertions. These will typically be the topic sentences in your paper. Next, use another color to highlight the specific evidence you provide for each

assertion (including quotations, paraphrased or summarized material, statistics, examples, and your own ideas). Lastly, use another color to highlight analysis of your evidence. Which assertions are key to your overall argument? Which ones are especially contestable? How much evidence do you have for each assertion? How much analysis? In general, you should have at least as much analysis as you do evidence, or your paper runs the risk of being more summary than argument. The more controversial an assertion is, the more evidence you may need to provide in order to persuade your reader.

PLAY DEVIL'S ADVOCATE, ACT LIKE A CHILD, OR DOUBT EVERYTHING

This technique may be easiest to use with a partner. Ask your friend to take on one of the roles above, then read your paper aloud to him/her. After each section, pause and let your friend interrogate you. If your friend is playing devil's advocate, he or she will always take the opposing viewpoint and force you to keep defending yourself. If your friend is acting like a child, he or she will question every sentence, even seemingly self-explanatory ones. If your friend is a doubter, he or she won't believe anything you say. Justifying your position verbally or explaining yourself will force you to strengthen the evidence in your paper. If you already have enough evidence but haven't connected it clearly enough to your main argument, explaining to your friend how the evidence is relevant or what it proves may help you to do so.

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11.4: Self Check: Finding Evidence

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

12: Organizing

Topic hierarchy

12.1: Outcome: Organizing
12.2: Types of Essays and Suggested Structures
12.3: Evolution of the Thesis Statement
12.4: Toulmin’s Schema
12.5: Paragraph Structure
12.6: Self Check: Organizing

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12.1: Outcome: Organizing

Skills to Develop

- Analyze appropriate rhetorical pattern for the topic and the task
- Analyze components of an effective thesis statement
- Analyze components of an effective logical argument
- Analyze components of an effective paragraph
- Analyze components of an effective essay body
- Analyze components of an effective introduction
- Analyze components of an effective conclusion

Analyze essay organizational techniques

The article “The Advantages of Organizational Skills” by Alexis Writing lists several virtues of being organized:

- Efficiency
- Tracking Progress
- Better Management Skills
- Instilling Trust
- Reduced Stress[1]

The article is actually referring to small business ownership, but the same advantages absolutely apply when considering organization as a principle of the writing process.

Let’s consider each of these virtues in closer detail:

Efficiency

Mapping out a plan for essay development requires some up-front time, but pays huge dividends in saving time later. As with many of the early stages of the writing process, deliberation now will be a huge advantage later.

Tracking Progress

Sub-dividing a writing project into smaller components is a great time management strategy. It’s easy to see the progress you’re making in the overall task, and helps you keep track of how much time will be needed to see the project through to completion.

Better Management Skills

Just like following a roadmap of your essay plan will save and track time, it will also save and track other resources–namely, the energy you need to invest in further research, getting input from peers, tutors, or instructors, and how to balance other commitments you have for other classes and other aspects of life.

Instilling Trust

Mapping out an outline or development plan for your essay DOES instill trust–primarily, trust in yourself that this is a manageable task ahead of you. Breaking a large project into smaller components shows a clear path towards checking items off the list. Accomplishing each stage will give you that much more confidence to approach the next one.

Reduced Stress

All the factors above will leave you with a stronger sense of well-being and confidence about the writing task overall. Who can turn down a chance to minimize stress?



***Figure* 12.1.1**

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Video: Evolution of the Thesis Statement
- Text: Types of Essays and Suggested Structures
- Text: Paragraph Structure
- Text: Toulmin's Schema
- Self Check: Organizing
- Try It: Organizing

References

1. **Writing, Alexis. "The Advantages of Organizational Skills." *Chron*. 2016. Web. 1 Jun 2016.** ↵

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12.2: Types of Essays and Suggested Structures

Introduction

The structural organization of an essay will vary, depending on the type of writing task you've been assigned. Below are outline templates for specific types of writing projects. Keep in mind these are just a starting point: there is always room for variation and creativity in how a subject is most effectively presented to a reader.

Analytical essay

This is perhaps the most common structure. Examples of this include questions which ask you to *discuss*, *analyze*, *investigate*, *explore*, or *review*. In an analytical structure you are required to break the topic into its different components and discuss these in separate paragraphs or sections, demonstrating balance where possible.

- 1. Introduction
  - Background information on topic
  - Overall point of view of the topic (thesis)
  - Overview of components to be discussed (structure)

  2. Body paragraphs
  - paragraph 1
    1. Topic sentence outlining first component
    2. Sentences giving explanations and providing evidence to support topic sentence
    3. Concluding sentence – link to next paragraph
  - paragraph 2
    1. Topic sentence outlining second component
    2. Sentences giving explanations and providing evidence to back topic sentence
    3. Concluding sentence – link to next paragraph
  - Following body paragraphs
    1. These follow the same structure for as many components as you need to outline

  3. Conclusion
  - Summary of the main points of the body
  - Restatement of the main point of view
  - Justification/evaluation (if required by task)

Argumentative essay

Examples of this type of essay include questions which ask you to take a position on a topic, such as a particular decision or policy, and present arguments which support your position. An effective way to argue a point can be to present the opposing view first then counter this view with stronger evidence.

- 1. Introduction
  - Background information on topic
  - Statement of your position on the topic (thesis)
  - Overview of arguments to be presented (structure)

  2. Body paragraphs
  - paragraph 1
    1. Topic sentence outlining first argument
    2. Sentences giving explanations and providing evidence to support topic sentence
    3. Concluding sentence – link to next paragraph
  - paragraph 2
    1. Topic sentence outlining second argument

2. Sentences giving explanations and providing evidence to back topic sentence
3. Concluding sentence – link to next paragraph

- Following body paragraphs
  1. These follow the same structure for as many arguments as you wish to put forward in support of the topic.

3. Conclusion
   - Summary of the main points of the body
   - Restatement of the position

Interpretive essay

Examples of this type of essay include assignments where you are given data such as a case study or scenario, a diagram, graphical information, or a picture and expected to interpret this information to demonstrate your application of knowledge when answering the task. Based on this data, you may be asked to do a range of things such as provide recommendations or solutions, develop a nursing care plan, a teaching plan, suggest legal advice, or plan a marketing strategy.

- 1. Introduction
  - Brief background information on topic
  - Overview of issues to be addressed in the essay (structure)
  - State overall interpretation (thesis)

  2. Body paragraphs
     - paragraph 1
       1. Topic sentence outlining first issue identified from the data
       2. Sentences giving further explanation and providing evidence from both the literature and the data, e.g. the case study to support the topic sentence (it is very important in this types of essays to make reference to the data you have been supplied to give your essay context).
       3. Concluding sentence – link to next paragraph
     - paragraph 2
       1. Topic sentence outlining second issue identified
       2. As above
       3. Concluding sentence – link to next paragraph
     - Following body paragraphs
       1. These follow the same structure for as many issues as you wish to discuss from the data you have been supplied.

  3. Conclusion
     - Statement of overall interpretation
     - Summary of the main issues from the data supplied
     - Make recommendations or suggest solutions to address the issues arising from the data supplied.

Comparative essay

Examples of this type of essay include *compare*, *compare and contrast*, or *differentiate* questions. In this structure the similarities and/or differences between two or more items (for example, theories or models) are discussed paragraph by paragraph. Your assignment task may require you to make a recommendation about the suitability of the items you are comparing.

- 1. Introduction
  - Brief background information on topic
  - Outline of two (or more) things being compared or contrasted
  - Purpose for making the comparison / contrast
  - Overview of the specific points to be compared / contrasted

  2. Body paragraphs
     - paragraph 1

1. Topic sentence outlining first similarity or difference
2. Sentences giving explanations and providing evidence to support topic sentence
3. Concluding sentence – link to next paragraph

- paragraph 2
  1. Topic sentence outlining second similarity or different
  2. Sentences giving explanations and providing evidence to back topic sentence
  3. Concluding sentence – link to next paragraph
- Following body paragraphs
  1. These follow the same structure for as many items or aspects as you need to compare/contrast

3. Conclusion
   - Restatement of the main purpose for the comparison / contrast
   - Summary of the main similarities and differences
   - Recommendation about suitability of compared items for purpose (if requirement of assessment task)
   - Overall conclusion

Problem and solution essay

These essay questions often require you to structure your answer in several parts. An example may be to ask you to investigate a problem and explore a range of solutions. You may also be asked to choose the best solution and justify your selection, so allow space for this in your essay if needed.

- 1. Introduction
  - Background information about the problem
  - Description of the problem and why it is serious
  - Overview of the solutions to be outlined

  2. Body paragraphs
     - paragraph 1
       1. Topic sentence outlining first solution
       2. Explanation of the positive and negative aspects of the solution
       3. Evidence to support explanations
       4. Concluding sentence
     - paragraph 2
       1. Topic sentence outlining second solution
       2. Explanation of the positive and negative aspects of the solution
       3. Evidence to support explanation
       4. Concluding sentence
     - Following body paragraphs
       1. These follow the same structure for as many solutions as you need to discuss

  3. Conclusion
     - Summary of the problem and overview of the solutions
     - Evaluation of solutions and recommendation of best option

Note: Depending on the topic, body paragraphs in a problem and solution essay could be devoted to discussing the problem in more detail, as well as the solution. It's up to the writer to assess the needs of the project, in order to decide how much time is spent on each part.

Cause and effect essay

Examples of this type of essay include questions which ask you to state or investigate the effects or outline the causes of the topic. This may be, for example, an historical event, the implementation of a policy, a medical condition, or a natural disaster. These

essays may be structured in one of two ways: either the causes(s) of a situation may be discussed first followed by the effect(s), or the effect(s) could come first with the discussion working back to outline the cause(s). Sometimes with cause and effect essays you are required to give an assessment of the overall effects, such as on a community, a workplace, an individual. Space must be allocated for this assessment in your structure if needed.

- 1. Introduction
  - Background information on situation under discussion
  - Description of the situation
  - Overview of the causes or effects to be outlined

  2. Body paragraphs
  - paragraph 1
    1. Topic sentence outlining first cause or effect
    2. Sentences giving explanations and providing evidence to support the topic sentence
    3. Concluding sentence – linking to next paragraph
  - paragraph 2
    1. Topic sentence outlining second cause or effect
    2. Sentences giving explanations and providing evidence to back topic sentence
    3. Concluding sentence – linking to next paragraph
  - Following body paragraphs
    1. These follow the same structure for as many causes or effects as you need to outline

  3. Conclusion
  - Summary of the main points of the body
  - Conclusion, prediction or recommendation

Conclusion

Finally, consider that some essay assignments may ask you to combine approaches, especially in more advanced classes. At that point, you may have to vary your body paragraph strategy from section to section.

This chart gives an idea of what different roles paragraphs can play in a mixed-structure essay assignment.

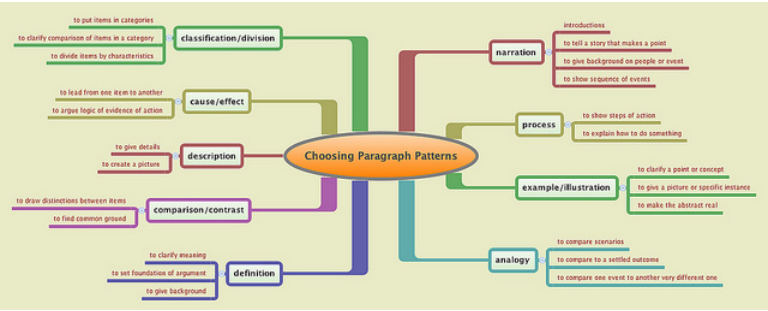


***Figure* 12.2.1**

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12.3: Evolution of the Thesis Statement

Previous pages established the importance of a working thesis statement early in the writing process. This working thesis is likely to be revisited and revised several times as the writing process continues.

After gathering evidence, and before starting to write the essay itself, is a natural point to look again at the project's thesis statement. The following video offers friendly, appealing advice for developing a thesis statement more concretely.



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12.4: Toulmin's Schema

Introduction

Another approach to writing assignments, particularly ones with a persuasive or argumentative aspect to them, is to apply what's known as Toulmin's Schema as you prepare to write. Rather than a strict outline for a persuasive essay, Toulmin's Schema asks you to identify key features of your argument ahead of time, and understand how they will influence both what you write, and how your audience will react to what you write.

Toulmin's Schema is named for Stephen Edelston Toulmin (born March 25, 1922), a British philosopher, author, and educator devoted to analyzing moral reasoning. Throughout his writings, he seeks to develop practical arguments which can be used effectively in evaluating the ethics behind moral issues. His most famous work is his Model of Argumentation (also known as Toulmin's Schema), which is a method of analyzing an argument by breaking it down into six parts. Once an argument is broken down and examined, weaknesses in the argument can be found and addressed.

Toulmin's Schema

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

The first three elements (claim, data, and warrant) are considered as the essential components of practical arguments, while the final three elements (qualifier, Backing, and Rebuttal) may not be needed in all arguments.

When first proposed, this Schema was based on legal arguments and intended to be used to analyze arguments typically found in the courtroom. In fact, Toulmin did not realize that this layout would be applicable to the field of rhetoric and communication until later.

Example 12.4.1:

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

1. **Claim**: You should buy our tooth-whitening product.
2. **Data**: Studies show that teeth are 50% whiter after using the product for a specified time.
3. **Warrant**: People want whiter teeth.
4. **Backing**: Celebrities want whiter teeth.
5. **Rebuttal**: Commercial says "unless you don't want to attract guys."

6. **Qualifier**: Fine print says “product must be used six weeks for results.”

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

Example 12.4.2:

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

How would you assess the strength of the warrant in this argument?

Example 12.4.3:

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

How would you assess the strength of the data in this argument?

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

12.4: Toulmin’s Schema is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

12.5: Paragraph Structure

Paragraphs

The manner in which your essay presents material is vital. As you know, an essay (or any academic text) is built up around paragraphs. These help the reader understand the organization of your essay and grasp its main points. A paragraph is a series of sentences that are organized and coherent, and are all related to a single topic. The main rule is:

One paragraph = one new point in your argument

Each paragraph typically contains a three-part structure:

1. **Introduction**: includes a topic sentence and transition words
2. **Body**: discusses the topic, using various forms of evidence
3. **Conclusion**: comments and draws connections

Paragraph Principles



***Figure* 12.5.1**

- Each paragraph should contain one new point related to the essay's overall thesis.
- Each paragraph should be able to stand on its own and have its own internal structure.
- Each paragraph should state its purpose, in the form of a topic sentence.

Try extracting the first line from your essay paragraphs and see if you can follow your main line of argument. If you can't, they your essay is not so easy to follow as you might want it to be. (Of course, not every argument has to be organized this way. But try to look up a few articles in some "serious" newspapers: you will find this structure widely used!)

The reason why paragraphs should be "headlined" with reference to the overall argument is to keep that argument in the reader's mind, thereby making it easier for them to see the relevance of the rest of the paragraph. This way, the reader doesn't lose track, and neither do you as you write.

Connecting Paragraphs Together

Ideally, paragraphs should be well connected to each other. Order paragraphs so that each one follows logically from the previous one. To make this logic more obvious, you can use transition words (or "connectors"), so that the paragraphs flow better and the reader is always kept on track.

As the author, you know why one paragraph relates to the next, because you've put a lot of effort, research, and thought into the planning of this document. Your reader isn't as well-versed in the subject as you are, however. Adding transition words and phrases helps cue your reader into the connections between ideas you've already made for yourself.

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12.6: Self Check: Organizing

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

13: Drafting

Topic hierarchy

13.1: Outcome: Drafting
13.2: The First Draft is the Ugliest
13.3: Moving From Outline to Draft
13.4: Revising and Writing a Second Draft
13.5: Self Check: Drafting

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13.1: Outcome: Drafting

Skills to Develop

- Analyze strategies for drafting from an outline
- Analyze considerations unique to early drafts
- Analyze the value of multiple drafts

Analyze drafting activities

> *Writing is a way to end up thinking something you couldn't have started out thinking. – Peter Elbow, Writing Without Teachers*

According to Elbow, the best way to accomplish deep thinking is a series of drafts which come together to produce an emerging "center of gravity" that then translates into the main focus on the work. This process should be a holistic process, not a linear process. Elbow's reasoning behind this concept of multiple drafts follows the idea that, "if [a writer] learns to maximize the interaction among his own ideas or points of view, he can produce new ones that didn't seem available to him."

In other words, it's difficult to predict where your thoughts and your argument will end up when working on an essay draft. And that's a good thing.

This is the reason that writing assignments are so common in higher education: they develop a deep level of thinking that's only possible through this process.



***Figure* 13.1.1**

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Video: Moving From Outline to Draft
- Text: The First Draft is the Ugliest
- Text: Revising and Writing a Second Draft
- Self Check: Drafting
- Try It: Drafting

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13.2: The First Draft is the Ugliest



***Figure* 13.2.1** - *Consider this skywriting the fireflies' first draft.*

If one is the loneliest number, the first draft is the ugliest draft. The end. There's no way around it. If you can accept that reality, carry on. If you can't, writing will be an ever-frustrating task. You will struggle to find joy in doing the work.

Consider the truth a sort of Jedi mind trick. It frees you from having to write something "golden" every time you come to the page. The pressure eases. You can write terribly. You can use cliches and jargon and run-on sentences. Don't worry about any of it. You can – and should – revise and edit later.

Let the words fill the page. If no words come, use a writing exercise. Steal a line from someone (cited, of course). Get your writing muscles working, and your mind will follow suit. It will start to make connections.

Stop waiting to "feel" like writing and do the hard work of writing. Feelings more often follow actions rather than the other way around. Waiting to feel like writing is the same thing as waiting for inspiration. Neither typically happen unless you're working.

Don't be afraid of the horrible, no-good words. At least you have words. That's an accomplishment. Many give up before even getting that far. You didn't. You have an ugly first draft.

Now get to work on the second. It'll still be ugly but much less so than the first.

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13.3: Moving From Outline to Draft

At this point in the writing process, you'll have accomplished quite a lot of work. It may feel pretty scattered across notes you've made, sources you've pulled together, and different trains of thought in your head. That's fine!

You'll have some sort of outline at this point: some plan for what sections you'll need, and an idea of their order. This may be a very formal Roman numeral outline, a more informal list of ideas, a mind map, a Powerpoint outline–whatever is comfortable for you.

The next step is a big one: starting to flesh out those pieces of an outline into a substantial essay draft.

Consider this guidance from an English professor. She's talking about a specific essay assignment for her students, but the general concepts of the video apply to all writing situations. Professor Pell's best advice is to NOT write the sections of your paper in order. Instead, take advantage of the outline to skip around to the parts that are easiest to develop first, and that will have the biggest impact of your paper overall.



While you'll have different sections of your paper, the concept still applies. Decide for yourself what order will be most effective to write in, and free yourself up to put off the difficult parts until last!

13.3: Moving From Outline to Draft is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

13.4: Revising and Writing a Second Draft

You've written a draft. It's likely that you saw ways to improve it as you were building it, or knew there were parts that would need more attention later. You may have also refined as you went, looping back through parts multiple times before moving on to the next.

In that sense, the term "second draft" can be misleading, since there often is no clear line between first, second, and later drafts. It's all an ongoing process.

If you hit a point where you're not sure what the next step should be, here are three key questions to ask.

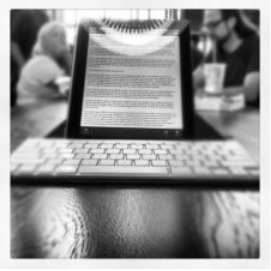


***Figure* 13.4.1**

1) Does the argument hold together?

Does your essay move convincingly from one point to the next? Maybe you decide to move your key points around and change the structure of the essay.

Do your paragraphs carry the argument clearly? You might want to look at the links between paragraphs to make the relationships between them more clear.

2) Is your argument supported by evidence?

Every point you make should have some evidence to support it. Maybe there's still some reading you need to do to find the evidence you need.

3) Does the essay have an effective introduction and conclusion?

At this stage, you have a good idea of what the essay as a whole will look like. So now is the time to write and refine your introduction and your conclusion. These are much easier to write at this second stage than straight off at the start of your work on the essay.

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13.5: Self Check: Drafting

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

14: Revising

Topic hierarchy

14.1: Outcome: Revising

14.2: Revising Drafts

14.3: Peer Review

14.4: Concerns About Revision

14.5: Self Check: Revising

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14.1: Outcome: Revising

Skills to Develop

- Analyze the process of seeking input on writing from others
- Analyze strategies for incorporating personal and external editorial comments
- Analyze methods for re-seeing a piece of writing
- Analyze higher order concerns for revision

Analyze revision activities

The Writing Center at UNC-Chapel Hill offers insight into the Revision stage of the writing process. Read below to understand how Revision is different from both Drafting and Proofreading, and a crucial step towards refining a piece of work.

What Does It Mean to Revise?

Revision literally means to "see again," to look at something from a fresh, critical perspective. It is an ongoing process of rethinking the paper: reconsidering your arguments, reviewing your evidence, refining your purpose, reorganizing your presentation, reviving stale prose.

BUT I THOUGHT REVISION WAS JUST FIXING THE COMMAS AND SPELLING.

Nope. That's called proofreading. It's an important step before turning your paper in, but if your ideas are predictable, your thesis is weak, and your organization is a mess, then proofreading will just be putting a band-aid on a bullet wound. When you finish revising, that's the time to proofread. For more information on the subject, see our handout on **proofreading**.

HOW ABOUT IF I JUST REWORD THINGS: LOOK FOR BETTER WORDS, AVOID REPETITION, ETC.? IS THAT REVISION?

Well, that's a part of revision called editing. It's another important final step in polishing your work. But if you haven't thought through your ideas, then rephrasing them won't make any difference.

Why Is Revision Important?

Writing is a process of discovery, and you don't always produce your best stuff when you first get started. So revision is a chance for you to look critically at what you have written to see

- if it's really worth saying,
- if it says what you wanted to say, and
- if a reader will understand what you're saying.

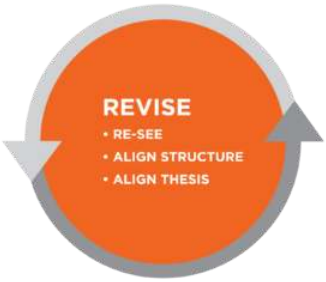


***Figure* 14.1.1**

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Video: Peer Review
- Text: Revising Drafts

- Text: Concerns About Revision
- Self Check: Revising
- Try It: Revising

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14.2: Revising Drafts

Let's continue exploring what the UNC-Chapel Hill Writing Center has to offer about Revision.

THE PROCESS

WHAT STEPS SHOULD I USE WHEN I BEGIN TO REVISE?

Here are several things to do. But don't try them all at one time. Instead, focus on two or three main areas during each revision session.

- Wait awhile after you've finished a draft before looking at it again. The Roman poet Horace thought one should wait nine years, but that's a bit much. A day—a few hours even—will work. When you do return to the draft, be honest with yourself, and don't be lazy. Ask yourself what you really think about the paper.
- As *The Scott, Foresman Handbook for Writers* puts it, "THINK BIG, don't tinker" (61). At this stage, you should be concerned with the large issues in the paper, not the commas.
- Check the focus of the paper: Is it appropriate to the assignment? Is the topic too big or too narrow? Do you stay on track through the entire paper?
- Think honestly about your thesis: Do you still agree with it? Should it be modified in light of something you discovered as you wrote the paper? Does it make a sophisticated, provocative point, or does it just say what anyone could say if given the same topic? Does your thesis generalize instead of taking a specific position? Should it be changed altogether? For more information visit our handout on **thesis statements**.
- Think about your purpose in writing: Does your introduction state clearly what you intend to do? Will your aims be clear to your readers?

WHAT ARE SOME OTHER STEPS I SHOULD CONSIDER IN LATER STAGES OF THE REVISION PROCESS?

- Examine the balance within your paper: Are some parts out of proportion with others? Do you spend too much time on one trivial point and neglect a more important point? Do you give lots of detail early on and then let your points get thinner by the end?
- Check that you have kept your promises to your readers: Does your paper follow through on what the thesis promises? Do you support all the claims in your thesis? Are the tone and formality of the language appropriate for your audience?
- Check the organization: Does your paper follow a pattern that makes sense? Do the transitions move your readers smoothly from one point to the next? Do the topic sentences of each paragraph appropriately introduce what that paragraph is about? Would your paper work better if you moved some things around? For more information visit our handout on **reorganizing drafts.**
- Check your information: Are all your facts accurate? Are any of your statements misleading? Have you provided enough detail to satisfy readers' curiosity? Have you cited all your information appropriately?
- Check your conclusion: Does the last paragraph tie the paper together smoothly and end on a stimulating note, or does the paper just die a slow, redundant, lame, or abrupt death?

WHOA! I THOUGHT I COULD JUST REVISE IN A FEW MINUTES.

Sorry. You may want to start working on your next paper early so that you have plenty of time for revising. That way you can give yourself some time to come back to look at what you've written with a fresh pair of eyes. It's amazing how something that sounded brilliant the moment you wrote it can prove to be less-than-brilliant when you give it a chance to incubate.

BUT I DON'T WANT TO REWRITE MY WHOLE PAPER!

Revision doesn't necessarily mean rewriting the whole paper. Sometimes it means revising the thesis to match what you've discovered while writing. Sometimes it means coming up with stronger arguments to defend your position, or coming up with more vivid examples to illustrate your points. Sometimes it means shifting the order of your paper to help the reader follow your argument, or to change the emphasis of your points. Sometimes it means adding or deleting material for balance or emphasis. And then, sadly, sometimes revision does mean trashing your first draft and starting from scratch. Better that than having the teacher trash your final paper.

BUT I WORK SO HARD ON WHAT I WRITE THAT I CAN'T AFFORD TO THROW ANY OF IT AWAY.

If you want to be a polished writer, then you will eventually find out that you can't afford NOT to throw stuff away. As writers, we often produce lots of material that needs to be tossed. The idea or metaphor or paragraph that I think is most wonderful and brilliant is often the very thing that confuses my reader or ruins the tone of my piece or interrupts the flow of my argument. Writers must be willing to sacrifice their favorite bits of writing for the good of the piece as a whole. In order to trim things down, though, you first have to have plenty of material on the page. One trick is not to hinder yourself while you are composing the first draft because the more you produce, the more you will have to work with when cutting time comes.

BUT SOMETIMES I REVISE AS I GO.

That's OK. Since writing is a circular process, you don't do everything in some specific order. Sometimes you write something and then tinker with it before moving on. But be warned: there are two potential problems with revising as you go. One is that if you revise only as you go along, you never get to think of the big picture. The key is still to give yourself enough time to look at the essay as a whole once you've finished. Another danger to revising as you go is that you may short-circuit your creativity. If you spend too much time tinkering with what is on the page, you may lose some of what hasn't yet made it to the page. Here's a tip: Don't proofread as you go. You may waste time correcting the commas in a sentence that may end up being cut anyway.

HOW DO I GO ABOUT THE PROCESS OF REVISING? ANY TIPS?

- Work from a printed copy; it's easier on the eyes. Also, problems that seem invisible on the screen somehow tend to show up better on paper.
- Another tip is to read the paper out loud. That's one way to see how well things flow.
- Remember all those questions listed above? Don't try to tackle all of them in one draft. Pick a few "agendas" for each draft so that you won't go mad trying to see, all at once, if you've done everything.
- Ask lots of questions and don't flinch from answering them truthfully. For example, ask if there are opposing viewpoints that you haven't considered yet.

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14.3: Peer Review

Some classes may require a peer review as part of an essay project. Even when not strictly required, though, peer review can be valuable for many reasons, as the video below explains.



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

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14.4: Concerns About Revision

Finally, let's revisit the guidance from the Writing Center at UNC-Chapel Hill once more, to address any concerns we may have about revision.

CONCERNS

WHENEVER I REVISE, I JUST MAKE THINGS WORSE. I DO MY BEST WORK WITHOUT REVISING.

That's a common misconception that sometimes arises from fear, sometimes from laziness. The truth is, though, that except for those rare moments of inspiration or genius when the perfect ideas expressed in the perfect words in the perfect order flow gracefully and effortlessly from the mind, all experienced writers revise their work. I wrote six drafts of this handout. Hemingway rewrote the last page of *A Farewell to Arms* thirty-nine times. If you're still not convinced, re-read some of your old papers. How do they sound now? What would you revise if you had a chance?

WHAT CAN GET IN THE WAY OF GOOD REVISION STRATEGIES?

Don't fall in love with what you have written. If you do, you will be hesitant to change it even if you know it's not great. Start out with a working thesis, and don't act like you're married to it. Instead, act like you're dating it, seeing if you're compatible, finding out what it's like from day to day. If a better thesis comes along, let go of the old one. Also, don't think of revision as just rewording. It is a chance to look at the entire paper, not just isolated words and sentences.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I FIND THAT I NO LONGER AGREE WITH MY OWN POINT?

If you take revision seriously, sometimes the process will lead you to questions you cannot answer, objections or exceptions to your thesis, cases that don't fit, loose ends or contradictions that just won't go away. If this happens (and it will if you think long enough), then you have several choices. You could choose to ignore the loose ends and hope your reader doesn't notice them, but that's risky. You could change your thesis completely to fit your new understanding of the issue, or you could adjust your thesis slightly to accommodate the new ideas. Or you could simply acknowledge the contradictions and show why your main point still holds up in spite of them. Most readers know there are no easy answers, so they may be annoyed if you give them a thesis and try to claim that it is always true with no exceptions no matter what.

HOW DO I GET REALLY GOOD AT REVISING?

The same way you get really good at golf, piano, or a video game—do it often. Take revision seriously, be disciplined, and set high standards for yourself. Here are three more tips:

- The more you produce, the more you can cut.
- The more you can imagine yourself as a reader looking at this for the first time, the easier it will be to spot potential problems.
- The more you demand of yourself in terms of clarity and elegance, the more clear and elegant your writing will be.

HOW DO I REVISE AT THE SENTENCE LEVEL?

Read your paper out loud, sentence by sentence, and follow Peter Elbow's advice: "Look for places where you stumble or get lost in the middle of a sentence. These are obvious awkwardness's that need fixing. Look for places where you get distracted or even bored—where you cannot concentrate. These are places where you probably lost focus or concentration in your writing. Cut through the extra words or vagueness or digression; get back to the energy. Listen even for the tiniest jerk or stumble in your reading, the tiniest lessening of your energy or focus or concentration as you say the words . . . A sentence should be alive" (*Writing with Power*135).

Practical advice for ensuring that your sentences are alive:

- Use forceful verbs—replace long verb phrases with a more specific verb. For example, replace "She argues for the importance of the idea" with "She defends the idea."
- Look for places where you've used the same word or phrase twice or more in consecutive sentences and look for alternative ways to say the same thing OR for ways to combine the two sentences.
- Cut as many prepositional phrases as you can without losing your meaning. For instance, the following sentence, "There are several examples of the issue of integrity in Huck Finn," would be much better this way, "Huck Finn repeatedly addresses the

issue of integrity."

- Check your sentence variety. If more than two sentences in a row start the same way (with a subject followed by a verb, for example), then try using a different sentence pattern.
- Aim for precision in word choice. Don't settle for the best word you can think of at the moment—use a thesaurus (along with a dictionary) to search for the word that says exactly what you want to say.
- Look for sentences that start with "It is" or "There are" and see if you can revise them to be more active and engaging.
- For more information, please visit our handouts on **word choice** and **style**.

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14.5: Self Check: Revising

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

15: Proofreading

Topic hierarchy

15.1: Outcome: Proofreading

15.2: Proof Reading

15.3: Why and How to Proofread

15.4: Approaching Precision

15.5: Self Check: Proofreading

15.6: Conclusion: Writing Process

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15.1: Outcome: Proofreading

Skills to Develop

- Analyze lower order concerns for revision
- Analyze strategies for improving sentence clarity
- Analyze strategies for recognizing potential grammar, spelling, and punctuation issues in a draft

Analyze proofreading activities

You know that mistakes in grammar, punctuation, and spelling will negatively impact your grade on school assignments. They have larger-world implications, as well. To see more of this in action, read the following blog post from Melissa Culbertson:

"Why Poor Grammar and Spelling Are Bad for Your Blog"

I know you've been told this before but I'll say it again: proper grammar and spelling matter, even in the blogging world. If that's a little short on the dramatics, then pretend that statement is in neon-flashing lights for extra emphasis.

Just to be clear, bad grammar and spelling is WAY different than using conversational style or slang. For example, while you may have gotten in trouble in school for starting a sentence with "and" or "but," it's NOT grammatically incorrect. It's just informal. So while your teacher may have scoffed at this in school, I'm all about **breaking the rules you learned in English class** regarding formalized writing.

When I'm talking about poor grammar and spelling what I mean is the clear-cut, no-way-this-is-right type of errors that crop up in blogs all over the web. Things like saying "their" when you mean "they're" or spelling receive with the "i" before the "e." Or my least favorite: using a random apostrophe in a word (like "Dog's run.")

So how can poor grammar and spelling hurt your blog's likeability? Like this:

YOU SLOW DOWN YOUR READER

Think of each mistake like a speed bump. Each time a reader notices a grammar or spelling error in your post, it slows them down. It may be a small bump that makes them say – "oh she meant this" – and then move on. Or it may be a larger one and your reader has to re-read it just for your words to make sense. Either way, lots of errors means lots of speed bumps and your reader probably won't take that "route" again.

YOU MUDDLE THE MEANING OF YOUR POST

Picture the most beautiful story you could tell. Now add in some bad grammar or misspelled words. Kinda loses its luster, right? Sure some stories are hard to ruin but a polished post sure sounds a heck of a lot better. With a post free of mistakes, you keep the reader's focus on your overall story, not individual words that are incorrect.

Same goes for blog posts that *aren't* based on a story. Say you're writing a tutorial. Well, if it's full of extra-long, run-on sentences, it may be harder to understand your tutorial.

YOU COULD MISS OUT ON BRAND OPPORTUNITIES

Most people who are looking to work with bloggers are in PR or Marketing. As a marketer myself, we're picky when it comes to writing. PR and marketing people want the brand they represent to have top-notch bloggers writing about them. This means you could get picked over if your blog posts are riddled with errors.

So, treat your blog like your resume. It IS your resume. (The only difference I'd argue is that an occasional mistake shouldn't dissuade a brand from working with you whereas a single mistake on a resume could get yours tossed into a "not interested" pile.)

SO WHAT'S THE FIX?

People on the Internet have short attention spans so the fewer grammar or misspellings you have, the more likely someone will enjoy that phenomenal blog post of yours.

The fix is simply to proofread your posts. If you're someone who knows grammar and spelling isn't your strong suit, then make it a point to work on improving those skills bit by bit. Yes, we all make mistakes but we can always improve too. And yes, I proofread this post like a gazillion times so I wouldn't endure the irony if I indeed made a mistake.



Figure 15.1.1

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Video: Proof Reading
- Text: Why and How to Proofread
- Text: Approaching Precision
- Self Check: Proofreading
- Try It: Proofreading

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15.2: Proof Reading

This animated guide will get you focused on the small-scale improvements to wording that will have huge impacts.



(Note: the video has an instrumental sound track but no dialogue, so can be watched without sound.)

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15.3: Why and How to Proofread

Why bother with proofreading?

Proofreading needs to be considered as an important stage in writing and editing processes.

Writing and revising focus on how to communicate the topic content most effectively while **proofreading** focuses on the mechanics of grammar, punctuation, and spelling. If you miss this stage or proofread too quickly, you will not notice critical errors that reduce the effectiveness of what you write.

Teachers often use these **proofreading symbols** when they mark papers. If you see the same ones show up on graded projects return to you, this will help you learn to anticipate and avoid your unique writing concerns. We normally repeat the same kinds of errors in everything we write.

What is the best way to go about proofreading?

Work with another student or family member in an editing role



Figure 15.3.1

Did you know that…

- It is much harder to spot mistakes in your own writing than in someone else's work.
- Someone with a fresh set of eyes might offer excellent suggestions for improvement.
- Professional writers hire editors who proofread each page up to ten times and pick up new errors each time.
- Publishers use teams of editors who work in pairs, reading out loud to each other in order to spot errors.

Know your typical errors

If you know you often make certain errors, double check for these in particular.

Make a note of your errors each time you get work marked and look for patterns. For example missppellingss, keyboarding letters bcak ot frotn, missing words because your brain works far faster you can write type. Did you spot all those kinds of errors in the previous sentence?

Read aloud, word for word

Take advantage of the dual power of sight and hearing working together and you may hear a mistake that you can't see, such as an omitted or repeated word. Also, note that wherever you pause, you often need some punctuation.

Slow down to about 25% of your normal reading speed

This will help you to read what is actually on the page, not what you think is there. When you read what you wrote, because you already know what is there, it is harder to concentrate on each word.

When you read at normal speed, you "fix your eyes" on the page only three or four times per line, or less. You unconsciously predict the words between these points and often pick out only as much of the words as you need to do this–perhaps only as much as the first and last letters.

To proofread effectively, you need to focus consciously on every word you have written and maybe do it twice in longer words. You have to look attentively at each word, not slide over it.

Check for consistency and accuracy

- Check through all the verbs to make sure tenses are consistent (all match in time sequence)
- Ask who?/what? for each verb to make sure singular/plural subjects match with verbs. Check every sentence has a full stop (for example, did you notice that the line above this one needed a full stop at the end?).

Some bits of your writing need to be double checked, such as the accuracy of statistics, dates, page references, or quotations you have copied, to make sure that the evidence you have selected is absolutely correct.This may mean re-reading sections of your sources again.

Read from the end

Instead of starting at the beginning of your page, start with the very last sentence and read that on its own, then read each sentence individually, working back towards the beginning, a sentence at a time.

This will stop you sliding over the words and help you see if you have complete sentences or fragments and run-on sentences. It will also help you see if you have pronouns (like *it* or *this*) that do not have full meaning because they are too far from their corresponding noun.

Read for formality

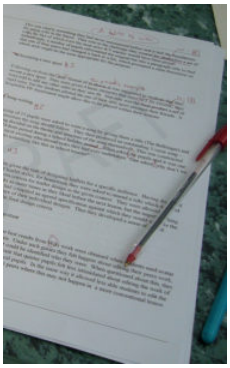


***Figure* 15.3.2**

Look through your writing for symptoms that your text is not formal enough. You can do this easily using the ***Find and Replace*** tool in Microsoft Word and searching for apostrophes in words like *it's*, *they're*, *you're*, *can't*. These contractions need to be replaced by the full words to be formal enough for an academic essay or report.

Then search for the capital *I* because first person may not be appropriate and might need to be replaced by the passive or third person ("Results from this experiment show that…" instead of "I did an experiment that shows…").

Turn on the Grammar tools in Word

As well as having a spellchecker that underlines wrong spelling with a red dotted line, Microsoft Word can identify problems with sentence structure by underlining with a green dotted line if you have the grammar tools turned on.

Check your reference list

Check through your reference list systematically for alphabetical order and for all required commas, full stops, parentheses, and for missing details such as place or publisher or date that you accessed a website.

Finally, try some **Read-aloud software** to help with proofreading. If the word or structure is wrong in some way, the text reader will read it wrongly and you will immediately see what you need to fix. Of course, this will not identify differences between words that sound exactly the same, such as *there*/*their*/*they're* or *weather*/*whether*.

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15.4: Approaching Precision



Figure 15.4.1

Proofreading can be seen as a tedious task that many writers avoid like a contagious disease. Sometimes, writers will simply lump several stages of the writing process into one, calling it all "proofreading the document." Careful proofreading, however, is the equivalent of combing one's hair, straightening one's clothing, and buffing one's shoes before facing the public. It is possible to enter the public in an unkempt manner, but the effect upon the public might not be what one expects or prefers.

If the other writing process steps have been performed adequately, then much of the proofreading stage will be routine and limited to the few mistakes that have escaped the writer's attention during the multiple drafting, revising, and editing stages.

What Proofreading Entails

Proofreading involves checking for grammatical, spelling, and mechanical errors, which may include problems with verb tense, subject-verb agreement, parallel structure, sentence completion, alternate spellings, capitalization, and punctuation. Proofreading is often made easier by the use of colored ink, bracketed or parenthetical notations, or proofreading symbols for identification and correction.

Example 15.4.1:

The Strange Life of Death

> *Death in literature has experienced a strange life throughout the years. In some cases, death*
>
> ~~*have*~~ ***has*** *been portrayed as a welcome* ~~*visitor*~~ ***guest*** *whose presence is unwittingly included among family and friends (e.g., "The Ambitious Guest," a short story by Nathaniel Hawthorne). On other occasions, death has been ostracized as an enemy whose unwelcome morbid presence is forbidden or unsuccessfully avoided (e.g., Oedipus). The only consistent certainty about death* ~~*have*~~ ***has*** *been* ~~*their*~~ ***the*** *controlling inevitability with which death has been portrayed.*

Subject-verb agreement errors should be checked in every independent and dependent clause. So too should parallel structure of words, phrases, and ideas. Detection of spelling or grammatical and mechanical errors should not be left to the electronic red or green colors of spell and grammar check: Electronic spell checks notoriously overlook homonyms—or erroneously insert them in place of other misspelled words. Such errors can only be found by the human eye.

Similar mistakes can occur with computer recommendations in grammar. Humans should not abdicate the task of reasoning and applying knowledge to a computer's artificial intelligence. As the astronauts learned in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, that artificial intelligence can come to some flawed conclusions.



***Figure* 15.4.2**

Many writers find that they benefit from leaving a distance of time—and even place—between the most recent draft and the final proofreading stage before publication. These writers find that approaching a text with fresh eyes makes them better able to detect errors that might escape the attention of one who has spent a great deal of uninterrupted time with the document.

Writers who don't have the luxury of waiting between completing a draft and proofreading it can still benefit from that fresh perspective by asking someone who hasn't seen the document to proofread it. A word of caution is in order here, however: A writer would be wise to avoid asking the same person to proofread all of the writer's documents, for fear of becoming too imposing.

No matter how proofreading is accomplished, it should be performed in a careful, methodical manner so that the document's overall appearance is worthy of the writer's professional and personal pride in the process and the product.

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15.5: Self Check: Proofreading

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15.6: Conclusion: Writing Process

Here's the secret: your success with academic writing depends upon how well you understand what you are doing as you write, and then how you approach the writing task.



***Figure* 15.6.1**

Early research done on college writers discovered that whether students produced a successful piece of writing depended largely upon their representation of the writing task. The writers' mental model for picturing their task made a huge difference. Most people as they start college have wildly strange ideas about what they are doing when they write an essay, or worse—they have no clear idea at all.

This module has demonstrated a very broad concept of the writing process, and in some senses a generic one. The next step for you, as a writer, is to visualize and customize your own personal process.

One final piece of advice: identify a metaphor for your writing process. Pat Thomson describes the value such a metaphor can give you, below. She's describing writing her Ph.D. thesis, in this case:

> *When I was just beginning to write my own thesis I thought about it as a jigsaw. I just had to put all the little pieces together. At some point I had one of those aha moments when I realized that a jigsaw was a very unhelpful metaphor – a jigsaw has an original somewhere, it is about producing a predetermined image, and it already has set of relationships and a defined set of edges. My thesis and its authoring was actually nothing like this.*
>
> *I decided I needed to rethink what I was doing. To help me do this I needed a new metaphor. I came to think that a more helpful approach to my thesis was thinking of it as making a patchwork quilt.*
>
> *I had lots of pieces of stuff that I'd made up, hacked out, into some kind of shape. Some of the pieces were new material and others were made from second hand bits I'd found lying around (in books). I had to decide how big the quilt would be. Even though there was a recommended size, there was still the possibility of approaching the shape somewhat creatively. There was certainly plenty of opportunity for putting the separate pieces together in different ways. It all depended on the effect I was trying to achieve. As long as I had a good backing, and the stitching firmly anchored the result of my more creative handiwork to the backing, then there were quite a few possible variations in patterning available.*
>
> *This was a metaphor which worked for me at the time. It put me in control of the process. It meant I spent time thinking about the structure of the text, and where the various pieces might go. There were many possible quilts to be made. I played with various options –*

> *what if this chapter was about this and that one about that – how did it compare to all the other possible theses that I could write?*



Figure **15.6.2**

Thomson uses the patchwork quilt metaphor as descriptive of her process, and it also helps her define what her role in writing should be. Can you envision similar metaphors for yourself? Does writing a paper feel like creating a new galaxy to you? Does it seem like preparing for and undertaking a big trip to a foreign land? You can decide, and in doing so, you empower yourself to become a more confident writer.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

Research

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

16: Finding Sources

Topic hierarchy

16.1: Why It Matters: Research Process
16.2: Outcome: Finding Sources
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16.1: Why It Matters: Research Process

Skills to Develop

- Analyze preliminary, intermediate, and advanced search techniques
- Analyze methods of analysis to assess the quality and reliability of a source
- Analyze issues of plagiarism and academic dishonesty
- Analyze MLA document formatting and citation practices

Why is it necessary to analyze the way we gather and use information?

Some Surprising News

Imagine your reaction if you saw this title on social media one morning: "Kim Jung-Un Named *The Onion*'s Sexiest Man Alive For 2012." You open the story to read,



Figure 16.1.1

With his devastatingly handsome, round face, his boyish charm, and his strong, sturdy frame, this Pyongyang-bred heartthrob is every woman's dream come true. Blessed with an air of power that masks an unmistakable cute, cuddly side, Kim made this newspaper's editorial board swoon with his impeccable fashion sense, chic short hairstyle, and, of course, that famous smile.[1]

You'd probably figure out fairly quickly that something was not quite right about this story. (At the very least, you'd protest that Channing Tatum and Ryan Gosling were robbed.)

But what if you weren't familiar with *The Onion*? What if you were outside of the U.S.? What if you came from a culture where Kim Jong-Un held a much larger grip over popular media, such as in South Korea or China?

Parody as Entertainment

You're probably familiar with the spoof news source *The Onion.* What started as a print newspaper in the '80s has evolved into a fake-news website, video series, and YouTube channel. It's an excellent example of a **parody**: a text that follows the same conventions and styles of a recognizable source, yet exaggerates it for comic effect.

LOOKS ARE EVERYTHING

Consider the home page of *The Onion* on June 16, 2016, compared to the home page of CNN on the same day:

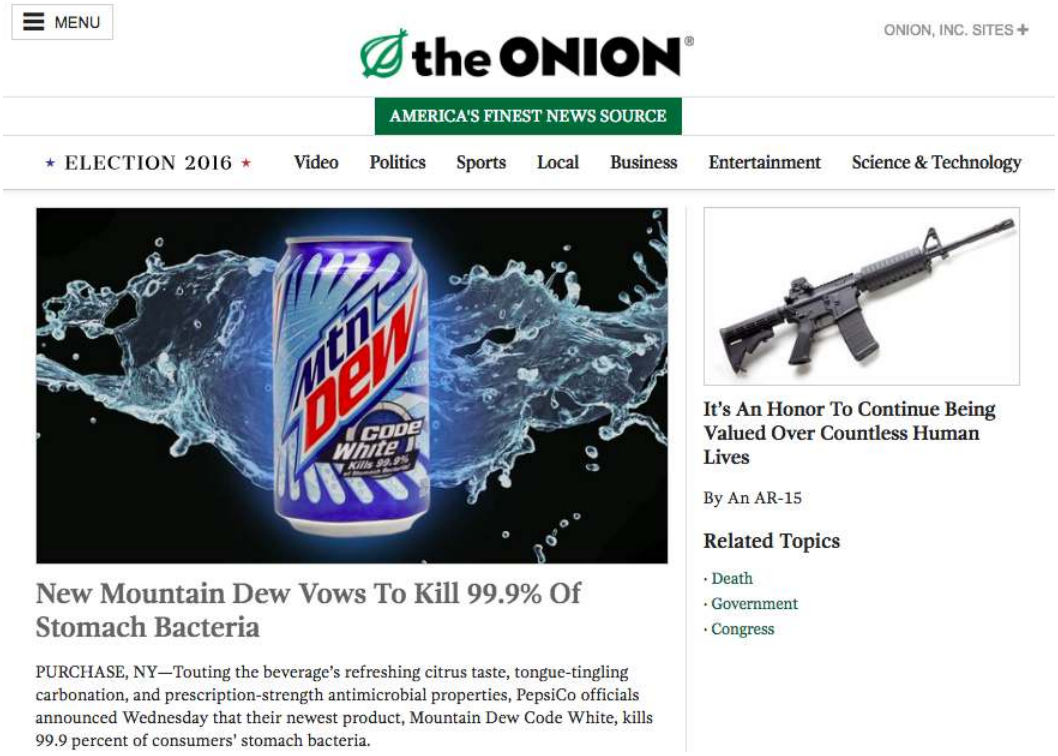


***Figure* 16.1.2**



***Figure* 16.1.3**

The actual stories may differ substantially, but the site layout is quite similar. That's very, very intentional. *The Onion* strives to have the appearance of a "real" news outlet, even if the stories themselves are ridiculous.

Taken Out of Context

Given the similar appearance and styling of the website, it's not surprising that someone not familiar with *The Onion*'s purpose might see a story, especially taken out of context, and assume it was real news.

This is actually a fairly frequent occurrence, such as with the Kim Jung-Un story above. China's state-run online news, *People's Daily Online*, picked up the story and ran with it as official news, as did South Korea's *Korea Times*. Readers of those news sites would have seen the story reported from a reputable source and have believed it to be true.[2]

Not an Isolated Incidence

Clearly, *The Onion* is a site meant to entertain. What about sources with more malicious goals, out to sway readers for less honorable purposes? Anyone can create a good-looking website. Reputable sources occasionally print or forward mistakes. Some reporters take shortcuts, out of laziness or greed. There are many reasons to closely scrutinize anything you read, regardless of what it looks like or where it comes from.

The Takeaway

There are no hard and fast rules when it comes to resource reliability. Each new source has to be evaluated on its own merit, and this module will offer you a set of tools to help you do just that. You'll also learn more about ways to find, analyze, integrate, and document your sources.



***Figure* 16.1.4**

References

1. "Kim Jung-Un Named *The Onion*'s Sexiest Man Alive For 2012 [Update]." *The Onion*. 14 Nov 2012. Web. http://www.theonion.com/article/kim-jong-un-named-the-onions-sexiest-man-alive-for-30379 ↵
2. Fallon, Kevin. "Fooled by 'The Onion': 9 Most Embarrassing Fails. The Daily Beast. 27 Nov 2012. Web. http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/09/29/fooled-by-the-onion-8-most-embarrassing-fails.html ↵

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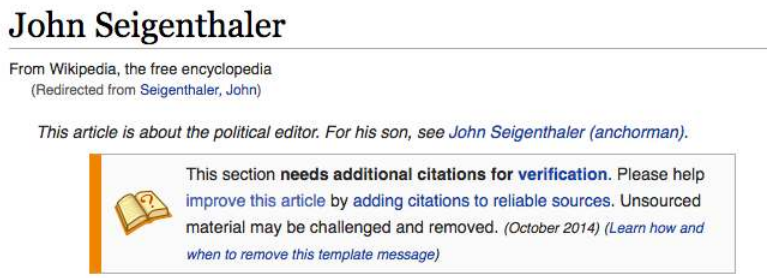
16.2: Outcome: Finding Sources

Skills to Develop

- Analyze preliminary research strategies (developing a research plan, basic online searching, using Google)
- Analyze intermediate research strategies (advanced online searches, finding scholarly sources and primary and secondary sources, basic library searches, librarian consultation)
- Analyze advanced search strategies (advanced library searches, reading academic texts, using library databases)

Analyze primary, intermediate, and advanced search techniques

Wikipedia is often the first stop on the research train, and for good reason. You can easily find concise, informative explanations on nearly any topic, and even investigate further using links and footnotes. Although it's a great beginning research tool, anyone, regardless of background, qualifications, or expertise, can write Wikipedia articles. As a result, articles can display incorrect information.


John Seigenthaler

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
(Redirected from Seigenthaler, John)

This article is about the political editor. For his son, see John Seigenthaler (anchorman).

This section **needs additional citations for verification**. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. *(October 2014) (Learn how and when to remove this template message)*

***Figure* 16.2.1**

There are many examples of such incorrect information on Wikipedia. Perhaps the most infamous involves the **Wikipedia article on John Seigenthaler** (former journalist, political advisor, and father of the reporter of the same name on NBC news). Brian Chase changed the article to indicate that Seigenthaler played a role in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and his brother Robert. This untrue contribution lasted for 132 days (Page, "Wikipedia Biography"). Seigenthaler was understandably upset, which he reported vociferously in an **article in *USA Today***. Were someone to take Wikipedia's John Seigenthaler's article at face value during this time, she or he would come to the wrong conclusion about Seigenthaler.

If you quote or paraphrase a Wikipedia article as an authoritative source, then, you are potentially making a claim based on wrong information, and using incorrect information is not a good way to make a convincing argument. Because the internet offers publishing capabilities to anyone, anytime, it's not just Wikipedia that offers a false sense of security in its information.You should, therefore, read critically **all** sources, not just Wikipedia articles.

It's always a good idea to verify information in multiple sources. To ensure a better chance of accuracy, though, college-level research-based writing assignments generally ask you to use sources written by academic professionals and recognized experts. In this section, you'll learn how follow the research process in order to carefully use search engines and library databases to find scholarly articles.

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Video: Preliminary Research Strategies
- Text: The Research Process
- Text: Level Up Your Google Game
- Text: Intermediate Research Strategies
- Text: Finding Books
- Text: Advanced Search Strategies
- Video: Library Databases
- Video: How to Search Databases
- Self-Check: Finding Sources

- Try It: Finding Sources

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16.3: Preliminary Research Strategies

Preliminary Research Strategies

Before you dive into your research paper, you want to inform yourself about the basics of your topic. Be sure you've read all the assigned texts and carefully read the prompt as you gather preliminary information. This stage is sometimes called **pre-research**.



Beginning the Search

You shouldn't start your research by just typing in a question like, "What were medical practices like during the Battle of Gettysburg?" Instead, you should make use of **key terms**, or words that will appear frequently in the source.

To search key terms, think about important words that will occur in sources you could use. Then, type one or two of those terms into the search bar. Most search engines will generate results based on how frequently those words appear in articles and their abstracts.

Let's use our topic of medical practices at the Battle of Gettysburg as an example. You might choose keywords like "amputation," "field medicine," and "Gettysburg." This should yield articles that discuss amputations on the field during the Battle of Gettysburg. You could also search something like "anesthesia" and "Civil War," which would lead you to articles about anesthetics during the war.

While searching with key terms, you may need to get creative. Some articles will use different language than you might expect, so try a variety of related terms to make sure you're getting back all the possible results.

Suppose you are asked to write a paper in support of this assertion:

The proliferation of fast food has led to the national problem of obesity.

It's not a good idea to type in the entire sentence in your search, as there are many irrelevant words in this search statement. Before typing, decide which words or phrases are essential to your search and which are non-essential. There are only two concepts in this statement that are essential to its meaning: fast food and obesity. You can eliminate the word "proliferation" because it modifies the essential concept of fast food and the phrase "national problem" is not crucial because we assume any article talking about "fast food" and "obesity" will discuss some negative aspect that would represent a *national problem.*

Exercise **16.3.1**

Identify the key concepts for following topics:

1. Harsher legal penalties and virus detection software have been useful in stemming the spread of computer viruses.
2. What is the effect of the media on the body image of young adults?

Answer

1. 1. computer virus

2. virus detection software
3. legal penalties

2. 1. media
2. body image
3. young adults

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16.4: The Research Process

The Research Process



Figure **16.4.1**

A good research process should go through these steps:

1. **Decide on the topic**, or carefully consider the topic that has been assigned.
2. **Narrow the topic** in order to narrow search parameters.
    - If you are studying the Battle of Gettysburg, for example, you might decide to look into any number of topics related to the battle: medical practices on the field, social differences between soldiers, or military maneuvers. If your topic is medical practices in battle, a search for “Battle of Gettysburg” would return far too many general results. You would also not want to search for a single instance of surgery, because you might not be able to find enough information on it. Find a happy medium between very broad and too specific.
3. **Do background research**, or pre-research, using broad search tools like Google search, Wikipedia, textbooks, or encyclopedias.
    - You can also talk about your research with friends, co-workers, and family for more ideas.
4. **Create a question** that your research will address and generate sub-questions from your main question.
    - By determining your research question, you can **develop a working thesis statement**, or the main point you hope to make in your paper. Plan to revise your thesis statement several times as you learn more about your topic. It will help you concentrate on what you want and ignore information that is irrelevant.
5. **Determine what kind of sources are best** for your argument.
    - How many sources will you need? How long should your paper be? Will you need primary or secondary sources? Where will you find the best information?
6. **Create a bibliography** as you gather and reference sources. Make sure you are using credible and relevant sources.
7. **Write and edit your paper!** Incorporate the research into your own writing and properly cite your sources.

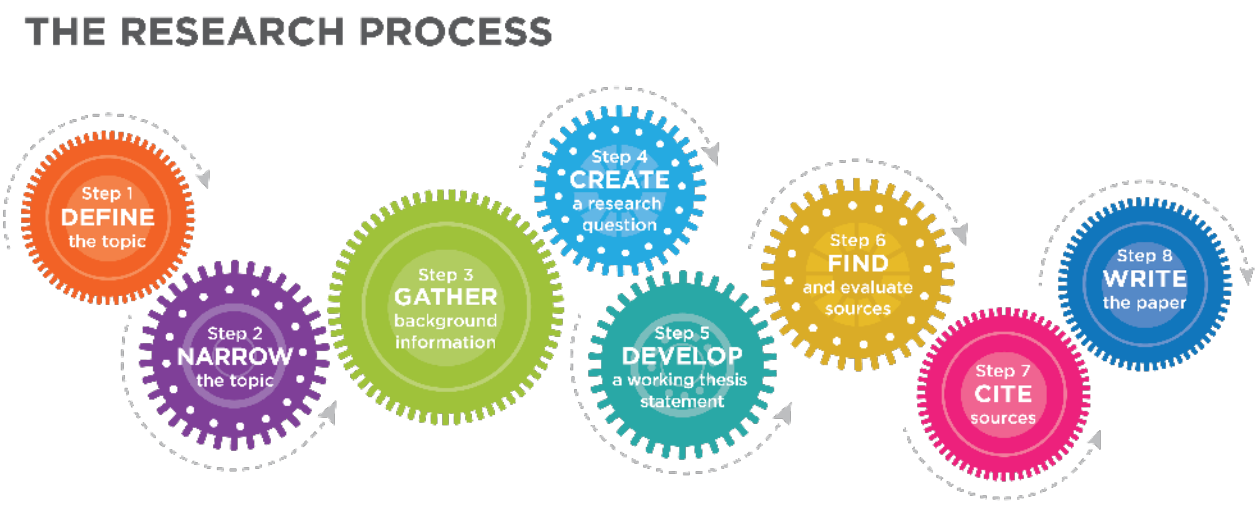


***Figure* 16.4.2**

For example, in step one, you might decide that your topic will be the Flint Water Crisis that began in 2014. Then in step two you may considering narrowing it down to either how the lead poisoning got into the water in the first place, government corruption, the impact of the crisis, or environmental racism. You might decide on government corruption and decide to investigate the specific state and local officials involved in the events leading up to the crisis.

After some initial research, you would come up with a research question. A good research question for this example might be, "How did the behavior and actions of state and local officials lead to the Flint Water Crisis?" Next, you generate sub-questions from your main question. For instance, "Who were the public officials during the Flint Water Crisis?" "How did officials react when they first learned of the polluted water?" "In what ways did public officials ignore/exacerbate the water problem?" These questions enable you to create a working thesis statement that can help organize and shape your paper. A working thesis statement for this paper might be "The actions and corruption of state and local officials in Flint led to the Flint Water Crisis." As you get further into the research, you might modify your thesis statement to be more specific about the types of action and corruption, or what officials were most responsible.

Next, you'll decide on what type of sources you want to use. Because this is a current event, you may choose a good mix of both primary and secondary sources, as well as popular news articles and scholarly reports on government actions. As you accumulate sources, make sure you create a bibliography, or a list of sources that you've used in your research and writing process. It's always a good idea to keep track of your sources and take notes on where you find information so you can easily include the information you need into your final paper. And finally, have fun doing the research!

Exercise 16.4.1

1. Which of the following is the better research question?
   a. Is global warming harmful?
   b. What are the adverse effects of global warming?
2. Which of the following is the better research question?
   a. Do doctors charge too much?
   b. What factors influence the operating costs of physicians?
3. Decide whether or not the following working thesis statements are **good** or **bad:**
   a. Man has had a major impact on the environment.
   b. Marijuana use in Mishawaka, Indiana has been a problem for law enforcement since the 1970s.

c. Miley Cyrus is a horrible singer.
d. Profilers have played a necessary role in catching serial killers.

Answer

1. b. “Is global warming harmful?” is not the best way to state the question because it’s too general. “What are the adverse effects of global warming?” allows you to discover specific adverse effects.
2. b. “Do doctors charge too much?” is not the best way to state the question because it’s too general. “What factors influence the operating costs of physicians?” is the best way to state the question because it focuses on a specific aspect of the cost of medical care.
3. a. Bad. This statement is way too vague and broad. What constitutes “major impact”? What aspects of the environment are we talking about? What century are we talking about?

   b. Bad. Even if it is true, it is too local and narrow to be supported with national or scholarly research. Sources would probably be limited to local newspaper articles and personal interviews. Can you make those sources “stretch” across a 10 page research paper? Not likely.

   c. Bad, because the statement is largely an unfocused opinion. What exactly is “horrible”? How does Miley Cyrus fall into that category? Do you think there are many books or research articles that could support this topic? Probably not.

   d. Good. Using this statement for a paper allows you to skip over the sources that do not deal with profiling, that do not deal with the apprehension of serial killers, and that deal only with the injustices of “racial profiling.” **A good working thesis statement saves you time and keeps you focused.**

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16.5: Level Up Your Google Game

Popular search engines like Google, Yahoo, and Bing enable you to find lots of information quickly and, when used cautiously, can be fabulous research tools. Because the information you find is not necessarily academic, credible, or pertinent to your topic, generic search engines are best used in the preliminary stages of the research process. As you use these search engines, make sure you are using them most effectively so you can speed up your search process and find the best information.

GOOGLE SEARCH TIPS

Practice these google search techniques to narrow down your search results.

Google Search Tools. Created using information from Google Support and Google Guide.

Search tool	How to use it
” “	Use quotes to search for exact phrases. This search tool looks for the words in the same order they appear, so be careful not to be too specific, or risk excluding helpful information. For example, “medicinal practices at Gettysburg” returns just one result. Example: **“The Battle of Gettysburg”** or **“Medicinal practices” Gettysburg**
–	Use dash immediately before a word or site to excludes that from your search. Example: **cricket -insect** or **Civil War -Gettysburg** or **Civil War -site:Wikipedia.org**
*	Put an asterick in place of an unknown search term. Example: **“an * a day”**
site:	Search specific websites or domains. This is helpful in academic research if you want to find articles only from .edu, .gov, or .org websites. Examples: **Gettysburg site:history.com** or **Gettysburg site:.mil**
related:	Find websites that are similar to a web address you already know. Example: **related:genealogy.com**
OR	Use OR to search for information that may use a different word. Example: **medicine OR surgery in “Battle of Gettysburg”**
filetype:	Find specific types of files. Example: **Gettysburg Address filetype:ppt**
allintitle:	Find pages that have the keywords in the title of the page. Example: **allintitle: medicine gettysburg battle**

Apply your newfound skills by solving Google’s “A Google a Day” research question.

Google Advanced Search

You can avoid having to memorize many of the search tools by simply using Google Advanced Search and typing in the specific information you seek. There you can sort for exact words, phrases, websites, filetype, and even usage rights.

USING GOOGLE ADVANCED SEARCH



Google Scholar

A popular article database is Google Scholar. It looks like a regular Google search, and it aims to include the vast majority of scholarly resources available. While it has some limitations and is not as valuable as searching within library databases, it's a useful tool if you want to cast a wide net. It's also a large step above general Google searches for finding academic content. Google Scholar starts with a basic search blank. Because researchers are more likely to need the results of more specific searches, the advanced search link is accessed via a down-arrow in the search blank.

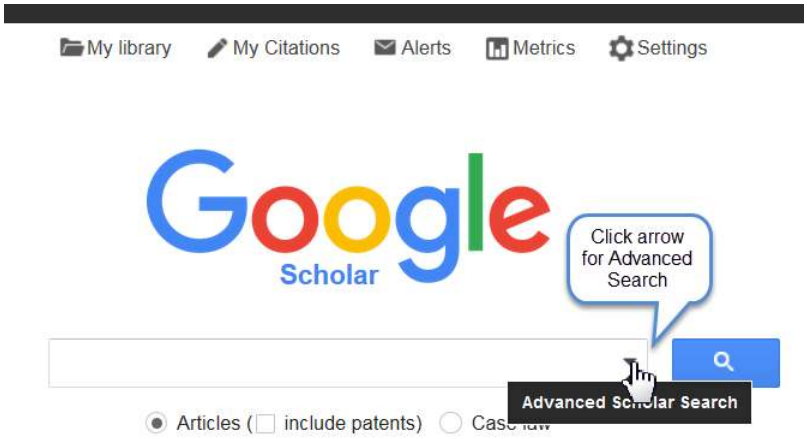


***Figure* 16.5.1**

Here are a few things to consider when using Google Scholar:

- Keep in mind that Google is not transparent about the journals or time ranges it indexes, and publishers occasionally request that Google Scholar not index their publications. Non-scholarly and/or non-peer reviewed material may also appear in Google Scholar, so it is best used in conjunction with other search tools.
- Unless your Google Scholar account is already connected to your school library account (check with your library for setting that up), you will likely see that many articles will cost you $20 or $30 just to look at. **Don't pay for them!** You probably have access to virtually all the published academic literature through your library resources. Write down the key information (authors' names, title, journal title, volume, issue number, year, page numbers) and go find the article through your library website. If you don't have immediate full-text access, you may be able to get it through interlibrary loan.
- A neat Google Scholar feature is the "cited by" link. If you get one great hit on Google Scholar, you can quickly see a list of other papers that cited it.

USING GOOGLE SCHOLAR

Watch this video to get a better idea of how to utilize Google Scholar for finding articles. While this video mentions setting up an account with La Trobe University, the same principles apply to other colleges and universities. Ask your librarian or check out **Google Scholar Search Tips** for more assistance.



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16.6: Intermediate Research Strategies

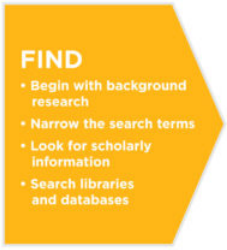


***Figure* 16.6.1**

The first step in finding good resources is to know what to look for. Sites like Google, Yahoo, and Wikipedia may be good for general searches, but if you want something you can cite in a scholarly paper, you need to find academic sources.

Scholarly Sources

A scholarly source can be an article or book that was written by an expert in the academic field. Most are by professors or doctoral students for publication in peer-reviewed academic journals. Since the level of expertise and scrutiny is so high for these articles, they are considered to be among the best and most trustworthy sources. Most of these articles will list an author's credentials, such as relevant degrees, other publications, or employment at a university or research institution. If an article does not, try searching for the author online to see how much expertise he or she has in the field.

	Scholarly	Popular
		
What's in them?	Articles presenting original research or events related to a specific discipline.	Articles about current events and popular culture, opinion pieces, fiction, self-help tips.
Who writes them?	Professors, researchers, or professionals; credentials are usually stated in article.	Staff writers or free-lancers; names or credentials often not stated.
Who reads them?	Scholars (professors, researchers, students) knowledgeable about a specific discipline.	General public.
What do they look like?	Mostly text supported by black and white figures, graphs, tables, or charts; few advertisements.	Glossy, color photographs, easy-to-read layout, plenty of advertising.
What are their advantages?	• Articles are usually critically evaluated by experts before they can be published (peer-reviewed). • Footnotes or bibliographies support research and point to further research on a topic. • Authors describe methodology and supply data used to support research results.	• Written for non-specialists. • Timely coverage of popular topics and current events. • Provide broad overview of topics. • Good source for topics related to popular culture.
What are their disadvantages?	• Articles often use technical jargon and can be difficult for non-specialists to read. • Scholarly journals are expensive and may not be as readily available. • Research and review process take time; not as useful for current events or popular culture.	• Articles are selected by editors who may know very little about a topic. • Authors usually do not cite sources. • Published to make a profit; the line between informing and selling may be blurred.

Primary and Secondary Sources

A **primary source** is an original document. Primary sources can come in many different forms. In an English paper, a primary source might be the poem, play, or novel you are studying. In a history paper, it may be a historical document such as a letter, a journal, a map, the transcription of a news broadcast, or the original results of a study conducted during the time period under review. If you conduct your own field research, such as surveys, interviews, or experiments, your results would also be considered a primary source. Primary sources are valuable because they provide the researcher with the information closest to the time period or topic at hand. They also allow the writer to conduct an original analysis of the source and to draw new conclusions.

Secondary sources, by contrast, are books and articles that analyze primary sources. They are valuable because they provide other scholars' perspectives on primary sources. You can also analyze them to see if you agree with their conclusions or not.

Most essays will use a combination of primary and secondary sources.

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16.7: Finding Books

Despite the ease of the internet, and all the resources available to you in searching online, it is still valuable to find pertinent information in actual books. Books cover virtually any topic, fact or fiction. For research purposes, you will probably be looking for books that synthesize all the information on one topic to support a particular argument or thesis. They will be especially beneficial

- to locate substantial, in-depth information on a topic
- to put your topic in context with other important issues
- to find historical information
- to find summaries of research to support an argument

The following presentation provides tips for finding books in your college or university library.



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16.8: Advanced Search Strategies

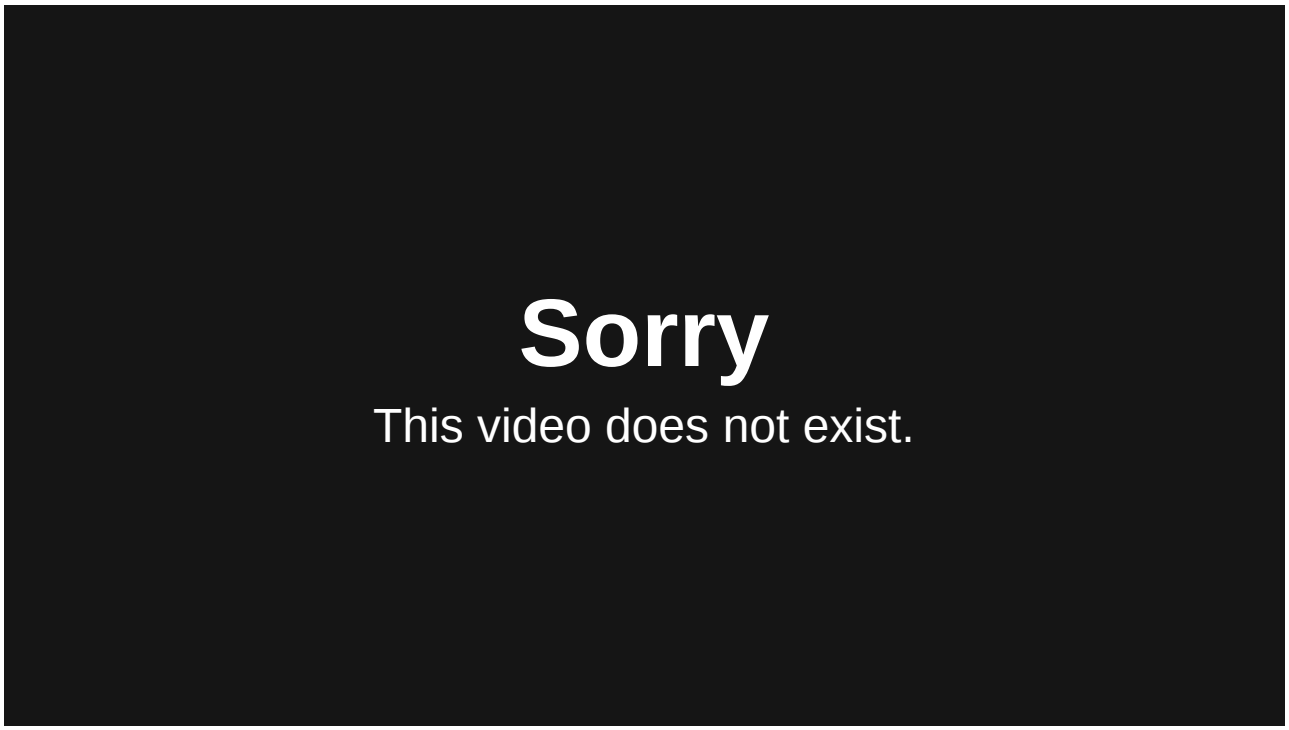
Scholarly Articles

While books are undoubtedly fabulous resources, you will find shorter, specific, scholarly works in academic journals. Essays in academic journals are essentially reports that scholars write to their peers—present and future—about what they've done in their research, what they've found, and why they think it's important. Thus, in a lot of fields they often have a structure reminiscent of the lab reports you've written for science classes:

1. **Abstract**: A one-paragraph summary of the article: its purpose, methods, findings, and significance.
2. **Introduction**: An overview of the key question or problem that the paper addresses, why it is important, and the key conclusion(s) (i.e., thesis or theses) of the paper.
3. **Literature review**: A synthesis of all the relevant prior research (the so-called "academic literature" on the subject) that explains why the paper makes an original and important contribution to the body of knowledge.
4. **Data and methods**: An explanation of what data or information the author(s) used and what they did with it.
5. **Results**: A full explanation of the key findings of the study.
6. **Conclusion/discussion**: Puts the key findings or insights from the paper into their broader context; explains why they matter.

HOW TO READ SCHOLARLY ARTICLES

This video defines scholarly articles and explains how to read through them so you can find the information you need.



Not all papers are so "sciencey." For example, a historical or literary analysis doesn't necessarily have a "data and methods" section, but it will explain and justify the research question, describe how the authors' own points relate to those made in other relevant articles and books, develop the key insights yielded by the analysis, and conclude by explaining its significance. Some academic papers are review articles, in which the "data" are published papers and the "findings" are key insights, enduring lines of debate, and/or remaining unanswered questions.

Understanding the structure of scholarly articles tells you a lot about how to find, read, and use these sources. Some hints:

1. **Find them quickly**. Instead of paging through mountains of dubious web content, go right to the relevant scholarly article databases in order to quickly find the highest quality sources.

2. **Use the abstracts**. Abstracts tell you immediately whether or not the article you're holding is relevant or useful to the paper you're assigned to write. You shouldn't ever have the experience of reading the whole paper just to discover it's not useful.
3. **Read strategically**. Knowing the anatomy of a scholarly article tells you what you should be reading for in each section. For example, you don't necessarily need to understand every nuance of the literature review. You can just focus on why the authors claim that their own study is distinct from the ones that came before.
4. **Don't sweat the technical stuff**. Not every social scientist understands the intricacies of log-linear modeling of quantitative survey data; focus instead on the passages that explain the findings and their significance in plainer language.
5. **Use one article to find others**. If you have one really good article that's a few years old, you can use article databases to find newer articles that cited it in their own literature reviews. That immediately tells you which ones are on the same topic and offer newer findings. On the other hand, if your first source is very recent, the literature review section will describe the other papers in the same line of research. You can look them up directly.

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16.9: Library Databases

If you want reliable sources, head to your library (or the library website!) and check out the library databases. Here's why:

- **Library resources go through a review process.** Librarians select books, magazines, journals, databases, and other media sources. This selection process allows the library to collect sources considered reliable, historically relevant, and valuable.
- **Library resources are free for your use.** Libraries purchase subscriptions to journals, databases, and other resources so they are available for your research. These subscriptions are not cheap but your library considers them a good investment, because the information is valuable, relevant, and reliable.
- **Library resources are organized** so you can easily find all the sources on a topic.
- **Library resources are meant to be kept permanently.** One of the primary functions of a library is to be an organized storehouse of in-depth information published throughout time. Current and historical information can be found in the library, giving a picture of how information on a topic developed.
- **Library resources come with personal assistance.** Unlike the Internet which is primarily do-it-yourself, libraries have staff who are trained to assist you in sorting through all these information sources. They can help you learn to use new tools and can answer any questions you have. Some libraries even provide help through their websites.
- **Libraries have large collections of information** on a variety of topics which have been carefully selected and organized. The key idea when using the library is that you are getting QUALITY over QUANTITY. Print or electronic library resources are the best sources to use when starting your research. You can efficiently find quality information from a variety of credible resources in the library.

Watch the following video to get an idea of what a library database is and why it is valuable to your research.



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16.10: How to Search Databases

The following video demonstrates a few tips, like how to use Boolean operators to search within a library database (it's not the same as searching in Google!). Although library websites vary, the same general search tips apply to nearly all academic databases. On your school's library homepage, you should be able to find a general search button and an alphabetized list of databases. Get familiar with your own school's library homepage to identify the general search features, find databases, and practice searching for specific articles.



This presentation shows more specific tools you can utilize to get the search results you want.



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16.11: Self Check: Finding Sources

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

17: Source Analysis

Topic hierarchy

17.1: Outcome: Source Analysis
17.2: Reading and Using Your Sources
17.3: Evaluating Sources
17.4: Evaluating Websites
17.5: Synthesizing Sources
17.6: Self Check: Source Analysis

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17.1: Outcome: Source Analysis

Skills to Develop

- Analyze strategies for evaluating the rhetorical context (author, purpose, audience) of a source
- Analyze the relationship between a potential source and the writing task
- Analyze strategies for evaluating the authority, reliability, and effectiveness of a source
- Analyze strategies for comparison and synthesis between multiple sources

Analyze methods of analysis to assess the quality and reliability of sources



Figure **17.1.1**

You have articles and books in hand. Now it's time to evaluate their quality.

Consider a parallel situation: let's say you're new to campus and you've decided to join an organization in order to meet people. How do you evaluate which organization fits you best? You gather information about several organizations by doing the following:

- exploring club web sites, which list social events and service opportunities
- talking with your advisor, who identifies activities that would look good on your resume
- reaching out to club officers, who invite you to sit in on a meeting and ask questions

You **evaluate** your choices in light of your own interests and goals. You find the organization that fits you best.

Doing research is similar. You'll find plenty of sources of information, but some will fit your assignment better than others. In this section, you'll learn how to closely examine your sources using the C.R.A.A.P method to determine their reliability and usefulness, then identify strategies for incorporating these sources into your own work.

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Video: Tools for Evaluating Sources
- Text: Determining Usefulness
- Text: Synthesizing Sources
- Self-Check: Source Analysis
- Try It: Source Analysis

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17.2: Reading and Using Your Sources

Multiple Readings

Finding information is just the beginning of research. The next step is determining if the information you find adds to your argument and is credible, reliable, and useful. Some sources can be outdated, biased, or just plain wrong, and using that information makes it a lot more difficult for you to present a convincing argument.

In order to ensure the appropriateness of a source for your research, you should expect to read through each source at least twice.

The First Reading

During the first reading you should analyze the rhetorical context of the source. This includes examining the reasons the author wrote the work and his or her intended audience. Start by looking for the topic and the thesis. What is the author's stated purpose? What kind of evidence does he or she use to support the argument? What is the author saying? What is her purpose? The author could be trying to explain, inform, anger, persuade, amuse, motivate, sadden, ridicule, attack, or defend. Once you understand the argument and purpose, you can begin to evaluate the argument.

The Second Reading

During the second reading, you want to take notes and determine how to utilize the source in your own research. This is the time to think about whether you agree or disagree with the source, and whether you have any commentary that you would like to make about the author's argument. Determine whether you find the author credible or not. If you do, and if the author's purpose and argument support your own, you can begin incorporating the source into your own writing. If you find the author credible but disagree with his purpose, it can still be valuable to consider the source in your own writing so that you can anticipate and acknowledge counterarguments later in your essay.

Finally, remember to pay attention to quotation marks as you read. It's important to note whether the author of a text is writing, or if she is quoting someone else. Quotation marks are a helpful tool that authors use to help readers in distinguishing their voice from those of others. By paying attention to quotations and other cited material, you may also gain leads on other sources and authors you can incorporate in your paper.

Determining Usefulness



***Figure* 17.2.1**

While reading through your sources, you should determine if and how they will be useful for your research. Below are lists of reasons to decide that a piece of information is or is not useful for your project.

Potentially include information if it:

- contains facts/opinions that you need

- contains illustrations or data you need
- contains an overview to establish the context of your paper
- was written by a well-known authority or expert
- contains a point of view that illustrates something you are trying to establish
- exemplifies something or shows an example of something to support your argument
- may have a clear explanation of something

Potentially exclude information if it:

- is not from a scholarly journal
- is from a scholarly journal but is too difficult for you to understand
- is out of date
- doesn’t have the point of view you are researching
- doesn’t contain any new information.
- is too narrow (or too broad) in coverage

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17.3: Evaluating Sources

How can you know if information is appropriate for your research? Take a look at its “craap”! The C.R.A.A.P. method is a way to determine the validity and relevance of a source. C.R.A.A.P. stands for

- **C**: Currency. When was the information published?
- **R**: Relevance. How relevant to your goals is the information?
- **A**: Authority. How well does the author of the information know the information?
- **A**: Accuracy. How reliable is the information?
- **P**: Purpose. Why does this information exist in this way?

If the source you’re looking at is fairly current, relevant, and accurate, it’s probably a good source to use. Depending on the aim of your paper, you’ll be looking for an authority and purpose that are unbiased and informative.



Currency

Currency is important because information can quickly become obsolete. Supporting your thesis statement with facts that have been superseded by new research or recent events weakens your argument. Of course, not all assignments require the most current information; older materials can provide an historical or comprehensive understanding of your topic.

How do you know if the timeliness of your information is appropriate?

- When was the information published or last updated?
- Have newer articles been published on your topic?
- Are links or references to other sources up to date? Is your topic in an area that changes rapidly, like technology or popular culture?

Relevance

Relevance is important because you are expected to support your ideas with pertinent information. A source detailing Einstein’s marriage and family life would not be germane to his theories in physics.

How do you know if your source is relevant?

- Does the information answer your research question?
- Does the information meet the stated requirements of the assignment?
- Is the information too technical or too simplified for you to use?
- Does the source add something new to your knowledge of your topic?

Authority

Authority is important in judging the credibility of the author’s assertions. In a trial regarding DNA evidence, a jury gives far more authority to what a genetics specialist has to say compared to someone off the street.

How do you know if an author is an authority on your topic?

- What are the author's credentials?
- Is the author affiliated with an educational institution or prominent organization?
- Can you find information about the author from reference books or the Internet?
- Do other books or articles cite the author?

Accuracy

Accuracy is important because you want to build your own argument around correct information. If the source you find is written by someone in authority, then chances are good that it will also be accurate. Sometimes, however, an expert in one subject area may write or say something out of their field of knowledge, making that information unreliable or potentially inaccurate. Even experts may perpetuate myths or misconceptions.

How do you know if your source is accurate?

- Are there statements you know to be false?
- Are there errors in spelling, punctuation, or grammar?
- Was the information reviewed by editors or subject experts before it was published?
- What citations or references support the author's claims?
- What do other people have to say about the topic?

Purpose

Purpose is important because books, articles, and Web pages exist to educate, entertain, or sell a product or point of view. Some sources may be frivolous or commercial in nature, providing inadequate, false, or biased information. Other sources are more ambiguous concerning their partiality. Varied points of view can be valid, as long as they are based upon good reasoning and careful use of evidence.

How do you determine the purpose of your source?

- Why did the author or publisher make this information available?
- Is there an obvious bias or prejudice?
- Are alternative points of view presented?
- Does the author omit important facts or data that might disprove a claim?
- Does the author use strong or emotional language?

Exercise 17.3.1

Your research question is **"What are the social benefits and liabilities for tribes developing casinos on Indian reservations?"**

1. Select the source that would likely be more **current** for your topic.
   a. a book published in 1998 about gaming on American Indian lands
   b. Pechanga.net, Indian gaming news on the Internet
2. Which database would be more likely to point you to articles **relevant** to your topic?
   a. Sociological Abstracts
   b. Biological Abstracts
3. Which source would likely be more **authoritative** on your topic?
   a. a peer-reviewed article published in *UNLV Gaming Research & Review*
   b. an article published in *Sports Illustrated*
4. Which source is more likely to be **accurate**?
   a. employment statistics from a newsletter published by a grassroots organization opposed to gambling
   b. employment statistics from the U.S. Department of Labor web site
5. Which source would more likely suit the **purpose** of your report?

a. Pechanga.net, Indian gaming news on the Internet
b. a peer-reviewed article published in *UNLV Gaming Research & Review*

Answer

1. b. Pechanga.net
   (A book published in 1998 will not be as current as most Web sites, although it may provide good background information. Internet resources like Pechanga.net are generally more current than books; a Web site should indicate the date it was last updated.)
2. a. Sociological Abstracts
   (Sociological Abstracts catalogs journals that focus on social consequences of human behavior, which is more relevant to your topic. Biological Abstracts catalogs journals in the life sciences, which would not likely cover social aspects of your topic.)
3. a. a peer-reviewed article published in *UNLV Gaming Research & Review*
   (An article in a peer-reviewed journal is more likely to have been written by an expert and will have been evaluated by other experts before it is published. Writers for *Sports Illustrated* are not likely to have expertise in social issues surrounding gambling.)
4. b. employment statistics from the U.S. Department of Labor web site
   (The U.S. government is considered a reliable source for statistics. You can identify a government web site by the ".gov" at the end of the URL. A grassroots organization opposed to gambling may use legitimate statistics but exclude those that don't support a specific agenda.)
5. b. a peer-reviewed article published in *UNLV Gaming Research & Review*
   (Pechanga.net would probably give you a handle on what's going on in the world of Indian gaming, but it would not provide scholarly research. The title *UNLV Gaming Research & Review* is a clue that the journal is likely to publish studies related to issues surrounding gaming, and is likely more suitable to your purpose.)

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17.4: Evaluating Websites

When looking at any source, the key questions to ask yourself are 1. who is writing this, and 2. why?



***Figure* 17.4.1**

When looking for sources–particularly websites–think about whether or not they are reliable. You want your paper to contain sources written by unbiased and professional experts, not businessmen with commercial interests. The C.R.A.A.P method is a fabulous tool for assessing the credibility and reliability of sources, as a starting point. Additional questions you may want to consider when investigating a website include:

Author

- Who is providing the information?
- What do you know about him/her and his/her credentials?
- Is he/she an expert?
- Can you find out more and contact him/her?
- Search for author or publisher in search engine. Has the author written several publications on the topic?
- Does the author support the information with works cited or links to other sources?

Publisher

- Is there a sponsor or affiliation?
- Who is linking to the page?
- Do they take responsibility for the content?

Bias

- Does the organization or author indicate there will be bias?
- Is the purpose of the website to inform or to spread an agenda?
- Is there an “About” link?
- Is the site personal, commercial, governmental, organizational, or educational? (.com, .gov, .org, .edu)
- Are there ads? Are they trying to make money?
- Why did they write the article?
- Is the site a content farm? (A content farm is a site whose content has been generated by teams of low-paid freelancers who write large amounts of text to raise the site’s search engine rankings.)

Citations

- Copy and paste a sentence into Google to see if the text can be found elsewhere.
- Are there links to related sites? Are they organized?
- Are citations or a bibliography provided?

Currency

- When was the source last updated?
- Does the source even have a date?

Design

- Is the source professional?
- Does it seem like current design?
- Is the website user-friendly?
- What kinds of images are used?
- Is the navigation menu well-labeled?
- Are there spelling or grammar errors?
- Do the pages appear uncluttered?
- Are there ads or pop-ups on the page?
- Are links working?

Reproduced

- Was it reproduced? If so, from where? Type a sentence in Google to verify.
- If it was reproduced, was it done so with permission? Is copyright/disclaimer included?

Keep in mind that everything is written from a particular social, cultural, and political perspective. Realize that some publications tend to be 'slanted' towards a certain viewpoint. For example, the CATO Institute is known for being libertarian, while The Nation is known to lean left, politically. Keep these slants in mind when you are researching.

Example 17.4.1:

Try evaluating some of your favorite websites using this **Website Evaluator tool from Imagine Easy Academy**.

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17.5: Synthesizing Sources

Once you have analyzed the texts involved in your research and taken notes, you must turn to the task of writing your essay. The goal is here is not simply to summarize your findings. *Critical writing requires that you communicate your analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of those findings to your audience*.



***Figure* 17.5.1**

Any soldier who has gone through boot camp knows about being broken down before being "remade" or built up again. The analysis and synthesis parts of research are similar. Unlike analyzing, which breaks ideas down into parts, synthesizing involves bringing them together.

These questions can help you synthesize and process your notes:

1. What do your sources have in common? At first glance, you might see only that the topic is loosely connected but look for connective themes among subtopics.
2. How can you merge what you have discovered and find your own voice? This is where you turn back to your notes, especially if you made a double-entry journal where you recorded your own thoughts on each idea.
3. Staying true to context and intent, which ideas are the best ideas to use?
4. What patterns can you identify, and what conclusions can you draw?
5. What disagreements among sources do you notice? Which view do you trust more and why?

Integrating Material from Sources



***Figure* 17.5.2**

Integrating materials from sources into your own text can be tricky; if we consider the metaphor that writing a paper and including sources is a way of facilitating a conversation about a topic, it helps us to think about how this will best work.

When you're discussing a topic in person with one or more people, you will find yourself referencing outside sources: "When I was watching the news, I heard them say that . . . I read in the newspaper that . . . John told me that . . ." These kinds of phrases show instances of using a source in conversation, and ways that we automatically shape our sentences to work references to the sources into the flow of conversation.

Think about this next time you try to work a source into a piece of writing: if you were speaking this aloud in conversation, how would you introduce the material to your listeners? What information would you give them in order to help them understand who the author was, and why their view is worth referencing? After giving the information, how would you then link it back to the point you were trying to make? Just as you would do this in a conversation if you found it necessary to reference a newspaper article or television show you saw, you also need to do this in your essays.

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17.6: Self Check: Source Analysis

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

18: Writing Ethically

18.1: Outcome: Writing Ethically
18.2: Academic Integrity
18.3: Defining Plagiarism
18.4: Avoiding Plagiarism
18.5: Using Sources in Your Writing
18.6: Self Check: Writing Ethically

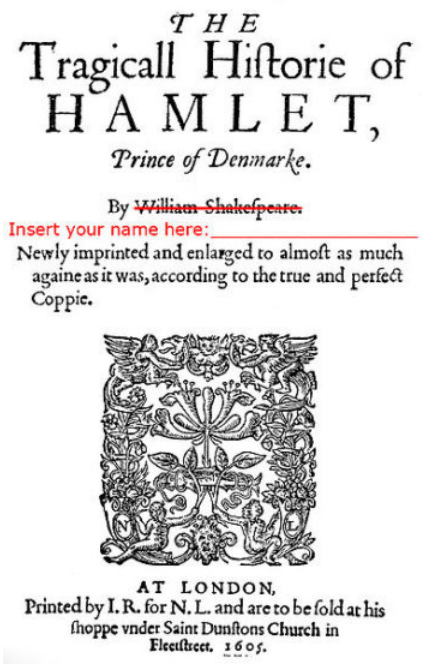
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18.1: Outcome: Writing Ethically

Skills to Develop

- Analyze the definition of academic dishonesty
- Analyze the definition of intentional and unintentional plagiarism
- Analyze reasons for concerns about plagiarism and academic dishonesty in academic settings
- Analyze strategies to avoid intentional and unintentional plagiarism and academic dishonesty, including summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting

Analyze issues of plagiarism and academic dishonesty



THE
Tragicall Hiſtorie of
HAMLET,
Prince of Denmarke.

By ~~William Shakeſpeare.~~
Insert your name here:_____
Newly imprinted and enlarged to almoſt as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppie.

AT LONDON,
Printed by I. R. for N. L. and are to be ſold at his ſhoppe vnder Saint Dunſtons Church in Fleetſtreet. 1605.

***Figure* 18.1.1 -** *An obvious example of plagiarism.*

Learning to correctly synthesize and utilize sources is a practice that takes awareness and effort, and even published authors sometimes find themselves in trouble with accusations of plagiarism. Consider these two examples:

- Stephen Ambrose (1936-2002), a highly regarded historian and writer, was accused of plagiarizing several passages of one of his later books. Although Ambrose had noted the original sources in footnotes, he had neglected to use quotation marks for passages he reproduced. Plagiarism stained Ambrose's reputation even after his death.
- Harvard student Kaavya Viswanathan (born 1987) authored her first novel at the age of 17. A major publisher offered her a six-figure advance and released the book in 2006. DreamWorks SKG bought the rights to make it into a movie. Everything was great for Viswanathan until a reader found that she had plagiarized passages from another writer. Viswanathan's novel was pulled from bookstores and DreamWorks dropped the film project. Her career as a novelist may have come to an embarrassing end.

In this section, you'll learn how to avoid plagiarism (and the fate of these authors!) and how to appropriately include quotes, summaries, and paraphrases in your writing.

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Video: Academic Integrity
- Text: Defining Plagiarism
- Text: Avoiding Plagiarism
- Text: Using Sources in Your Writing

- Self-Check: Writing Ethically
- Try It: Writing Ethically

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18.2: Academic Integrity

Defining Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is defined as the honest and responsible pursuit of scholarship. Academic integrity is characterized by

- completing exams and other academic assignments in an honest way
- presenting truthful and accurate data and research information in academic assignments
- avoiding plagiarism by properly incorporating and acknowledging sources

The reputation of a school and its assessment of student work depend on integrity.



Exercise 18.2.1

Which of the following is NOT a vital characteristic of academic integrity?

1. doing your own work on assignments
2. correctly citing sources in a research paper
3. completing all work without assistance or help from a TA
4. presenting accurate and truthful data
5. following assignment and exam instructions

Answer

c

Why Academic Integrity Matters

- It's vital to being a responsible part of the academic community.
- Consequences for failing to give credit to sources can be severe. Violating your school's academic integrity policy may lead to suspension or expulsion.
- As a member of the academic community, it is important to build and uphold a positive reputation. This will carry over to life after college, as you seek recommendations from professors to enter a career field.

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18.3: Defining Plagiarism

Plagiarism as “Intellectual Theft”

- Plagiarism occurs when you present another person’s ideas, intentionally or unintentionally, as your own.
- In the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, Joseph Gibaldi likens plagiarism to “intellectual theft,” because it “gives the impression that you wrote or thought something that you in fact borrowed from someone, and to do so is a violation of professional ethics” (165).
- It is your responsibility as the student to avoid plagiarizing.
- As a scholar, you are expected to credit the sources of ideas that you use in your own work.

Exercise 18.3.1

Which of these statements is TRUE concerning plagiarism?

1. It does not occur when a student purchases a paper from an online source
2. It is not considered theft or akin to stealing
3. It is the responsibility of the student to avoid plagiarism
4. It does not occur when a student turns in a paper from another class for a new assignment.

Answer

c

What Counts as Plagiarism?

Plagiarism can be **intentional** or **unintentional**. It often occurs because the process of citation can be confusing, technology makes copy + paste so easy, and knowing exactly what to cite is not always easy! You can avoid unintentional plagiarism by learning how to cite material and keeping track of sources in your notes. Give yourself plenty of time to process sources so you don’t plagiarize by mistake. Here are some examples of plagiarism:

- Submitting a paper written by someone else.
- Using words and phrases from the source text and patching them together in new sentences.
- Failing to acknowledge the sources of words or information.
- Not providing quotation marks around a direct quotation. This leads to the false assumption that the words are your own.
- Borrowing the idea or opinion of someone else without giving the person credit
- Restating or paraphrasing a passage without citing the original author
- Borrowing facts or statistics that are not common knowledge without proper acknowledgement

Why You Should Care

Being honest and maintaining integrity in your academic work is a sign of character and professionalism. In addition to maximizing your own learning and taking ownership of your academic success, not plagiarizing is important because

- your professors assign research projects to help you learn. You cheat yourself when you substitute someone else’s work for your own.
- you don’t like it when someone else takes credit for your ideas, so don’t do it to someone else.
- plagiarizing comes with consequences. Depending on the offense and the institution, you may be asked to rewrite plagiarized work, receive a failing grade on the assignment, fail the entire course, or be suspended from the university.
- professors use search engines, databases, and specialized software to check suspicious work, so you will eventually get caught.

Exercise 18.3.2

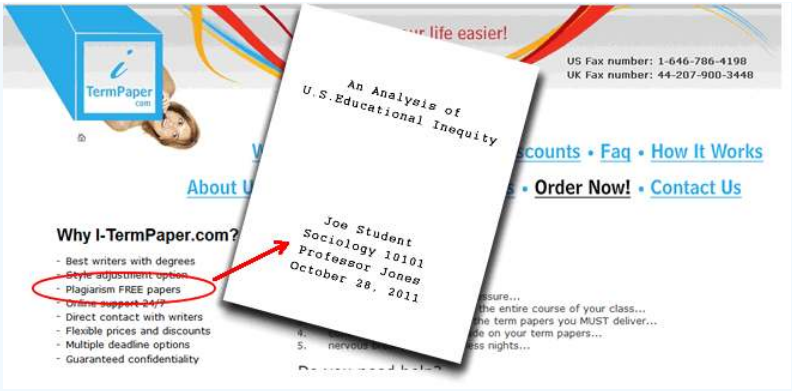


***Figure* 18.3.1**

1. Is the paper above plagiarized?
   a. No, it's an original paper, guaranteed plagiarism-free.
   b. Yes, because Joe Student purchased a paper and handed it in as his own work.



***Figure* 18.3.2**

2. Is the passage above plagiarized?
   a. No, it's not plagiarism. Joe Student did not copy the text word for word. Besides, Amazon is not a "real" author.
   b. Yes, this is plagiarism because Joe Student used someone else's ideas and words without giving them credit.

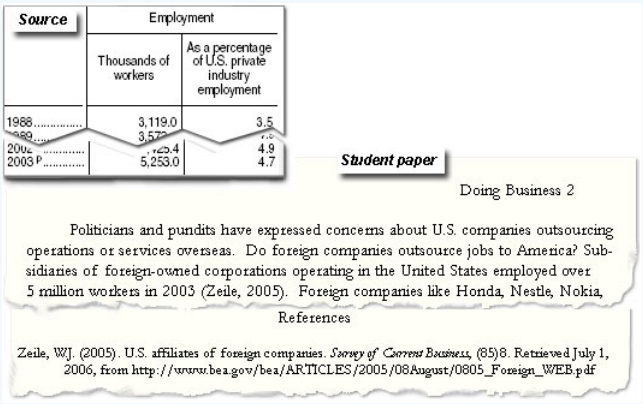


***Figure* 18.3.3**

3. 3. Does the student paper above plagiarize?
   a. No, it's not plagiarism. Credit to the source is given in both the text and the list of references.
   b. Yes, this is plagiarism. Joe Student did not use quotation marks.

Answer

1. b. Yes, because Joe Student purchased a paper and handed it in as his own work. Putting your name on a paper written by someone else, whether a friend wrote it for you or you bought it, is plagiarism. Even though the web site alleges that the paper purchased by Joe Student is original, turning in a paper written by someone else is unethical–and pretty easy for professors to spot.
2. b. This is plagiarism. Using someone else's words–even in a different order–is stealing if you don't give the original author credit.
3. a. This is not plagiarism. Quotation marks are used when citing someone's exact words. When you paraphrase, simply include an in-text citation or footnote.

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18.4: Avoiding Plagiarism

How to Avoid Plagiarizing

Avoiding plagiarism begins with properly managing your research. If you are rushed, don't take good notes, or lose track of where you found your sources, you may find yourself accidentally plagiarizing. Here are some tips to prevent that from happening:

- **Start your research early**.
- **Take and keep accurate notes** of the sources you use. Distinguish between your ideas and other's ideas and direct quotes.
- **Document your sources immediately**. As you gather sources during your research, make sure to record all the information you need to cite your sources accurately and completely (e.g., authors, titles, URL addresses, etc.). Check with your instructor or a librarian to see what citation information is required for the citation style you will be using (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago).

MANAGE YOUR MATERIALS

Reference management websites and applications exist to assist you in tracking and recording your research. Most of these websites are free and will even create the works cited page for you! Some of the most popular citation tools are:

- **Zotero**
- **RefME** (which works with **Evernote**)
- **BibMe**
- **Mendeley**

Pick one of these helpful tools at the beginning of your research and use it during your initial searches to ensure you always keep track of your materials.

More Tips for Avoiding Plagiarism

- Make sure to place **direct quotes** from another person in **quotation marks**. This is especially important to remember when you are taking notes from any source you use. Make sure to copy the words exactly as they appear in the source.
- When you **paraphrase**, be sure you are not just changing or rearranging a few words. Carefully read over the text you want to paraphrase. Write out the idea in your own words. Check your paraphrase against the original text to make sure you have not accidentally used the same phrases or words.
- Make sure to include **complete** and **correct citations** in your works cited list.
- Make sure to follow the **guidelines** and **rules** for the **citation style** specified by your instructor (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago).
- In the beginning of the first sentence containing a quote or paraphrase of another's work, make it clear that it is someone else's idea (e.g., According to Smith . . .)
- Make sure to include **in-text citations** within your paper for any information taken from another person's work. A typical in-text citation includes the author's last name and the page number of the source. The in-text citation is inserted at the end of the last sentence containing a quote or paraphrase of another's work – example: (Jones, 127)

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18.5: Using Sources in Your Writing

Summarizing



Figure 18.5.1

Summarizing involves condensing the main idea of a source into a much shorter overview. A summary outlines a source's most important points and general position. When summarizing a source, it is still necessary to use a citation to give credit to the original author. Summaries of different lengths are useful in research writing because you often need to provide your readers with an explanation of the text you are discussing. This is especially true when you are about to quote or paraphrase from a source.

Quoting

Direct quotations are words and phrases that are taken directly from another source, and then used word-for-word in your paper. If you incorporate a direct quotation from another author's text, you must put that quotation or phrase in quotation marks to indicate that it is not your language.

When writing direct quotations, you can use the source author's name in the same sentence as the quotation to introduce the quoted text and to indicate the source in which you found the text. You should then include the page number or other relevant information in parentheses at the end of the phrase (the exact format will depend on the formatting style of your essay).

WHEN TO QUOTE

In general, it is best to use a quote when:

- The exact words of your source are important for the point you are trying to make. This is especially true if you are quoting technical language, terms, or very specific word choices.
- You want to highlight your agreement with the author's words. If you agree with the point the author of the evidence makes and you like their exact words, use them as a quote.
- You want to highlight your disagreement with the author's words. In other words, you may sometimes want to use a direct quote to indicate exactly what it is you disagree about. This might be particularly true when you are considering the antithetical positions in your research writing projects.

Example 18.5.1:

Here's the first **BAD** example:

> *There are many positive effects for advertising prescription drugs on television. "African-American physicians regard direct-to-consumer advertising of prescription medicines as one way to educate minority patients about needed treatment and healthcare options" (Wechsler, Internet).*

This is a potentially good piece of information to support a research writer's claim, but the researcher hasn't done any of the necessary work to explain where this quote comes from or to explain why it is important for supporting her point. Rather, she

has simply "dropped in" the quote, leaving the interpretation of its significance up to the reader.

Now consider this revised **GOOD** example of how this quote might be better introduced into the essay:

> *In her Pharmaceutical Executive article available through the Wilson Select Internet database, Jill Wechsler writes about one of the positive effects of advertising prescription drugs on television. "African-American physicians regard direct-to-consumer advertising of prescription medicines as one way to educate minority patients about needed treatment and healthcare options."*

In this revision, it's much more clear what point the writer is trying to make with this evidence and where this evidence comes from.

Paraphrasing

When paraphrasing, you may put any part of a source (such as a phrase, sentence, paragraph, or chapter) into your own words. You may find that the original source uses language that is more clear, concise, or specific than your own language, in which case you should use a direct quotation, putting quotation marks around those unique words or phrases you don't change.

It is common to use a mixture of paraphrased text and quoted words or phrases, as long as the direct quotations are inside of quotation marks.

WHEN TO PARAPHRASE

In general, it is best to paraphrase when:

- There is no good reason to use a quote to refer to your evidence. If the author's exact words are not especially important to the point you are trying to make, you are usually better off paraphrasing the evidence.
- You are trying to explain a particular a piece of evidence in order to explain or interpret it in more detail. This might be particularly true in writing projects like critiques.
- You need to balance a direct quote in your writing. You need to be careful about directly quoting your research too much because it can sometimes make for awkward and difficult to read prose. So, one of the reasons to use a paraphrase instead of a quote is to create balance within your writing.

Example 18.5.2:

The original passage, from Benjamin Franklin's "Speech to the [Constitutional] Convention":

> *Mr. President, I confess that I do not entirely approve of this Constitution at present; but, Sir, I am not sure I shall never approve it; for, having lived long, I have experienced many instances of being obliged, by better information or fuller consideration, to change my opinions even on important subjects, which I once thought right, but found to be otherwise.*

Here's the first **BAD** example:

> *Benjamin Franklin tells the president of the Constitutional Convention that he does **not entirely** approve of the Constitution at the **present** time, but that he is not sure **he will never approve it**. He points out that he has lived a long time, and in his experience there have been **many instances** when **better information of fuller consideration** of a topic have made him change his opinions **on important subjects** that he had originally thought to be correct. He points out that he finds himself more likely to doubt his own judgment the older he gets, and contrasts his knowledge of his own fallibility with other people's conviction of their infallibility.*

The problem with this paraphrase is in the way that it reproduces distinctive phrasing, sentence structure, and ordering of ideas. Note that the red, bolded parts of the paragraph actually reproduce Franklin's wording exactly, and that the order of information in the paraphrase is essentially the same as in the original. Notice the end of the paraphrase also contains extra information that is not present in the original passage.

Now consider this **GOOD** revised version:

> *Benjamin Franklin tells the president of the Constitutional Convention that although he is currently uncertain about the Constitution they have created, he may eventually acknowledge its effectiveness. This is due, he explains, to new information or a different understanding of similarly important topics that have caused him to change his mind in the past.*

This paraphrase is strong because of the way that it captures the main ideas and important details of the original passage without reproducing phrasing or sentence structure too exactly. There are still similarities of phrasing and structure, but they deviate in notable ways from the phrasing and structure of the original passage. Also unlike the poor paraphrase, this one does not include information not found in the original passage.

Overview: Paraphrase, Quotation, and Summary

	How is the original passage modified?	How is it marked or cited in the text?
Summary	Complete modification of wording and sentence structure; elimination of unnecessary elements; condenses	Signal phrase to indicate where the summary begins and other citation as required by style
Quotation	No modification	Quotation marks or a paragraph to signal long quotation format, as required by the citation style
Paraphrase	Complete modification of wording and sentence structure; meaning and details included should remain the same	

Providing Context for Your Sources

Whether you use a direct quotation, a summary, or a paraphrase, it is important to distinguish the original source from your ideas, and to explain how the cited source fits into your argument. While the use of quotation marks or parenthetical citations tells your reader that these are not your own words or ideas, you should follow the quote with a description, in your own terms, of what the quote says and why it is relevant to the purpose of your paper. You should not let quoted or paraphrased text stand alone in your paper, but rather, should integrate the sources into your argument by providing context and explanations about how each source supports your argument.

THE "QUOTE SANDWICH"

You can think of the context for your quote as a sandwich with multiple parts. You'll want to: transition into and introduce the source, use a signal phrase to actually move into the material from the source, provide a citation that can be easily connected to the full citation material in your bibliography or works cited list, and explain how this material fits into your argument. Many writing textbooks refer to this as a quotation sandwich, but it can and should also be used to integrate paraphrases and summaries. All material from sources that you use in your own must be integrated in this way, or you risk readers becoming confused about its importance and purpose.

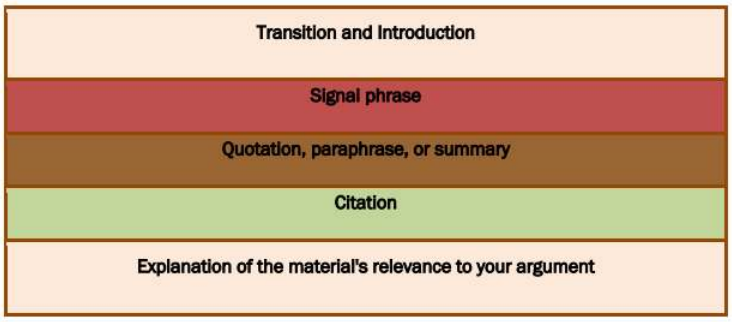


***Figure* 18.5.2** - *The Source Material Sandwich.*

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18.6: Self Check: Writing Ethically

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

19: MLA Documentation

Topic hierarchy

19.1: Outcome: MLA Documentation
19.2: Introduction to MLA Documentation
19.3: MLA Document Formatting
19.4: MLA Works Cited
19.5: Creating MLA Citations
19.6: MLA In-Text Citations
19.7: Self Check: MLA Documentation
19.8: Conclusion: Research Process
19.9: Supplementary Resource: MLA Citation Formatting

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19.1: Outcome: MLA Documentation

Skills to Develop

- Analyze reasons for the use of MLA formatting and documentation
- Analyze MLA document formatting, including page layout
- Analyze the components of MLA Works Cited citations
- Analyze the components of MLA in-text citations

Analyze MLA document formatting and citation practices



***Figure* 19.1.1** - *Checklist for documenting sources.*

"MLA" stands for Modern Language Association. This is a professional organization for scholars of language and literature.

But why does this group of people have so much influence on the appearance of papers you write in college?

The MLA, like many other academic organizations, publishes a scholarly journal and has done so for decades. In years before computers were common, the editors of this journal required typed submissions for publication to follow a common formatting template.

The professors who were following this format to write their own work recognized the value of having some standard of uniform appearance. They started asking their students to follow the same format when they typed essays for class projects.

Fast forward to now, and we have a thick set of guidelines for how the first page of an essay should look, what margins and font are appropriate, and what a Works Cited entry for a blog post should look like.

The ultimate goal for MLA formatting and citation standards is so that everyone has a common template to draw from. While they may feel like unbreakable rules, try to remember that they were created to serve a common need, with your interests in mind.



***Figure* 19.1.2**

The Learning Activities for this Outcome Include

- Video: Introduction to MLA Documentation
- Text: MLA Document Formatting
- Text: MLA Works Cited
- Text: Creating MLA Citations
- Video: MLA In-Text Citations
- Self Check: MLA Documentation
- Try It: MLA Documentation
- Putting It Together: Research

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19.2: Introduction to MLA Documentation

MLA 8

MLA style is one of the most common citation and formatting styles you will encounter in your academic career. Any piece of academic writing can use MLA style, from a one-page paper to a full-length book. It is widely used by in many high school and introductory college English classes, as well as scholarly books and professional journals. If you are writing a paper for a literature or media studies class, it is likely your professor will ask you to write in MLA style.

The newest edition of the MLA Handbook, the 8th Edition, was released in April 2016. We will focus on the newest changes, but you should be aware that some institutions or instructors may still utilize the previous 7th edition of the handbook. While the overall principles of creating a works cited page and using in-text citations remains the same, there are a few key changes and updates that make the citation process easier for our modern uses. For example, the guidelines now state that you should always include a URL of an internet source, you can use alternative author names, such as Twitter handles, and you no longer need to include the publisher (in some instances), and you don't need to include the city where a source was published. These new changes are less nit-picky and allow for a more streamlined citation process that will work with the wide variety of source locations (i.e., YouTube videos, songs, clips from TV episodes, websites, periodicals, books, academic journals, poems, interviews, etc.).

WHY CITATIONS ARE ESSENTIAL

Watch this video to see examples of why citations are important. They give credit to others, provide evidence for your argument, leave a trail of sources for others to investigate, and protect against plagiarism.



The Purpose of MLA Style

The MLA style guide aims to accomplish several goals:

1. to ensure consistent use of the English language in academic writing;
2. to ensure consistent formatting and presentation of information, for the sake of clarity and ease of navigation; and
3. to ensure proper attribution of ideas to their original sources, for the sake of intellectual integrity.

CITATION RESOURCES

There are many fantastic resources out there that can make the formatting and citation process easier. Some common style guides are found at:

- **The Purdue Online Writing Lab**: this is a popular resource that concisely explains how to properly format and cite in various academic styles.
- **EasyBib**: in addition to having a style guide, this website allows you to paste in information from your research and will create and save citations for you.

Reference management websites and applications can also assist you in tracking and recording your research. Most of these websites will even create the works cited page for you! Some of the most popular citation tools are:

- Zotero
- RefME
- BibMe

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19.3: MLA Document Formatting

Overall Structure of an MLA Paper

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

General MLA Formatting Rules

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

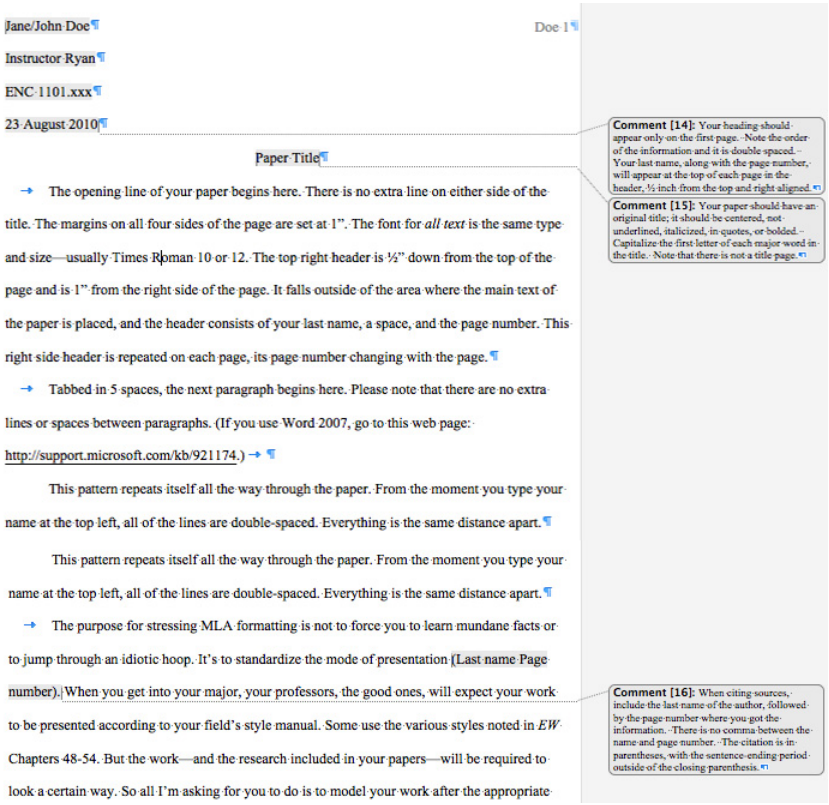


***Figure* 19.3.1**

Example 19.3.1:

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

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19.4: MLA Works Cited

Formatting the Works Cited Section

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

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



Freeman 8

Works Cited

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***Figure* 19.4.1**

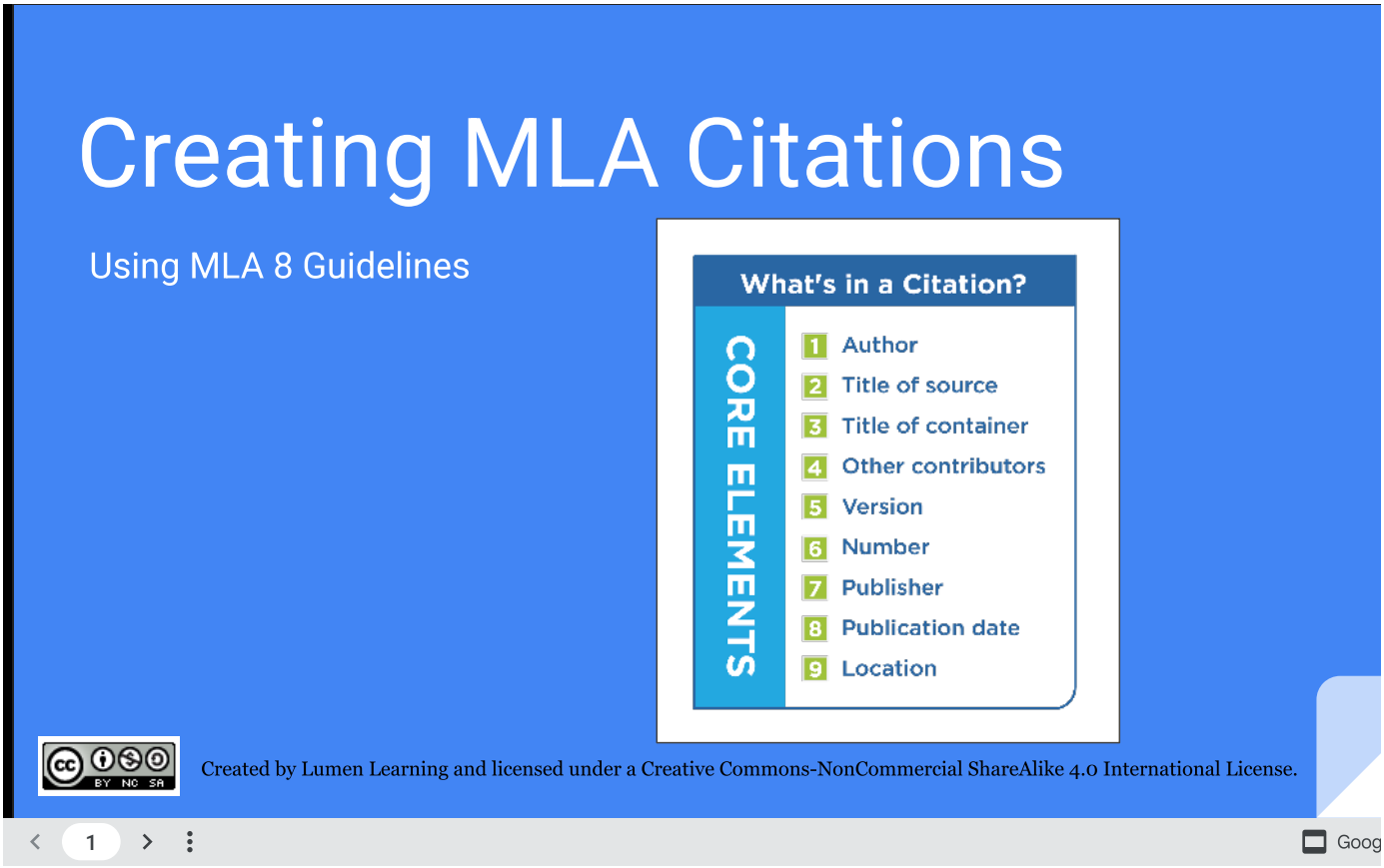
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19.5: Creating MLA Citations

Although there are still distinct rules you need to follow to create a citation, the rules in MLA 8 are less rigid than before and allow for you to look for the main components of a citation and construct it yourself. This means you will need to think about the source and its information, select the appropriate components, and organize it in a logical and useful manner.

Regardless of the source type, you are now asked to locate the same "core elements" from your sources and place them in a standard order in order to create citations. These core elements are explained in detail below. **Note that you do not need to memorize every step of this process**, but should take this opportunity to understand how citations are created. You can always return to this page, to the MLA handbook, or to online resources to help you create the citations you need for your paper.

Click through the following slides to learn more about each component and to see examples of MLA citations.



You can also download the presentation here.

Watch the video below to walk through the steps of creating a citation for citing an eBook from a database.

Watch the video below to walk through the steps of creating a citation for citing an eBook from a database.

We couldn't verify the security of your connection.

Access to this content has been restricted. Contact your internet service provider for help.

MLA: Citing an eBook (8th edition) from **Lawrence W. Tyree Library** on **Vimeo**.

Exercise **19.5.1**

Click **"Get Started" at the MLA Style Center** to practice creating citations.

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19.6: MLA In-Text Citations

In your paper, when you quote directly from a source in its words, or when you paraphrase someone else's idea, you need to tell the reader what that source is so the author gets credit. When you tell the reader the author's name in the text of your paper, this is called an in-text citation.

In-Text citations are placed in parentheses, and have two components

- The first word found in the full citation on the Works Cited page (usually the last name of the author)
- The location of the direct quote or paraphrase (usually a page number)



In-Text citations should be placed directly after the direct quote or paraphrase, or in a place that is a natural pause and does not cause the reader to become distracted while reading the body of your work.

Example 19.6.1:

In order to prevent starvation, Watney knew exactly what he needed to do. "My best bet for making calories is potatoes" (Weir 17).

When using the author's name in the sentence, only include the page number in the parentheses.

Example 19.6.2:

Seuss's use of words such as, "lurk" and "dank" help students understand the type of character that the Once-ler is (6).

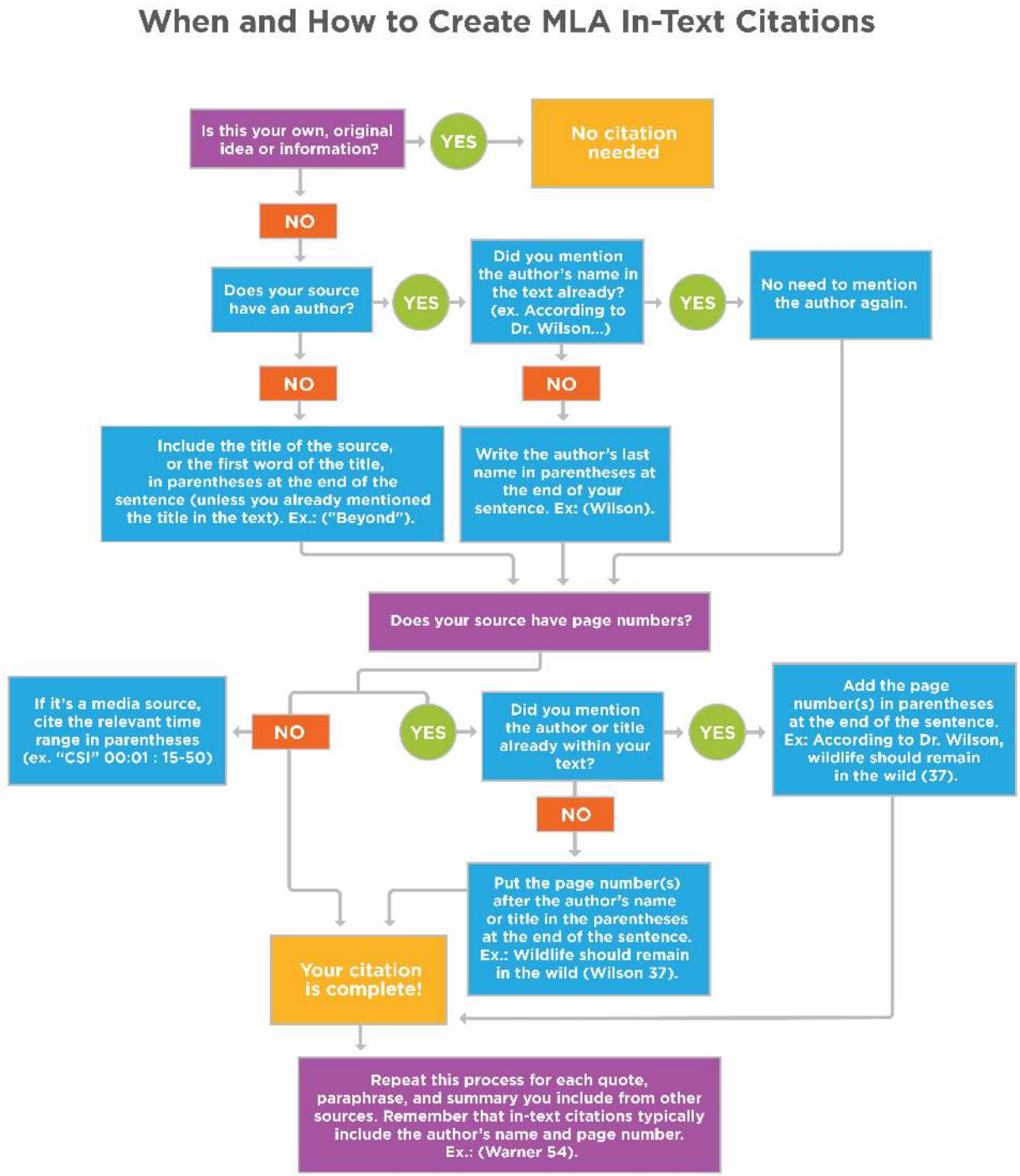

When and How to Create MLA In-Text Citations
Is this your own, original idea or information?
YES
No citation needed
NO
Does your source have an author?
YES
Did you mention the author's name in the text already? (ex. According to Dr. Wilson...)
YES
No need to mention the author again.
NO
NO
Include the title of the source, or the first word of the title, in parentheses at the end of the sentence (unless you already mentioned the title in the text). Ex.: ("Beyond").
Write the author's last name in parentheses at the end of your sentence. Ex: (Wilson).
Does your source have page numbers?
If it's a media source, cite the relevant time range in parentheses (ex. "CSI" 00:01 : 15-50)
NO
YES
Did you mention the author or title already within your text?
YES
Add the page number(s) in parentheses at the end of the sentence. Ex: According to Dr. Wilson, wildlife should remain in the wild (37).
NO
Put the page number(s) after the author's name or title in the parentheses at the end of the sentence. Ex.: Wildlife should remain in the wild (Wilson 37).
Your citation is complete!
Repeat this process for each quote, paraphrase, and summary you include from other sources. Remember that in-text citations typically include the author's name and page number. Ex.: (Warner 54).

Figure **19.6.1**

When to Use a Block Quotation

A typical quotation is enclosed in double quotation marks and is part of a sentence within a paragraph of your paper. However, if you want to quote **more than four lines of prose (or three lines of verse)** from a source, you should format the excerpt as a block quotation, rather than as a regular quotation within the text of a paragraph. Most of the standard rules for quotations still apply, with the following exceptions: a block quotation will begin on its own line, it will **not** be enclosed in quotation marks, and its in-text citation will come after the ending punctuation, not before it.

Example 19.6.3:

For example, if you wanted to quote the entire first paragraph of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, you would begin that quotation on its own line and format it as follows:

> *Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, 'and what is the use of a book,' thought Alice, 'without pictures or conversations?' (Carroll 98)*

The full reference for this source would then be included in your Works Cited section at the end of your paper.

Spacing and Alignment

The entire block quotation should be indented one inch from the left margin. The first line of the excerpt should not be further indented, unless you are quoting multiple paragraphs—in which case the first line of each quoted paragraph should be further indented 0.25 inches. As should the rest of your paper, a block quotation in MLA style should be double-spaced.

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19.7: Self Check: MLA Documentation

19.7: Self Check: MLA Documentation is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

19.8: Conclusion: Research Process

Research as Critical Thinking

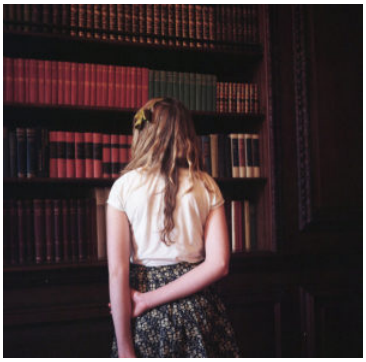


***Figure* 19.8.1**

You've probably noticed by now the thread of "critical thinking" that runs throughout this course. Critical research skills–*locating*, *evaluating*, *utilizing*, and *attributing* sources–are demanding tasks involving critical thinking.

Critical thinking is hard work. Even those who actively choose to do it experience it as tedious, difficult, and sometimes surprisingly emotional. Nobel-prize winning psychologist Daniel Kahneman explains that our brains aren't designed to think; rather, they're designed to save us from having to think.[1] Our brains are great at developing routines and repertoires that enable us to accomplish fairly complex tasks like driving cars, choosing groceries, and having a conversation without thinking consciously and thoroughly about every move we make. Kahneman calls this "fast thinking." "Slow thinking," which is deliberate and painstaking, is something our brains seek to avoid. That built-in tendency can lead us astray. Kahneman and his colleagues often used problems like this one in experiments to gauge how people used fast and slow thinking in different contexts:[2]

Exercise 19.8.1

A bat and ball cost $1.10.

The bat costs one dollar more than the ball.

How much does the ball cost?

Answer

Most people automatically say the ball costs $0.10. However, if the bat costs $1 more, than the bat would cost $1.10 leading to the incorrect total of $1.20. The ball costs $0.05.

Kahneman notes, "Many thousands of university students have answered the bat-and-ball puzzle, and the results are shocking. More than 50% of students at Harvard, MIT, and Princeton gave the intuitive—incorrect—answer." These and other results confirm that "many people are overconfident, prone to place too much faith in their intuitions."[3]

Downfalls of "Fast Thinking"

Recall the story from the opening of this module, "Kim Jung-Un Named *The Onion*'s Sexiest Man Alive For 2012." News editors in China and South Korea exhibited fast thinking reflexes when they responded to, and reprinted, the story. They likely had an emotional reaction and didn't stop to question the source.

Issues that trip students up with research often stem from the same kind of "fast thinking" mistakes and misguided trust in their instincts. It takes time to develop an analytic eye towards sources, but practicing critical research skills will result in a marked improvement in the quality of your writing and the impact it has on your readers.

References

1. Kahneman, Daniel. *Thinking, Fast and Slow.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011. ↵
2. p. 44 ↵
3. p. 45 ↵

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19.9: Supplementary Resource: MLA Citation Formatting

Because of the wide variety of source formats, MLA 8 now requires that researchers follow a simple set of guidelines to create appropriate citations (instead of looking up one of the fifty-nine types of sources inside the previous handbook and following the instructions). Although there are still distinct rules you need to follow to create a citation, the rules are less rigid and and allow for you to look for the main components of a citation and construct it yourself. This means you will need to think about the source and its information, select the appropriate components, and organize it in a logical and useful manner.

Regardless of the source type, you are now asked to locate the same "core elements" from your sources and place them in a standard order in order to create citations. These core elements are explained in detail below. **Note that you do not need to memorize every step of this process**, but should take this opportunity to understand how citations are created. You can always return to this page, to the MLA handbook, the **MLA Style Center**, or to other online resources to help you create the citations you need for your paper.

HOW TO CREATE CITATIONS

Each MLA citation should include as many of the following "Core Elements" that are applicable, along with their corresponding punctuation marks, in the order that follows. Click on each of the links below to take you to an explanation and examples of each component:

1. **Authors.**
2. **Title of the source.**
3. **Title of container,**
4. **Other contributors,**
5. **Version,**
6. **Numbers,**
7. **Publisher,**
8. **Publication date,**
9. **Location.**

The appropriate punctuation mark will follow each core element, unless it is the final piece. In this case, the punctuation mark would be a period.

Here's how an actual source looks when cited using MLA 8:

Example 19.9.1:

Goodwin, Doris. *Team of Rivals: the Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*. Simon & Shuster, 2012.

HOW TO FORMAT AN AUTHOR'S NAME

It's vitally important to make sure you correctly cite the last name of the author(s) whose work you're referencing. To correctly cite the author, always begin the citation with the author's last name, a comma, and the rest of the name as it appears on the source. Place a period after the author's name. Here are some examples for citing one or more authors:

How to Cite One Author

- Patterson, James.
- Rowling, J. K.
- King, Laurie R.

How to Cite Two Authors

Place the authors in the order in which they appear on the source. Note that only the lead author's name is listed last name first; all additional authors are listed by their first name, middle initial initial if applicable, and then last name:

- Shields, David, and Caleb Powell.

How to Cite Three or More Authors

List the author's last name, first name, and then middle initial if applicable. Follow it with a comma, and then add et. al. in place of the additional authors:

- Beck, Isabel L., et. al.

How to Cite Works by Individuals Other Than the Author

In cases where the person responsible for creating a work is someone other than the author, such as an editor, producer, performer, or artist, always include the individual's role after the name:

- Kansaker, Tej Ratna, and Mark Turin, editors.

How to Cite Corporate Authors

If a corporation is the author of the text, include the full name of the corporation:

- The New York City Department of Education.

How to Cite When There Is No Author

When no author is given in a text, omit this section and start the citation with the title.

HOW TO FORMAT THE TITLE

How to Cite Book Titles

When citing book titles using the MLA 8 format, always enter the full title, in italics, followed by a period.

The citation format is as follows:

- Last Name, First Name. *Italicized Title*. Publisher, Publication Year.

Example 19.9.2:

The full citation might look like this:

Sparks, Nicholas. *The Notebook*. Warner Books, 1996.

If there is a subtitle, place it after the title, using a colon to separate them. The subtitle should also be in italics.

The citation format is as follows:

- Last Name, First Name. *Italicized Title*: *SubTitle*. Publisher, Publication Year.

Example 19.9.3:

The full citation might look like this:

Weiland, K.M. *Structuring Your Novel: Essential Keys for Writing an Outstanding Story*. PenForA Sword, 2013.

If the source is part of a larger work, such as an essay, chapter, short story, or poem, place the title in quotation marks, making sure to put a period at the end of the title. Follow it with the title of the larger work, in italics, with a comma at the end.

The citation format is as follows:

- Last Name, First Name. "Title." *Italicized Larger Work Title*, Editor first and last name, Publisher, Publication Year, Page Numbers.

Example 19.9.4:

The full citation might look like this:

Langer, A.J. "Lessons in Friendships." *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul: 101 Stories of Life, Love and Learning*, edited by Jack Canfield, et al., Simon & Schuster, 1997, pp. 56-62.

How to Cite Periodical Titles

When citing periodicals in MLA 8, place the title of the article in quotes, with a period at the end of the title. The italicized title of the periodical follows, along with a comma.

The citation format is as follows:

- Last Name, First Name. “Title of the Article.” *Periodical Title*. Publication Year, Page Numbers.

Example 19.9.5:

The full citation might look like this:

Barack, Lauren. “Y is for Yoga: Libraries Embrace the Practice to Ease Stress and Promote Literacy.” *The School Library Journal*, January 2015, pp. 23-28.

How to Cite Web sites

These days much of our information comes from digital resources, such as web sites. When citing websites, place the title of the article in quotation marks, with a period at the end of the title. Follow with the name of the website in italics, followed by a comma, and ending with the website URL.

The citation format is as follows:

- “Title of the Article.” *Name of the Website*. URL.

Example 19.9.6:

The full citation might look like this:

“What are Annotated Bibliographies?.” *Easybib*, easybib.com.

How to Cite Untitled Works

If a source doesn’t have a title, include the creator of the source and a brief description. Do not italicize or place this information in quotation marks.

The citation format is as follows:

- Last Name, First Name. Title of the work. Year, Location of the Work, City, State.

Example 19.9.7:

The full citation might look like this:

Johnson, Sarah. Painting of a Horse. 1984, PS 86, Bronx, NY.

HOW TO FORMAT CONTAINERS

Sometimes a source is part of a larger whole. For example, a magazine article is part of a larger whole, the magazine itself. For citation purposes, we call the larger whole, in this case the magazine, a container. When citing sources, the container is generally italicized and is followed by a comma. Other examples of containers include a book within a collection, a periodical, a television series, a website, or comic book series.

How to Cite Sources With One Container

When citing sources with only one container, the title of the direct source is placed in quotes, and the title of the container is italicized.

The partial format for citing a title within a container is as follows:

- Last Name, First Name. “Title of the Source.” *Italicized Container Title*, Performer or Editor etc. Name,

Example 19.9.8:

The full citation might look like this:

Bazin, Patrick. “Toward Metareading.” *The Future of the Book*, edited by Geoffrey Nunberg, U of California P, 1996, pp. 153-68.

How to Cite Sources With Two Containers

Sometimes the source you’re citing might have two containers. For example, if an article is found on a database, the first container is the name of the larger whole, such as a journal. The second container is the database where you found the article.

Another example might be a television series you watched on Netflix. The first container is the name of the series, and the second container is Netflix. For sources with multiple containers, follow this template:

**Elements that are irrelevant are not included in the citation.*

1. Author.

2. Title of source.

Container 1

3. Title of Container,

4. Other contributors,

5. Version,

6. Number,

7. Publisher,

8. Publication date,

9. Location.

Container 2

3. Title of container,

4. Other contributors,

5. Version,

6. Number,

7. Publisher,

8. Publication date,

9. Location.

Example 19.9.9:

The full citation for a source with multiple containers might look like this:

Ellingsen, Eric. “In the Listenings: The Gold Waxes.” *World Literature Today*, vol. 89, no. 1, 2015, pp. 30-32. JSTOR, doi:10.7588/worllitetoda.89.1.0030.

HOW TO FORMAT OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

In addition to authors, there may be other contributors who are important to include in the citation, especially if their individual work was important to your assignment.

To correctly cite the contributions of these individuals, make sure you state their specific role, followed by the word “by” and then add their first and last name.

Some common roles:

- edited by
- translated by
- adapted by
- illustrated by
- directed by
- performance by

Example 19.9.10:

The full citation might look like this:

Callendar, G.S. “The Artificial Production of Carbon Dioxide and Its Influence on Temperature.” *The Global Warming Reader*, edited by Bill McKibbin, Penguin Books, 2011. Google Books, https://books.google.com/books?id=Ps..._4C&lpg=PP1&dq=edited%20bok&pg=PT3#v=onepage&q&f=false.

HOW TO FORMAT VERSIONS

In some cases there may be numerous versions of a specific source, and you’ll want to be sure you indicate the version you’re citing. This happens most often with books, which can have several editions still in print. Other examples include director’s cuts of movies and radio edits of songs. When citing a specific version of a source:

- Always use the symbol for a number instead of spelling it out. For example, use 4th ed. Instead of Fourth ed., regardless of how it appears on the source itself.
- Abbreviate ed. for edition and rev. for revised (example: use 4th ed. NOT 4th edition)

The following are examples of how full citations for sources with numerous versions might look:

Example 19.9.11:

How to Cite Book Editions

Ferber, Richard. *Solve Your Child’s Sleep Problems.* Revised ed., Simon & Schuster, 2006, Google Books, https://books.google.com/books?id=so...dition&f=false.

Nist-Oljenik, Sherrie, and Jodi Patrick Holschuh. *College Rules! How to Study, Survive, and Succeed in College*. 3rd ed., Ten Speed Press, 2011.

HOW TO FORMAT NUMBERS

You may find that your source is numbered, and you’ll want to be sure to include that information in your citation. Some common examples include episodes of television shows, volumes of books and journals, and issue numbers. When including numbered sources, remember:

- Journal issues are often given a volume and issue number
- Always abbreviate volume to vol. and number to no.

Example 19.9.12:

How to Cite a Journal Article

Schaefer, Sara E., et al. “Wearing, Thinking, and Moving: Testing the Feasibility of Fitness Tracking with Urban Youth.” *American Journal of Health Education*, vol. 47, no. 1, 2016, pp 8-16. ERIC, EJ1086821.

How to Cite a Book Volume

The New Cambridge Medieval History. Edited by David Abulafia, vol. 5, Cambridge UP, 1999. Google Books, books.google.com/booksid=bcl...0books&f=false.

HOW TO FORMAT PUBLISHERS

The publisher is the name of the organization or company responsible for making the work available, and you'll want to be sure to correctly cite this information. To cite publishers using MLA 8:

- Include only the name of publishers and omit business words. The business words are usually found directly after the name of the publisher. This includes words such as company, corporation, limited, and others. (Example: Use Dream Books NOT Dream Books Company, LLC.)
- Use UP for University Press (Example: Use Cambridge UP NOT Cambridge University Press)

How to Cite a Book

Example 19.9.13:

Silverstein, Shel. *The Giving Tree*, Harper & Row, 1964.

Sometimes there will be numerous organizations listed as being responsible for publishing the source. In this case, just include the company that is most responsible for the source's publication.

If two or more organizations are equally responsible, separate the names with a forward slash.

Example 19.9.14:

Bilodeau, Brent L. "Understanding Genderism." *The Art of Effective Facilitation: Reflections from Social Justice Educators*, edited by Lisa M. Landreman, ACPA-College Student/Stylus, 2013, pp. 67-80.

It is not always necessary to include the name of the publisher. For the following sources, omit this information:

- Any periodicals including journals, magazines, or newspapers
- A website when the name of it is the same as the publisher

HOW TO FORMAT THE PUBLICATION DATE

The publication date refers to the date that the source was made available. When formatting sources with publication dates, keep the following in mind:

- When there is more than one publication date, use the one that is most relevant to your research.
- Include the date as it is shown on the source.
- Online versions of articles sometimes display two dates: 1) the date the article was posted online and 2) the date that the printed version was published. If you used the online version, only include that date in your citation.

How to Cite an Article on a Website

Example 19.9.15:

Richtel, Matt. "Texting and Driving? Watch Out for the Textalyzer." *The New York Times*, Apr. 27, 2016,



***Figure* 19.9.1**

Example 19.9.16:

Example of a YouTube video

"Ew!" With Jennifer Lopez", *The Jimmy Fallon Show*, 27 Feb. 2016, YouTube, https://youtu.be/KX1bQ1sGiIA.

**The MLA 8 Handbook recommends locating the publisher directly on the source rather than relying on online catalogs or book retailers, as their information may be incorrect.*

HOW TO FORMAT THE LOCATION

In many cases, your readers will want to view your cited sources for themselves. This is why it's important to provide the precise location within a source from which you took your information. The way this information is included in a citation differs by source:

For Print Resources

- Include any page ranges to help readers locate the specific information themselves.
- When citing one page, place 'p.' prior to the page number.
- For a range of pages, use "pp." prior to the page numbers

Example 19.9.17:

Example of a Single Page Location

Weir, Andy. *The Martian*, Reprint Edition. Broadway Books. 2014, p. 84.

Example of a Multiple Page Location

Chopin, Kate. *The Awakening*, Avon Books, 1994, pp. 18-24.

For Online Sources

When citing online sources, the location is the URL or DOI (Digital Object Identifier) number. Keep in mind that:

- When there is one available, the DOI is favored over a URL, because while URLs often change, the DOI will always stay the same.
- When including a URL, use a permalink whenever possible, because it is generally more stable and shorter in length.

Example 19.9.18:

Bui, Hoang. "How to Get Financial Freedom When You Can't Increase Your Salary." *Elite Daily*, Mar. 30, 2016, elitedaily.com/money/financial-freedom-increase-salary/1375196/.

Sassen, Catherine, and Diane Wahl. "Fostering Research and Publication in Academic Libraries." *College and Research Libraries*, July 2014. ERIC, EJ1066504.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

Grammar

20: Nouns and Pronouns

20.1: Why It Matters: Grammar
20.2: Outcome: Nouns and Pronouns
20.3: Nouns
20.4: Categories of Nouns
20.5: Pronouns
20.6: Pronoun Cases
20.7: Pronoun Antecedents
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21: Verbs

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24.2: Parts of a Sentence
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24.4: Run-on Sentences
24.5: Sentence Fragments
24.6: Parallel Structure
24.7: Self Check: Sentence Structure
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25: Voice

25.1: Outcome: Voice
25.2: Active and Passive Voice
25.3: Using the Passive Voice
25.4: Self Check: Voice
25.5: Try It: Voice
25.6: Conclusion: Grammar

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

20: Nouns and Pronouns

Topic hierarchy

20.1: Why It Matters: Grammar
20.2: Outcome: Nouns and Pronouns
20.3: Nouns
20.4: Categories of Nouns
20.5: Pronouns
20.6: Pronoun Cases
20.7: Pronoun Antecedents
20.8: Self Check: Nouns and Pronouns
20.9: Try It: Nouns and Pronouns

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20.1: Why It Matters: Grammar

Skills to Develop

- Explain the function of nouns and pronouns.
- Explain verb types and their correction conjugation.
- Explain the function other parts of speech, including adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions, and articles.
- Explain common punctuation marks and the rules for their correct usage.
- Explain common sentence types and common errors in sentence composition.
- Explain the active and passive voices, as well as the reasons to use both.

Why is it helpful to explain patterns of academic grammar and punctuation usage?



***Figure* 20.1.1**

Language is one of the most powerful tools that people have at their disposal. Communication is the primary way we connect with others. Through words, we can inform, motivate, or injure. Language is also incredibly personal and unique: the way people speak can tell us so much about them—it tells us what groups they associate themselves with. Different communities (which can be determined by profession, age, ethnicity, or location) develop specialized words and constructions that distinguish its members from other people.

This kind of differentiation can be both a good thing or a bad thing. On the positive side, these specializations help groups become closer to each other, and they help people create a sense of identity. On the other hand, these differences can put strain on communication between members of different groups.

For the sake of communication across cultural lines, standardized rules and conventions are necessary. This is where grammar comes in. Grammar is composed of the rules that govern English. An understanding of these rules is essential for communication. Errors in grammar can easily lead to misunderstandings. Additionally, when you speak or write with poor grammar, others will often make judgements about who you are as a person. As Williams and Colomb say, "Follow all the rules all the time because sometime, someone will criticize you for something."[1]

Code Switching

Code switching is the ability to use two different varieties (or dialects) of the same language. Most people do this instinctively. If you were writing a paper, you might say something like "The experiment requires not one but four different procedures" in order to emphasize number. In an informal online setting, on the other hand, you might say something like "I saw two (2) buses drive past."

The most important facet of code switching is knowing when to use which variety. In formal academic writing, "standarized" English is the correct variety to use; this section will cover the rules and conventions of Standard American English, which is used in academic and professional situations. As you go through this module, remember that these are the rules for just one type of English.

About the Videos in this Module

You'll quickly recognize a distinctive voice and format in the videos in this section of the course. David, Grammar Content Fellow from the Khan Academy, has charming insights and a straightforward, encouraging approach to deepening your understanding of language. Watch this video for an introduction to David and his position on grammar:



References

1. Williams, Joseph M. and Gregory G. Colomb. *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace*. 3rd ed. Boston: Longman. 2012, p. 14. ↵

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20.2: Outcome: Nouns and Pronouns

Skills to Develop

- Explain the use of nouns
- Explain pronoun cases and types
- Explain pronoun and antecedent clarity
- Explain pronoun and antecedent agreement

Explain the function of nouns and pronouns

Nouns and pronouns are the “things” in our sentences. Nouns are specific things or people: for example, plants, houses, or Nicki Minaj. Pronouns, on the other hand, stand in for a previous noun. They include words like *those*, *them*, and *he*. Without a larger context, we have no idea what pronouns refer to, but with the correct reference, they can help us save time and space in our communication.

In this outcome, we’ll learn about the different types of nouns and pronouns, as well as how to correctly use them in English.

The Learning Activities for this Outcome Include

- Text: Nouns
- Text: Categories of Nouns
- Text: Pronouns
- Text: Pronoun Cases
- Text: Pronoun Antecedents
- Self Check: Nouns and Pronouns
- Try It: Nouns and Pronouns

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20.3: Nouns

Nouns are a diverse group of words, and they are very common in English. Nouns are a category of words defining **things**—the name of people (Dr. Sanders, lawyers), places (Kansas, factory, home), things (scissors, sheet music, book), or ideas (love, truth, beauty, intelligence).

IDENTIFYING NOUNS

Let's look at the following examples to get a better idea of how nouns work in sentences. All of the nouns have been bolded :

- The one **experiment** that has been given the most **attention** in the **debate** on **saccharin** is the 1977 Canadian **study** done on **rats**.
- The multi-fuel **capacity** of the Stirling **engine** gives it a versatility not possible in the internal combustion **engine**.
- The regenerative cooling **cycle** in the **engines** of the Space **Shuttle** is made up of high pressure **hydrogen** that flows in **tubes** connecting the **nozzle** and the combustion **chamber**.

There are a lot of different categories of nouns, but before we get in too deep, let's talk about pluralization.

Pluralization



***Figure* 20.3.1**

A plural noun indicates that there is more than one of that noun (while a singular noun indicates that there is just one of the noun). Most plural forms are created by simply adding an *-s* or *–es* to the end of the singular word. For example, there's one **dog** (singular), but three **dogs** (plural). However, English has both regular and irregular plural nouns. Regular plurals follow this rule (and other similar rules), but irregular plurals are, well, not regular and don't follow a "standard" rule.

Regular Plurals

Let's start with regular plurals: **regular plural nouns** use established patterns to indicate there is more than one of a thing. As was mentioned earlier, we add the plural suffix *–s* to most words (*cats*, *bears*, *zebras*). However, after sounds *s*, *z*, *sh*, *ch*, and *j*, we add the plural suffix *–es* (*classes*, *sashes*, *foxes*). Some words that end in *z* also double their ending consonant, like *quizzes*.

We also add the plural suffix *–es* to most words that end in *o* (*potatoes*, *heroes*, *mosquitoes*). However, when the words have a foreign origin (e.g.,Latin, Greek, Spanish), we just add the plural suffix *–s* (*tacos*, *avocados*, *maestros*).

Exercise 20.3.1

Look at each plural word in the table below. Write the singular version of the word and explain which rule the plural has used in its formation. For example:

- *vultures* is the plural of *vulture*. Despite *vultures* ending in *–es*, you simply add an *–s* to form the plural, as the *e* is a part of the singular word.

trees		sopranos		watches	
tomatoes		waltzes		wrists	

Answer

trees	*trees* is the plural of *trees*. *–s* is added	sopranos	*sopranos* is the plural of *soprano*. *–s* is added despite the word ending in an *o*, because the word is borrowed from Italian	watches	*watches* is the plural of *watch*. *–es* is added because the word ends in *ch*
tomatoes	*tomatoes* is the plural of *tomato*. *–es* is added because it's a native English word	waltzes	*waltzes* is the plural of *waltz*. *–es* is added because the word ends in *z*	wrists	*wrists* is the plural of *wrist*. *–s* is added

When a word ends in *y* and there is a consonant before *y*, we change the *y* to *i* and add *–es*. Thus *sky* becomes *skies*. When a word ends in *–f* or *–fe*, we change the *f* to *v* and add *–es*. Thus *calf* becomes *calves*.

However, there are some exceptions to these rules:

- *donkeys* not *donkeies*; *alloys* not *alloies*.
  - If the *y* follows another vowel, you simply add an *–s*.
- *cliffs* not *clivves*; *chiefs* not *chieves*
  - If there are two terminal *f*s, you simply add an *–s*.
  - If you still pronounce the *f* in the plural, then the spelling should retain the *f* as well.

Exercise 20.3.2

Look at each plural word in the table below. Write the singular version of the word and explain which rule the plural has used in its formation. For example:

- *fries* is the plural of *fry*. To form the plural, the *y* was changed to an *i*, and we added *–es*.

reefs		leaves		flies	
cafes		caves		boys	

Answer

reefs	*reefs* is the plural of *reef*. *–s* is added. It is an exception to the rule.	leaves	*leaves* is the plural of *leaf*. the *f* is changed to a *v*, and *-es* is added	flies	*flies* is the plural of *fly*. the *y* is changed to an *i*, and *–es* is added
cafes	*cafes* is the plural of *cafe*. the *–s* is added (note that *cafe* is sometimes spelled with an accent mark: *café*)	caves	*caves* is the plural of *cave*. the *–s* is added	boys	*boys* is the plural of *boy*. *–s* is added because the *y* follows a vowel

Irregular Plurals

Irregular plurals, unlike regular plurals, don't necessarily follow any particular pattern—instead, they follow a lot of *different* patterns. Because of this, irregular plurals require a lot of memorization; you need to remember which nouns belong to which type of pluralization. Mastering irregulars uses a different region of your brain than regular pluralization: it's an entirely different skill set than regular pluralization. So don't get too frustrated if you can't remember the correct plural. If you're ever in doubt, the dictionary is there for you.

The first kind of irregular plural we'll talk about is the **no-change** or **base plural**. In these words, the singular noun has the exact same form as the plural (*sheep*, *fish*, *deer*, *moose*). Most no-change plurals are types of animals. The next type of irregular is the **mid-word vowel change**:



Note

The plural for a computer mouse (as opposed to the fuzzy animal) can either be *mice* or *mouses*. Some people prefer *mouses* as it creates some differentiation between the two words.

And last we have **plural *–en*.** In these words *–en* is used as the plural ending instead of *–s* or *-es*.

- child → children
- ox → oxen
- brother → brethren
- sister → sistren

Note

Brethren and *sistren* are antiquated terms that you're unlikely to run into in your life; however, since these are the only four words in English that use this plural, all four have been included above.

Exercise **20.3.3**

Look at each plural word in the table below. Write the singular version of the word and explain which rule the plural has used in its formation. For example:

- *oxen* is the plural of *ox*. This is an *–en* noun. To form the plural, an *-en* was added.

children		moose		teeth	
squid		men		lice	

Answer

children	*children* is the plural of *child*. This is an *–en* noun. To form the plural, an *–ren* was added.	moose	*moose* is the plural of *moose*. This is a no-change plural. The singular and plural have the same form.	teeth	*teeth* is the plural of *tooth*. This is a mid-word vowel change plural. The *oo* in *tooth* was changed to an *ee*.
squid	*squid* is the plural of *squid*. This is a no-change plural. The singular and plural have the same form.	men	*men* is the plural of *man*. This is a mid-word vowel change plural. The *a* in *man* was changed to an *e*.	lice	*lice* is the plural of *louse*. This is a mid-word vowel change plural. The *ouse* in *louse* was changed to an *ice*.

The last category of irregular plurals is borrowed words. These words are native to other languages (e.g., Latin, Greek) and have retained the pluralization rules from their original tongue.

Singular *–us*; Plural *–i*

- cactus → cacti
- fungus → fungi
- syllabus → syllabi

In informal speech, *cactuses* and *funguses* are acceptable. *Octopuses* is preferred to *octopi*, but *octopi* is an accepted word.

Singular *-a*; Plural *–ae*

- formula → formulae (sometimes *formulas*)
- vertebra → vertebrae
- larva → larvae

Singular *–ix*, *–ex*; Plural *–ices*, *–es*

- appendix → appendices (sometimes *appendixes*)
- index → indices

Singular *–on*, *–um*; Plural *–a*

- criterion → criteria
- bacterium → bacteria
- medium → media

Singular *–is*; Plural *–es*

- analysis → analyses
- crisis → crises
- thesis → theses

Exercise 20.3.4

Look at each plural word in the table below. Write the singular version of the word and explain which rule the plural has used in its formation. For example:

- *stimuli* is the plural of *stimulus*. The singular ends with a *-us*, so the plural ends with an *-i*.

memoranda		hypotheses		phenomena	
parentheses		emphases		nuclei	
foci		vertebrae		appendices	

Answer

memoranda	*memoranda* is the plural of *memorandum*. The singular ends with *–um*, so the plural ends with *–a*.	hypotheses	*hypotheses* is the plural of *hypothesis*. The singular ends with *–is*, so the plural ends with *–es*.	phenomena	*phenomena* is the plural of *phenomenon*. The singular ends with *–on*, so the plural ends with *–a*.
parentheses	*parentheses* is the plural of *parenthesis*. The singular ends with *–is*, so the plural ends with *–es*.	emphases	*emphases* is the plural of *emphasis*. The singular ends with *–is*, so the plural ends with *–es*.	nuclei	*nuclei* is the plural of *nucleus*. The singular ends with *–us*, so the plural ends with *–i*.
foci	*foci* is the plural of *focus*. The singular ends with *–us*, so the plural ends with *–i*. *focuses* is also an acceptable plural	vertebrae	*vertebrae* is the plural of *vertebra*. The singular ends with *–a*, so the plural ends with *–ae*.	appendices	*appendices* is the plural of *appendix*. The singular ends with *–ix*, so the plural ends with *–ices*.

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20.4: Categories of Nouns

There are a lot of ways to categorize nouns: common vs. proper nouns, concrete vs. abstract nouns, count vs. non-count nouns, and compound vs. non-compound nouns. Let's take a look at each of these kinds of categorization and see exactly what they each mean.

Common vs. Proper Nouns

Common nouns are generic words, like *tissue* or *watch*. They are lower-cased (unless they begin a sentence). A proper noun, on the other hand, is the name of a specific thing, like the brand name *Kleenex* or *Rolex*. Proper nouns are always capitalized.

- common noun: name
- proper noun: Ester

Note

This rule also applies to adjectives that are based on proper nouns:

- It's often difficult to understand Shakespearian language.
  - *Shakespearian* comes from *Shakespeare*, a man's last name, so it should be capitalized.
- After her encounter with Lukas, she vowed to hate all Swiss men.
  - *Swiss* comes from the country *Switzerland*, so it should be capitalized.

However, you can also encounter things like these:

- I really love swiss cheese.
- Do you want me to pick up any french fries for you while I'm out?

Why aren't *swiss* and *french* capitalized in these instances? When you're talking about *swiss cheese* and *french fries*, these adjectives have a non-literal meaning: the cheese isn't really from Switzerland, nor are the fries really from France. So the adjective doesn't need to be capitalized.

This also applies to things like *arabic numerals* and *pasteurized milk* (*pasteurized* comes from the name *Louis Pasteur*, who discovered pasteurization).

Concrete vs. Abstract Nouns

Concrete nouns are things you can hold, see, or otherwise sense, like *book*, *light*, or *warmth*.

Abstract nouns, on the other hand, are (as you might expect) abstract concepts, like *time* and *love*.

- concrete noun: rock
- abstract noun: justice

Exercise 20.4.1

Look at each of the following nouns and determine if they are common or proper and if they are concrete or abstract. For example:

- *justice* is a common abstract noun.

Buddhism		Robert	
cathedral		talent	

Answer

Buddhism	*Buddhism* is a proper abstract noun.	Robert	*Robert* is a proper concrete noun.
cathedral	*cathedral* is a common concrete noun.	talent	*talent* is a common abstract noun

Count vs. Non-Count Nouns

A **count noun** (also **countable noun**) is a noun that can be modified by a numeral (*three chairs*) and that occurs in both singular and plural forms (*chair*, *chairs*). The can also be preceded by words such as *a*, *an*, or *the* (*a chair*). Quite literally, count nouns are nouns which can be counted.

A **non-count noun** (also **mass noun**), on the other hand, has none of these properties. It can't be modified by a numeral (*three furniture*is incorrect), occur in singular/plural (*furnitures* is not a word), or co-occur with *a*, *an*, or *the* (*a furniture* is incorrect). Again, quite literally, non-count nouns are nouns which cannot be counted.

In general, a count noun is going to be something you can easily count—like *rock* or *dollar bill*. Non-count nouns, on the other hand, would be more difficult to count—like *sand* or *money*. If you ever want to identify a singular non-count noun, you need a phrase beforehand—like *a grain of sand* or *a sum of money*.

LESS VS. FEWER?

The adjectives *less* and *fewer* are both used to indicate a smaller amount of the noun they modify. People often will use these words interchangeably; however, the word *fewer* is used with count nouns, while *less* is used with non-count nouns:

- The pet day care has **fewer** dogs than cats this week.
- Next time you make these cookies, you should use **less** sugar.

The adjectives many and much also follow this pattern. *Many* is used with count nouns, and *much* is used with non-count nouns. *Much* usually follows the adverb *too* (i.e., *too much*):

- **Many** poets struggle when they try to determine if a poem is complete or not.
- There's too **much** goodness in her heart for her own good.

Exercise 20.4.2

Read the following sentences. Decide if the bolded words have been treated correctly as count or non-count nouns.

1. Satya has a lot of **clothings**. Her mother has told her that before she can buy any more, she must get rid of five **shirts**and two **pants**.
2. There were a lot of types of **food** at the event, including different **soups**, **salads**, and **desserts**.
3. Miguel loved studying **outer space**—especially the different **galaxy**.

Answer

1. No. All three nouns (*clothings*, *shirts*, and *pants*) have been treated as count nouns. However, only *shirts* is a count noun. The correct sentence would be "Satya has a lot of **clothing**. Her mother has told her that before she can buy any more, she must get rid of five shirts and two **pairs of pants**."
   - Please not that even though the word *pants* ends in an *s*, it is not actually plural (or singular; it's non-count!). The correct way to create a plural is *pairs of pants*.
2. Yes. *Food* is a non-count noun (and has been treated as such). *Soups*, *salads*, and *desserts* are all plural count nouns.
3. No. *Outer space* is non-count, and has been treated as such, but *galaxy* is a count noun, and has been treated as a non-count. The correct sentence would be "Miguel loved studying outer space—especially the different **galaxies**."

Exercise 20.4.3

Choose the correct word to fill in the gaps in the following sentences:

1. Evelyn wished there was (less / fewer) rain in the weather forecast.
2. You can only be in this line if you have fifteen items or (less / fewer).
3. I made a list of my (many / much) ideas for the project.
4. Arturo drank too (many / much) water before his workout.

Answer

1. Evelyn wished there was **less** rain in the weather forecast.
   - *Rain* is a non-count noun, so the adjective *less* should be used.
2. You can only be in this line if you have fifteen items or **fewer**.
   - *Items* is a count noun, so the adjective *fewer* should be used.
3. I made a list of my **many** ideas for the project.
   - *Ideas* is a count noun, so the adjective *many* should be used.
4. Arturo drank too **much** water before his workout.
   - *Water* is a non-count noun, so the adjective *much* should be used.

Compound Nouns

A **compound noun** is a noun phrase made up of two nouns, e.g. *bus driver*, in which the first noun acts as a sort of adjective for the second one, but without really describing it. (For example, think about the difference between *a black bird* and *a blackbird*.)



***Figure* 20.4.1** - *A crow is a black bird, while a blackbird is a specific species of bird.*

Compound nouns can be made up of two or more other words, but each compound has a single meaning. They may or may not be hyphenated, and they may be written with a space between words—especially if one of the words has more than one syllable, as in

living room. In that regard, it's necessary to avoid the over-simplification of saying that two single-syllable words are written together as one word. Thus, *tablecloth* but *table mat*, *wine glass* but *wineglassful* or *key ring* but *keyholder*. Moreover, there are cases which some people/dictionaries will write one way while others write them another way. Until very recently we wrote *(the) week's end*, which later became *week-end* and then our beloved *weekend*.

There are three typical structures of compound nouns.

Types of Compound Nouns

Short compounds may be written in three different ways:

- **The solid or closed forms** in which two usually moderately short words appear together as one. Solid compounds most likely consist of short units that often have been established in the language for a long time. Examples are *housewife*, *lawsuit*, *wallpaper*, *basketball*, etc.
- **The hyphenated form** in which two or more words are connected by a hyphen. This category includes compounds that contain suffixes, such as *house-build*(*er*) and *single-mind*(*ed*)(*ness*). Compounds that contain articles, prepositions or conjunctions, such as *rent-a-cop* and *mother-of-pearl*, are also often hyphenated.
- **The open or spaced form** consisting of newer combinations of usually longer words, such as *distance learning*, *player piano*, *lawn tennis*, etc.

Hyphens are often considered a squishy part on language (we'll discuss this further in Text: Hyphens and Dashes). Because of this, usage differs and often depends on the individual choice of the writer rather than on a hard-and-fast rule. This means open, hyphenated, and closed forms may be encountered for the same compound noun, such as the triplets *container ship*/*container-ship*/*containership* and *particle board*/*particle-board*/*particleboard*. If you're ever in doubt whether a compound should be closed, hyphenated, or open, dictionaries are your best reference.

Plurals

The process of making compound nouns plural has its own set of conventions to follow. In all forms of compound nouns, we pluralize the chief element of a compound word (i.e., we pluralize the primary noun of the compound).

- fisher**man** → fisher**men**
- black **bird** → black **birds**
- **brother**-in-law → **brothers**-in-law

The word *hand-me-down* doesn't have a distinct primary noun, so its plural is *hand-me-downs*.

Exercise 20.4.4

Look at each compound word in the table below. Write the plural version of the word and explain why you wrote the plural in that form. For example:

- The plural of *spoonful* is *spoonfuls*. The end of the word is made plural because *–ful* isn't a complete word.
- The plural of *runner-up* is *runners-up*. *Runner* is made plural because it is the primary noun.

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
do-it-yourself		rabbit’s foot	
have-not		passerby	
time-out		lieutenant general	

Answer

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
do-it-yourself	The plural of *do-it-yourself* is *do-it-yourselves*. *Yourself* is made plural because it is the primary noun.	rabbit’s foot	The plural of *rabbit’s foot* is *rabbits’ feet*. Both words are made plural because when there’s more than one foot, it’s unlikely to know how many rabbits the feet came from.
have-not	The plural of *have-not* is *have-nots*. The end of the word is made plural because *have-not*doesn’t have a distinct primary noun	passerby	The plural of *passerby* is *passersby*. *Passer* is made plural because it is the primary noun.
time-out	The plural of *time-out* is *time-outs*. The end of the word is made plural because *time-out*doesn’t have a distinct primary noun	lieutenant general	The plural of *lieutenant general* is *lieutenant generals*. The end of the word is made plural because *lieutenant general* doesn’t have a distinct primary noun

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20.5: Pronouns

A pronoun stands in the place of a noun. Like nouns, pronouns can serve as the subject or object of a sentence: they are the things sentences are about. Pronouns include words like *he*, *she*, and *I*, but they also include words like *this*, *that*, *which*, *who*, *anybody*, and *everyone*. Before we get into the different types of pronouns, let's look at how they work in sentences.

Because a pronoun is replacing a noun, its meaning is dependent on the noun that it is replacing. This noun is called the **antecedent**. Let's look at the first sentence of this paragraph again:

Because a pronoun is replacing a noun, **its** meaning is dependent on the noun that **it** is replacing.

There are two pronouns here: *its* and *it*. *Its* and *it* both have the same antecedent: "a pronoun." Whenever you use a pronoun, you must also include its antecedent. Without the antecedent, your readers (or listeners) won't be able to figure out what the pronoun is referring to. Let's look at a couple of examples:

- Jason likes it when people look to him for leadership.
- Trini does her hair and make up every day—with no exceptions.
- Billy often has to clean his glasses.
- Kimberly is a gymnast. She has earned several medals in different competitions.

So, what are the antecedents and pronouns in these sentences?

- *Jason* is the antecedent for the pronoun *him*.
- *Trini* is the antecedent for the pronoun *her*.
- *Billy* is the antecedent for the pronoun *his*.
- *Kimberly* is the antecedent for the pronoun *she*.

Exercise 20.5.1

Identify the antecedents and pronouns in the following examples:

1. Itzel and Camila were the top ranking doubles team at OSU. They hadn't been defeated all year.
2. People asked Jorge to review their papers so often that he started a small editing business.
3. Henry called his parents every week.

Answer

1. **Itzel and Camila** is the antecedent for the pronoun **They**. There are two pronoun/antecedent pairs in this sentence.
2. **People** is the antecedent for **their**, and **Jorge** is the antecedent for **he**.
3. **Henry** is the antecedent for **his**.

So far, we've only looked at personal pronouns, but there are a lot of other types, including demonstrative, and indefinite pronouns. Let's discuss each of these types in further depth:

Personal Pronouns



***Figure* 20.5.1**

The following sentences give examples of personal pronouns used with antecedents:

- **That poor man** looks as if **he** needs a new coat. (the noun phrase *that poor man* is the antecedent of *he*)
- **Kat** arrived yesterday. I met **her** at the station. (*Kat* is the antecedent of *her*)
- When **they** saw us, **the lions** began roaring (*the lions* is the antecedent of *they*)
- **Adam and I** were hoping no-one would find **us**. (*Adam and I* is the antecedent of *us*)
- **You and Aisha** can come if **you** like. (*you and Aisha* is the antecedent of the second, plural, *you*)

> First- and second-person pronouns don't always require an explicitly stated antecedent. When a speaker says something like "I told you the zoo was closed today," it's implied that the speaker is the antecedent for *I* and the listener is the antecedent for *you*.

Reflexive pronouns are a specific type of personal pronoun. This video will give you an introduction to them:



Here's two examples with the pronoun and antecedents indicated:

- **Jason** hurt **himself**. (*Jason* is the antecedent of *himself*)
- **We** were teasing **each other**. (*we* is the antecedent of *each other*)

Demonstrative Pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns substitute for things being pointed out. They include *this*, *that*, *these*, and *those*. *This* and *that* are singular; *these* and *those* are plural.



***Figure* 20.5.2**

The difference between *this* and *that* and between *these* and *those* is a little more subtle. *This* and *these* refer to something that is "close" to the speaker, whether this closeness is physical, emotional, or temporal. *That*and *those* are the opposite: they refer to something that is "far."

- Do I actually have to read all of *this*?
  - The speaker is indicating a text that is close to her, by using "this."
- *That* is not coming anywhere near me.
  - The speaker is distancing himself from the object in question, which he doesn't want to get any closer. The far pronoun helps indicate that.

- You're telling me you sewed all of *these*?
  - The speaker and her audience are likely looking directly at the clothes in question, so the close pronoun is appropriate.
- *Those* are all gross.
  - The speaker wants to remain away from the gross items in question, by using the far "those."

Note

These pronouns are often combined with a noun. When this happens, they act as a kind of adjective instead of as a pronoun.

- Do I actually have to read all of *this* contract?
- *That* thing is not coming anywhere near me.
- You're telling me you sewed all of *these* dresses?
- *Those* recipes are all gross.

The antecedents of demonstrative pronouns can be more complex than those of personal pronouns:

Animal Planet's puppy cam has been taken down for maintenance. I never wanted *this* to happen.

The antecedent for *this* is the concept of the puppy cam being taken down.

Note

The pronoun *it* can also have more complex antecedents:

I love Animal Planet's panda cam. **I watched a panda eat bamboo for half an hour.** *It* was amazing.

The antecedent for *it* in this sentence is the experience of watching the panda. That antecedent isn't explicitly stated in the sentence, but comes through in the intention and meaning of the speaker.

Exercise 20.5.2

Identify the antecedents and pronouns in the following examples:

1. I can see forty bracelets. Are you telling me you made all of these?
2. I can't get rid of my country-shaped mugs. Tommy gave those to me for my birthday!
3. The video of a skateboard-riding bulldog? I showed that to you last week!
4. Jordan has been talking for over two hours. This is unbearable.

Answer

1. The pronouns **I** and **you** don't have antecedents. It's implied that the speaker is "I" and the listener is the "you." **Forty bracelets** is the antecedent for the pronoun **these**.
2. The pronouns **I**, **my**, and **me** don't have antecedents. It's implied that the speaker is "I." **Country-shaped mugs** is the antecedent for **those**.
3. **The video of a skateboard-riding bulldog** is the antecedent for the pronoun **that**. The pronouns **I** and **you** don't have antecedents. It's implied that the speaker is "I" and the listener is the "you."
4. **Jordan talking for over two hours** is the antecedent for the pronoun **this**.

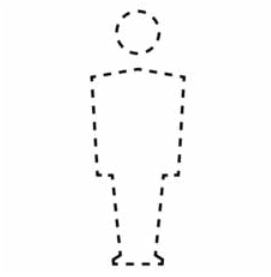


***Figure* 20.5.3**

Indefinite pronouns, the largest group of pronouns, refer to one or more unspecified persons or things, for example: ***Anyone*** *can do that.*

These pronouns can be used in a couple of different ways:

- They can refer to members of a group separately rather than collectively. (*To* ***each*** *his or her own.*)
- They can indicate the non-existence of people or things. (***Nobody*** *thinks that.*)
- They can refer to a person, but are not specific as to first, second or third person in the way that the personal pronouns are. (***One****does not clean* ***one's*** *own windows.*)

Please note that all of these pronouns are singular. Look back at the example "To **each** his or her own." Saying "To each their own" would be incorrect, since *their* is a plural pronoun and *each* is singular. We'll discuss this in further depth in Text: Pronoun Antecedents. The table below shows the most common indefinite pronouns:

anybody	anyone	anything	each	either	every
everybody	everyone	everything	neither	no one	nobody
nothing	one	somebody	someone	something	

Note

Sometimes third-person personal pronouns are sometimes used without antecedents—this applies to special uses such as dummy pronouns and generic *they*, as well as cases where the referent is implied by the context.

- You know what *they* say.
- *It's* a nice day today.

Exercise 20.5.3

Identify the indefinite pronouns in the following sentences:

1. Everyone should take the time to critically think about what he or she wants out of life.
2. If I had to choose between singing in public and swimming with leeches, I would choose neither.
3. Yasmin knew something was wrong, but she couldn't figure out what.
4. If nobody else enrolls in this class, it will be cancelled this semester.

Answer

1. **Everyone** is the indefinite pronoun. *He or she* is a pronoun with the antecedent *everyone*.
2. **Neither** is the indefinite pronoun. Its antecedents are *singing in public* and *swimming with leeches*.
3. **Something** is the indefinite pronoun.
4. **Nobody else** is the indefinite pronoun.

Relative Pronouns

There are five relative pronouns in English: *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *that*, and *which*. These pronouns are used to connect different clauses together. For example:

- Belen, **who** had starred in six plays before she turned seventeen, knew that she wanted to act on Broadway someday.
  - The word *who* connects the phrase "had starred in six plays before she turned seventeen" to the rest of the sentence.
- My daughter wants to adopt the dog **that** doesn't have a tail.
  - The word *that* connects the phrase "doesn't have a tail" to the rest of the sentence.

These pronouns behave differently from the other categories we've seen. However, they are pronouns, and it's important to learn how they work.

Two of the biggest confusions with these pronouns are *that* vs. *which* and *who* vs. *whom*. The two following videos help with these:

That vs. Which



Who vs. Whom



Exercise 20.5.4

Does the following paragraph use relative pronouns correctly? Explain why or why not for each relative pronoun.

Katerina, whom had taken biology once already, was still struggling to keep the steps of cellular respiration straight. She knew the process took place in animals, which take in oxygen and put out carbon dioxide. She also knew that plants underwent the process of photosynthesis. However, the individual steps of the process seemed beyond her understanding.

Answer

There are three relative pronouns in this passage:

Katerina, **whom** had taken biology once already, was still struggling to keep the steps of cellular respiration straight. She knew the process took place in animals, **which** take in oxygen and put out carbon dioxide. She also knew **that** plants underwent the process of photosynthesis. However, the individual steps of the process seemed beyond her understanding.

Whom is incorrect; the object case is not needed here. The sentence should start with "Katerina, who had taken biology once already. . . ." *Which* is used correctly. *Which* is appropriate to use with the noun *animals*, and the clause is set off with commas. *That* is used correctly. It connects *knew* with what she knew.

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20.6: Pronoun Cases

Pronouns may be classified by three categories: person, number, and case.

Person



Figure 20.6.1

Person refers to the relationship that an author has with the text that he or she writes, and with the reader of that text. English has three persons (first, second, and third).

First

First-person is the most informal. The author is saying, this is about me and people I know.

- First-person pronouns include *I*, *me*, *we*

Second

Second-person is also informal, though slightly more formal than first-person. The author is saying, this is about you, the reader.

- All second-person pronouns are variations of *you*, which is both singular and plural

Third

Third-person is the most formal. The author is saying, this is about other people.

In the third person singular there are distinct pronoun forms for male, female, and neutral gender. Here is a short list of the most common pronouns and their gender:

Person		Pronouns
First		I, me, we, us
Second		you
Third	Male	he, him
	Female	she, her
	Neutral	it, they, them

Exercise 20.6.1

In the following sentences, determine the person for each pronoun:

1. Jada often put other people's needs before her own.
2. Amelia and Ajani still haven't arrived. I should make sure I texted them.
3. You will need three things in order to be successful: determination, discipline, and dexterity.

Answer

1. The pronoun is **her**. *Her* is a feminine third-person pronoun.
2. There are two pronouns: **I** and **them**. *I* is a first-person pronoun. *Them* is a neutral third-person pronoun.
3. The pronoun is **you**. *You* is a second-person pronoun

Number



***Figure* 20.6.2**

There are two numbers: singular and plural. The table below separates pronouns according to number. You may notice that the second person is the same for both singular and plural: *you*.

Person	Number	Pronouns
First	Singular	I, me
	Plural	we, us
Second	Singular	you
	Plural	you
Third	Singular	he, him
		she, her
		it
	Plural	they, them

Case



***Figure* 20.6.3**

English personal pronouns have two cases: **subject** and **object** (there are also possessive pronouns, which we'll discuss next). **Subject-case pronouns** are used when the pronoun is doing the action. (I like to eat chips, but she does not). **Object-case pronouns** are used when something is being done to the pronoun (John likes me but not her). This video will further clarify the difference between subject- and object-case:



Exercise 20.6.2

In the following sentences, identify the person, case, and number of each pronoun:

1. You shouldn't be so worried about what other people think. They don't matter. The only person you need to please is you.
2. Elena knew she should have spent more time on homework this semester, but binge-watching TV had tripped her up again and again.
3. George Washington was the first president of the United States. He set the standard of only serving two terms of office. However, it wasn't illegal to do so until 1951.

Answer

1. There are three pronouns: *you*, *they*, and *you.*

- *You* is a subject case, singular, second-person pronoun.
- *They* is a subject case, plural, neutral third-person pronoun.
- *You* is an object case, singular, second-person pronoun.

2. There are two pronouns: *she* and *her.*

- *She* is a subject case, singular, feminine third-person pronoun.
- *Her* is an object case, singular, feminine third-person pronoun.

3. There are two pronouns: *he* and *it*.

- *He* is a subject case, singular, masculine third-person pronoun.
- *It* is a subject case, singular, neutral third-person pronoun.

Possessive Pronouns

Possessive pronouns are used to indicate possession (in a broad sense). Some occur as independent phrases: *mine*, *yours*, *hers*, *ours*, *yours*, *theirs*. For example, "Those clothes are **mine**." Others must be accompanied by a noun: *my*, *your*, *her*, *our*, *your*, *their*, as in "I lost **my** wallet." This category of pronouns behaves similarly to adjectives. *His* and *its* can fall into either category, although *its* is nearly always found in the second.

Both types replace possessive noun phrases. As an example, "Their crusade to capture our attention" could replace "The advertisers' crusade to capture our attention."

This video provides another explanation of possessive pronouns:



Exercise 20.6.3

In each sentence, select the correct possessive pronoun. Identify why you selected the pronoun you did:

1. André told me that was (my/ mine) box of cereal, but I couldn't remember having bought it.
2. Eloá said that it was (her/ hers).
3. Jake and Suren refused to give (their / theirs) opinions on the subject.

Answer

1. André told me that was **my** box of cereal, but I couldn't remember having bought it. The pronoun is followed by the noun *box of cereal*, so it should be the adjective form.
2. Eloá said that it was **hers**. The pronoun stands on its own, so it should be the independent form.
3. Jake and Suren refused to give **their** opinions on the subject. The pronoun is followed by the noun *opinions*, so it should be the adjective form.

Review

The table below includes all of the personal pronouns in the English language. They are organized by person, number, and case.

Person	Number	Subject	Object	Possessive	
First	Singular	I	me	my	mine
	Plural	we	us	our	ours
Second	Singular	you	you	your	yours
	Plural	you	you	your	yours
Third	Singular	he	him	his	his
		she	her	her	hers
		it	it	its	its
	Plural	they	them	their	theirs

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20.7: Pronoun Antecedents

Antecedent Clarity

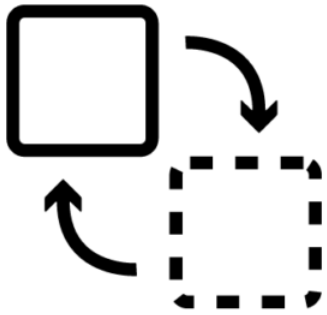


***Figure* 20.7.1**

We've already defined an **antecedent** as the noun (or phrase) that a pronoun is replacing. The phrase "antecedent clarity" simply means that is should be clear who or what the pronoun is referring to. In other words, readers should be able to understand the sentence the first time they read it—not the third, forth, or tenth. In this page, we'll look at some examples of common mistakes that can cause confusion, as well as ways to fix each sentence.

Let's take a look at our first sentence:

Rafael told Matt to stop eating his cereal.

When you first read this sentence, is it clear if the cereal Rafael's or Matt's? Is it clear when you read the sentence again? Not really, no. Since both Rafael and Matt are singular, third person, and masculine, it's impossible to tell whose cereal is being eaten (at least from this sentence).

How would you best revise this sentence? Type your ideas and then look at the suggested revisions.

Answer

Let's assume the cereal is Rafael's:

Rafael told Matt to stop eating Rafael's cereal. Matt was eating Rafael's cereal. Rafael told him to stop it.

These aren't the only ways to revise the sentence. However, each of these new sentences has made it clear whose cereal it is.

- Matt was eating his own cereal when Rafael told him to stop.

What if the cereal is Matt's?:

Rafael told Matt to stop eating Matt's cereal.

Were those revisions what you expected them to be?

Let's take a look at another example:

Katerina was really excited to try French cuisine on her semester abroad in Europe. They make all sorts of delicious things.

When you read this example, is it apparent who the pronoun *they* is referring to? You may guess that *they* is referring to the French —which is probably correct. However, this is not actually stated, which means that there isn't actually an antecedent. Since every pronoun needs an antecedent, the example needs to be revised to include one.

How would you best revise this sentence? Type your ideas and then look at the suggested revisions.

Answer

Let's assume the cereal is Rafael's:

Rafael told Matt to stop eating Rafael's cereal. Matt was eating Rafael's cereal. Rafael told him to stop it.

These aren't the only ways to revise the sentence. However, each of these new sentences has made it clear whose cereal it is.

- Matt was eating his own cereal when Rafael told him to stop.

What if the cereal is Matt's?:

Rafael told Matt to stop eating Matt's cereal.

As you write, keep these two things in mind:

- Make sure your pronouns always have an antecedent.
- Make sure that it is clear what their antecedents are.

Exercise 20.7.1

Read the following passage, then re-write it using as many pronouns as possible, while still retaining clarity.

Marina and Marina's twin sister Adriana often fought over small things. Marina frequently took Adriana's clothes without asking and never returned them. Adriana always ate the last piece of dessert, even if Mariana had saved it for Mariana. However, Mariana always made sure Adriana knew about the sales at Adriana's favorite stores, and Adriana baked Mariana's favorite cookies at least once a month.

Answer

Here is one possible solution:

Marina and **her** twin sister Adriana often fought over small things. Marina frequently took Adriana's clothes without asking and never returned them. Adriana always ate the last piece of dessert, even if Mariana had saved it for **herself**. However, Mariana always made sure Adriana knew about the sales at Adriana's favorite stores, and Adriana baked Mariana's favorite cookies at least once a month.

You could possibly say "Mariana made sure Adriana knew about the sales at her favorite stores," but there is still room for misinterpretation, so saying "Adriana's favorite stores" is more clear.

Antecedent Agreement



***Figure* 20.7.2**

As you write, make sure that you are using the correct pronouns. When a pronoun matches the person and number of its antecedent, we say that it **agrees** with it antecedent. Let's look at a couple of examples:

- I hate it when Zacharias tells me what to do. **He**'s so full of **himself**.
- The Finnegans are shouting again. I swear you could hear **them** from across town!

In the first sentence, *Zacharias* is singular, third person, and masculine. The pronouns *he* and *himself* are also singular, third person, and masculine, so they agree. In the second sentence, *the Finnegans* is plural and third person. The pronoun *them* is also plural and third person.

When you select your pronoun, you also need to ensure you use the correct case of pronoun. Remember we learned about three cases: subject, object, and possessive. The case of your pronoun should match its role in the sentence. For example, if your pronoun is doing an action, it should be a subject:

- **He** runs every morning.

- **I** hate it when **she** does this.

However, when something is being done to your pronoun, it should be an object:

- Birds have always hated **me**.
- My boss wanted to talk to **him**.
- Give **her** the phone and walk away.

Exercise 20.7.2

Replace each bolded word with the correct pronoun:

1. **Hannah** had always loved working with plants.
2. People often lost patience with **Colin**.
3. Justin was unsure how well **Justin** and Terry would together.
4. **Alicia and Katie** made a formidable team.

Answer

1. **She** had always loved working with plants.

- *She* is a subject case, singular, feminine, third-person pronoun.

2. People often lost patience with **him**.

- *Him* is an object case, singular, masculine, third-person pronoun.

3. Justin was unsure how well **he** and Terry would together.

- *He* is a subject case, singular, masculine, third-person pronoun.

4. **They** made a formidable team.

However, things aren't always this straightforward. Let's take a look at some examples where things are a little more confusing.

Person and Number

Some of the trickiest agreements are with indefinite pronouns:

- Every student should do his or her best on this assignment.
- If nobody lost his or her scarf, then where did this come from?

As we learned earlier in this outcome, words like *every* and *nobody* are singular, and demand singular pronouns. Here are some of the words that fall into this category:

anybody	anyone	anything	each	either	every
everybody	everyone	everything	neither	no one	nobody
nothing	one	somebody	someone	something	

Some of these may feel "more singular" than others, but they all are technically singular. Thus, using "he or she" is correct (while *they* is incorrect).

- Anyone going on this hike should plan on being in the canyon for at least seven hours; he or she should prepare accordingly.
- I know somebody has been throwing his or her trash away in my dumpster, and I want him or her to stop.

However, as you may have noticed, the phrase "he or she" (and its other forms) can often make your sentences clunky. When this happens, it may be best to revise your sentences to have plural antecedents.

Exercise **20.7.3**

Here's a paragraph that uses "he or she" liberally:

Every writer will experience writer's block at some point in his or her career. He or she will suddenly be unable to move on in his or her work. A lot of people have written about writer's block, presenting different strategies to "beat the block." However, different methods work for different people. Each writer must find the solutions that work best for him or her.

How would you best revise this paragraph? Type your ideas and then look at the suggested revisions.

Answer

There are a couple of different ways you could revise this paragraph:

Writers will all experience writer's block at some point in their careers. They will suddenly be unable to move on in their work. A lot of people have written about writer's block, presenting different strategies to "beat the block." However, different methods work for different people. Writers must find the solutions that work best for them. As a writer, you will experience writer's block at some point in your career. You will suddenly be unable to move on in your work. A lot of people have written about writer's block, presenting different strategies to "beat the block." However, different methods work for different people. You must find the solutions that work best for you.

Were those revisions what you expected them to be?

Case

You and I versus *You and Me*

Some of the most common pronoun mistakes occur with the decision between "you and I" and "you and me." People will often say things like "You and me should go out for drinks." Or—thinking back on the rule that it should be "you and I"—they will say "Susan assigned the task to both you and I." However, both of these sentences are wrong. Remember that every time you use a pronoun you need to make sure that you're using the correct case.

Let's take a look at the first sentence: "You and me should go out for drinks." Both pronouns are the subject of the sentence, so they should be in subject case: "You and I should go out for drinks."

In the second sentence (Susan assigned the task to both you and I), both pronouns are the object of the sentence, so they should be in object case: "Susan assigned the task to both you and me."

Note

This is the same principle that is behind the *who* versus *whom* debate. *Who* is the subject case of the word, and *whom* is the object case.

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20.8: Self Check: Nouns and Pronouns

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20.9: Try It: Nouns and Pronouns

Nouns

Identify errors in the following as you read the passage:

- pluralization
- count vs. non-count nouns
- common vs. proper nouns
- compound nouns

Explain why each error is incorrect, and explain how to correct the error. The sentences have been numbered to help you organize your comments.

(1) Marie Curie, who conducted pioneering research on radio-activity, was the first woman to win a nobel prize, the first person to win twice, and the only person to win twice in multiple sciencees (she won in physics and chemistries). (2) She was also the first woman to become a professor at the University of Paris.

(3) Curie was born in Warsaw, and she began her practical scientific training there. (4) She studied at Warsaw's clandestine Floating University—a Polish patriotic institution of higher learning that admitted womans. (5) In 1891, aged 24, she began her studys in Paris, where she earned her higher degrees and conducted her subsequent scientific researches.

(6) In 1910—four years after the death of her husband—Curie succeeded in isolating radium; she also defined an international standard for radioactive emissions that was eventually named for her and Pierre: the curie. (7) Her achievementes included the development of the theory of radioactivity (a term that she coined), the creation of techniques to isolate radioactive isotopes, and the discovery of two elements: a polonium and a radium.

Answer

The list below identifies all of the errors in noun treatment. Any incorrect words have been enclosed in quotation marks.

1. The compound noun "radio-activity" should not have a hyphen; it is a closed compound: *radioactivity*. It has been treated correctly as a non-count noun, however. *Nobel Prize* should be capitalized because it is a proper noun. "Sciencees" has been pluralized incorrectly; the correct spelling is *sciences* since the word *science* takes regular pluralization. "Chemistries" is a non-count noun, so it does not have a plural form; the correct word is *chemistry.*
2. There are no errors in this sentence.
3. There are no errors in this sentence.
4. "Womans" has been pluralized incorrectly. The correct spelling is *women* since this word is a mutant plural.
5. "Studys" has been pluralized incorrectly. Since the word *study* ends with a *y* (and there is no vowel before the *y*), the correct plural should end in *–ies*: *studies*. "Researches" is a non-count noun, so it does not have a plural form; the correct word is *research*. (The word *researches* is a real word, but it is a verb, as in "She researches elements.")
6. There are no errors in this sentence. You may want to capitalize the word *curie* in this sentence, since it is named after a person. However, this is not a literal use of the name. As a unit, the word has become a common noun instead of a proper noun.
7. "Achievementes" has been pluralized incorrectly; the correct spelling is *achievements* since the word *achievement* takes regular pluralization. The non-count noun *radioactivity* has been treated correctly; however, the non-count nouns *polonium* and *radium*have not. They should not have articles before them; thus, "the discovery of two new elements: polonium and radium" is correct.

Pronouns

Read the following passage. Identify any errors in pronoun usage, including agreement and clarity. The sentences in the passage have been numbered to help you organize your comments.

(1) Louis Charles Joseph Blériot (1872–1936) was a French aviator, inventor, and engineer. (2) In 1909, he became world famous for making the first flight across the English Channel in a heavier than air aircraft, winning the prize of £1,000 offered by the *Daily*

*Mail*newspaper. (3) When the prize was announced by the paper, it was widely seen as nothing more than a way to gain cheap publicity—no one at the time thought that the feat could actually be accomplished. (4) The Paris newspaper *Le Matin* commented that there was no chance of the prize being won. (5) Blériot would prove them wrong.

(6) At 4:15 am on July 25, 1909, watched by an excited crowd, Blériot made a short trial flight in his's Type XI. (7) On a signal that the sun had risen, he took off at 4:41 for the attempted crossing. (8) Flying at approximately 45 mph and at an altitude of about 250 ft, he set off across the Channel. (9) Not having a compass, Blériot took his course from his escort ship, the *Escopette*, that was heading for Dover, but himself soon overtook the ship. (10) The visibility had deteriorated and he later said, "for more than 10 minutes I was alone, isolated, lost in the midst of the immense sea, and I did not see anything on the horizon or a single ship."

(11) After he landed on a patch of gently sloping land called Northfall Meadow, close to Dover Castle, he was escorted back to the harbor by a *Daily Mail* correspondent, where he was reunited with his wife. (12) The couple, surrounded by cheering people and photographers, was then taken to the Lord Warden Hotel at the foot of the Admiralty Pier: Blériot had become a celebrity.

Answer

In sentence 5 the pronoun *them* has a vague antecedent. Does it refer back to the writers at *Le Matin*? Or does it refer back to the pronoun *no body* (in which case it should be singular). The best solution it to remove the pronoun entirely: "Blériot would prove **everyone** wrong."

In sentence 6, the apostrophe on "his's" is incorrect. The pronoun *his* is inherently possessive—you don't need to add anything. The sentence should say ". . . a short trial flight in **his** type XI."

There are four pronouns used in sentence 9: *his*, *his*, *that*, and *himself*. Both instances of *his* are correct. The relative pronoun, *that*, is set off by commas: this means we should use *which* not *that*. *Himself* is also used incorrectly. This is the start of a new idea, so the subject case should be used here.

- Not having a compass, Blériot took his course from his escort ship, the Escopette, **which** was heading for Dover, but **he** soon overtook the ship.

Sentence 11 is the beginning of a new paragraph. Blériot's name has not been mentioned in this paragraph yet, and it isn't mentioned until the end of the last sentence. While it's assumed that we're still talking about Blériot, it might be good to say his name again.

- After **Blériot** landed on a patch of gently sloping land called Northfall Meadow, close to Dover Castle, he was escorted back to the harbor by a Daily Mail correspondent, where he was reunited with his wife.
- After he landed on a patch of gently sloping land called Northfall Meadow, close to Dover Castle, **Blériot** was escorted back to the harbor by a Daily Mail correspondent, where he was reunited with his wife.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

21: Verbs

Topic hierarchy

21.1: Outcome: Verbs
21.2: Verb Types
21.3: Simple Verb Tenses
21.4: Verb Agreement
21.5: Non-Finite Verbs
21.6: Advanced Verb Tenses
21.7: Self Check: Verbs
21.8: Try It: Verbs

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21.1: Outcome: Verbs

Skills to Develop

- Explain the function and types of verbs
- Explain verb tenses, simple
- Explain verb agreement
- Explain non-finite verbs
- Explain verb tenses, advanced

Explain verb types and their correct conjugation

From 2002 to 2006, The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) ran a media campaign entitled “Verb: It’s What You Do.” This campaign was designed to help teens get and stay active, but it also provided a helpful soundbite for defining verbs: “It’s what you do.”

Verbs are often called the “action” words of language. As we discuss verbs, we will learn that this isn’t always the case, but it is a helpful phrase to remember just what verbs are.



***Figure* 21.1.1**

Traditionally, verbs are divided into three groups: active verbs (these are “action” words), linking verbs, and helping verbs (these two types of verbs are *not* “action” words). In this outcome, we’ll discuss all three of these groups. We’ll also learn how verbs work and how they change to express action in the past, present, and future.

The Learning Activities for this Outcome Include

- Text: Verbs Types
- Text: Simple Verb Tenses
- Text: Verb Agreement
- Text: Non-Finite Verbs
- Text: Other Verb Tenses
- Self Check: Verbs
- Try It: Verbs

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21.2: Verb Types

Active Verbs



***Figure* 21.2.1**

Active verbs are the simplest type of verb: they simply express some sort of action. Watch this video introduction to verbs:



Let's look at the example verbs from the video one more time:

- *contain*
- *roars*
- *runs*
- *sleeps*

All of these verbs are active verbs: they all express an action.

Exercise 21.2.1

Identify the active verbs in the following sentences:

1. Dominic paints the best pictures of meerkats.
2. Sean's hair curled really well today.
3. Elephants roam the savanna.
4. Billy ate an entire loaf of bread in one sitting.

Answer

1. Dominic **paints** the best pictures of meerkats.
2. Sean's hair **curled** really well today.
3. Elephants **roam** the savanna.
4. Billy **ate** an entire loaf of bread in one sitting.

Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

Active verbs can be divided into two categories: transitive and intransitive verbs. A **transitive verb** is a verb that requires one or more objects. This contrasts with intransitive verbs, which do not have objects.

It might be helpful to think of it this way: transitive verbs have to be *done to* something or someone in the sentence. Intransitive verbs only have to be done *by* someone.

Let's look at a few examples of transitive verbs:

- We are going to **need** a bigger boat.
  - The object in this sentence is the phrase "a bigger boat." Consider how incomplete the thought would be if the sentence only said "We are going to need." Despite having a subject and a verb, the sentence is meaningless without the object phrase.
- She hates **filling out** forms.
  - Again, leaving out the object would cripple the meaning of the sentence. We have to know that *forms* is what she hates filling out.
  - *Hates* is also a transitive verb. Without the phrase "filling out forms," the phrase "She hates" doesn't make any sense.
- Sean **hugged** his brother David.
  - You can see the pattern. . . . *Hugged* in this sentence is only useful if we know who Sean hugged. David is the object of the transitive verb.

Intransitive verbs, on the other do not take an object.

- John **sneezed** loudly.
  - Even though there's another word after *sneezed*, the full meaning of the sentence is available with just the subject *John* and the verb *sneezed*: "John sneezed." Therefore, *sneezed* is an intransitive verb. It doesn't have to be done to something or someone.
- My computer completely **died**.
  - Again, *died* here is enough for the sentence to make sense. We know that the computer (the subject) is what died.

This video provides a more in-depth explanation of transitive and intransitive verbs and how they work:



Note

There are some verbs that can act as both transitive and intransitive verbs (the video defined these as bitransitive verbs):

Intransitive	Transitive
The fire has **burned** for hundreds of years.	Miranda **burned** all of her old school papers.
Don’t let the engine stop **running**!	Karl **ran** the best horse track this side of the river.
The vase **broke**.	She **broke** the toothpick.
Does your dog **bite**?	The cat **bit** him.
Water **evaporates** when it’s hot.	Heat **evaporates** water.

Exercise 21.2.2

Read the following sentences. Are the verbs in each transitive or intransitive? How can you tell?

1. Alba fell out of the car.
2. Ian has written over four hundred articles on the subject.
3. Javier sings really well.
4. Marton wondered about a lot of things.
5. Cate gave great gifts.

Answer

1. Alba **fell** out of the car. *Fell* is intransitive; it doesn’t require an object.
2. Ian **has written** over four hundred articles on the subject. *Has written* is transitive; it has an object: *articles*.
3. Javier **sings** really well. *Sings* is intransitive; it doesn’t require an object.
   - Note that *sings* can also be a transitive verb. In the sentence “Lorena sang three songs in the show last night,” the verb *sing* has the object *songs*.
4. Marton **wondered** about a lot of things. *Wondered* is intransitive; it doesn’t require an object.
5. Cate **gave** great gifts. *Gave* is transitive; it has an object: *gifts*.

Linking Verbs

A linking verb is a verb that links a subject to the rest of the sentence. There isn’t any “real” action happening in the sentence. Sentences with linking verbs become similar to math equations. The verb acts as an equal sign between the items it links.



As the video establishes, *to be* verbs are the most common linking verbs (*is*, *was*, *were*, etc.). David and the bear establish that there are other linking verbs as well. Here are some illustrations of other common linking verbs:

- Over the past five days, Charles **has become** a new man.

- It's easy to reimagine this sentence as "Over the past five days, Charles = a new man."
- Since the oil spill, the beach **has smelled** bad.
  - Similarly, one could also read this as "Since the oil spill, the beach = smelled bad."
- That word processing program **seems** adequate for our needs.
  - Here, the linking verb is slightly more nuanced than an equals sign, though the sentence construction overall is similar. (This is why we write in words, rather than math symbols, after all!)
- This calculus problem **looks** difficult.
- With every step Jake took, he could **feel** the weight on his shoulders growing.

Exercise 21.2.3

Read each sentence and determine whether its verb is a linking verb or not:

1. Terry smelled his yogurt to see if it was still good.
2. Rosa looks intimidating.
3. Amy looked over at the clock to check the time.
4. Gina smelled like chrysanthemums and mystery.
5. Raymond is a fantastic boss.

Answer

1. Terry **smelled** his yogurt to see if it was still good. *Smelled* is an active verb in this sentence.
2. Rosa **looks** intimidating. *Looks* is a linking verb in this sentence.
3. Amy **looked** over at the clock to check the time. *Looked* is an active verb in this sentence.
4. Gina **smelled** like chrysanthemums and mystery. *Smelled* is a linking verb in this sentence.
5. Raymond **is** a fantastic boss. *Is* is a linking verb in this sentence.

Helping Verbs



***Figure* 21.2.2**

Helping verbs (sometimes called *auxiliary verbs*) are, as the name suggests, verbs that help another verb. They provide support and add additional meaning. Here are some examples of helping verbs in sentences:

- Mariah **is** looking for her keys still.
- Kai **had** checked the weather three times already, but he looked one more time to see if the forecast **had**changed.
- What ever happens, **do** *not* let the water level drop below this line.

As you just saw, helping verbs are usually pretty short, and they include things like *is*, *had*, and *do* (we'll look at a more complete list later). Let's look at some more examples to examine exactly what these verbs do. Take a look at the sentence "I have finished my dinner." Here, the main verb is *finish*, and the helping verb *have* helps to express tense. Let's look at two more examples:

- By 1967, about 500 U.S. citizens **had** received heart transplants.

- While *received* could function on its own as a complete thought here, the helping verb *had* emphasizes the distance in time of the date in the opening phrase.

- **Do** you want tea?
  - *Do* is a helping verb accompanying the main verb *want*, used here to form a question.
- Researchers **are** finding that propranolol is effective in the treatment of heartbeat irregularities.
  - The helping verb *are* indicates the present tense, and adds a sense of continuity to the verb *finding*.
- He **has** given his all.
  - *Has* is a helping verb used in expressing the tense of *given*.

The following table provides a short list of some verbs that can function as helping verbs, along with examples of the way they function. **A full list of helping verbs can be found here.**

Helping Verb	Function	Examples
be	Express tense (the tense depends on the conjugation of *to be*; *is* is present, *was* is past, *will be* is future, etc.) and a sense of continuity.	He **is** sleeping.
	Express tense (the tense depends on the conjugation of *to be*; *are* is present, *were* is past, *will be* is future, etc.) and indicate the passive voice	They **were** seen.
can	Express ability	I **can** swim. Such things **can** help.
could	Express possibility	That **could** help.
do	Express negation (requires the word *not*)	You **do** not understand.
	Ask a question	**Do** you want to go?
have	Express tense (the tense depends on the conjugation of *to be*; *are* is present, *were* is past, *will be* is future, etc.) and indicate a sense of completion	They **have** understood.
might	Express possibility	We **might** give it a try.
must	Express confidence in a fact	It **must** have rained.
should	Express a request	You **should** listen.
	Express likelihood	That **should** help.
will	Express future tense	We **will** eat pie. The sun **will** rise tomorrow at 6:03.
would	Express future likelihood	Nothing **would** accomplish that.

The negative forms of these words (*can't*, *don't*, *won't*, etc.) are also helping verbs.

Note

The helping verbs *to be*, *to have*, and *would* are used to indicate tense. We'll discuss exactly how they function in more depth in **Text: Complex Verb Tenses**.

Exercise **21.2.4**

Identify the helping verbs in the sentences below. What main verb to they accompany and what role do they play in each sentence?

1. Damian can't work tonight. Do you want to take his shift?
2. Harper couldn't afford to give up.
3. Tim was exercising when Cassie finally found him. He had completed three circuits of his work out.

Answer

1. Damian **can't** work tonight. **Do** you want to take his shift?

- *Can't* accompanies *work*. In this sentence it is used to express ability (in this case, the *not* turns it into a lack of ability).
- *Do* accompanies *want*. In this sentence, it is used to make a question.

2. Harper **couldn't** afford to give up.

- *Couldn't* helps *afford*. In this sentence, it indicates how possible the verb *afford* is.

3. Tim **was** exercising when Cassie finally found him. He **had** completed three circuits of his work out.

- *Was* accompanies *exercising*. In this sentence, it is used to indicate the past tense, along with a sense of continuity.
- *Had* accompanies *completed.* In this sentence, it is used to indicate the past tense, along with a sense of completion.

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21.3: Simple Verb Tenses

What is tense? There are three standard tenses in English: past, present and future. All three of these tenses have simple and more complex forms. For now we'll just focus on the simple present (things happening now), the simple past (things that happened before), and the simple future (things that will happen later).

- **Simple Present:** works
- **Simple Past:** worked
- **Simple Future:** will work

Tenses

Present Tense

Watch this quick introduction to the present tense:



Past Tense

Watch this quick introduction to the past tense:



Future Tense

Watch this quick introduction to the future tense:



Note

You may have noticed that in the present tense video David talked about “things that are happening right now” and that he mentioned there were other ways to create the past and future tense. We’ll discuss these in further depth in **Text: Advanced Verb Tenses**.

Exercise 21.3.1

Identify the tense of the following sentences. You can type your answers in the text field below:

1. Alejandra directed a play.
2. Lena will show me how to use a microscope.
3. Isaac eats a lot of steaks.

Answer

1. *Directed* is in the past tense; the word ends with an *–ed*.
2. *Will show* is in the present tense; the first part of the two-word verb is *will*.
3. *Eats* is in the present tense; the only ending it has is indicating that Isaac is a third-person subject of the sentence.

Conjugation

Most verbs will follow the pattern that we just learned in the previous videos:

Person	Past	Present	Future
I	verb + *ed*	verb	will verb
We	verb + *ed*	verb	will verb
You	verb + *ed*	verb	will verb
He, She, It	verb + *ed*	verb + *s* (or *es*)	will verb
They	verb + *ed*	verb	will verb

To Walk

Let’s look at the verb *to walk* for an example:

Person	Past	Present	Future
I	walked	walk	will walk
We	walked	walk	will walk
You	walked	walk	will walk
He, She, It	walked	walks	will walk
They	walked	walk	will walk

Irregular Verbs

There are a lot of irregular verbs. Unfortunately, there's a lot of memorization involved in keeping them straight. This video shows a few of the irregular verbs you'll have to use the most often (*to be*, *to have*, *to do*, and *to say*):



Here's a list of several irregular past tense verbs.

Exercise 21.3.2

Change the tense of each sentence as directed below. You can type your answers in the text field below:

1. Make this sentence present tense: Ysabella was really good at getting others to open up.
2. Make this sentence past tense: Rodrigo will have a B+ in his math class.
3. Make this sentence future tense: Amanda said she didn't want to go to the party.
4. Make this sentence past tense: Jordan does five hundred sit-ups.
5. Make this sentence present tense: Marcela ran a car wash down the street from my house.

Answer

1. Ysabella **is** really good at getting others to open up.
2. Rodrigo **had** a B+ in his math class.
3. Amanda **will say** she **doesn't** want to go to the party.
   - Notice that when the tense of the first verb changed, the tense of the second verb did as well.
4. Jordan **did** five hundred sit-ups.
5. Marcela **runs** a car wash down the street from my house.

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21.4: Verb Agreement

The basic idea behind sentence agreement is pretty simple: all the parts of your sentence should match (or **agree**). Verbs need to agree with their subjects in **number** (singular or plural) and in **person** (first, second, or third). In order to check agreement, you simply need to find the verb and ask who or what is doing the action of that verb.



***Figure* 21.4.1**

Person

Agreement based on grammatical person (first, second, or third person) is found mostly between verb and subject. For example, you can say “I am” or “he is,” but not “I is” or “he am.” This is because the grammar of the language requires that the verb and its subject agree in person. The pronouns *I* and *he* are first and third person respectively, as are the verb forms *am* and *is*. The verb form must be selected so that it has the same person as the subject.

Number

Agreement based on grammatical number can occur between verb and subject, as in the case of grammatical person discussed above. In fact the two categories are often conflated within verb conjugation patterns: there are specific verb forms for first person singular, second person plural and so on. Some examples:

- **I** really **am** (1st pers. singular) vs. **We** really **are** (1st pers. plural)
- The **boy sings** (3rd pers. singular) vs. The **boys sing** (3rd pers. plural)

More Examples

Compound subjects are plural, and their verbs should agree. Look at the following sentence for an example:

A pencil, a backpack, and a notebook **were** issued to each student.

Verbs will never agree with nouns that are in prepositional phrases. To make verbs agree with their subjects, follow this example:

The direction of the three plays **is** the topic of my talk.

The subject of “my talk” is *direction*, not *plays*, so the verb should be singular.

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. For example:

Beside the house **stand** sheds filled with tools.

The subject is *sheds*; it is plural, so the verb must be *stand*.

Agreement

All regular verbs (and nearly all irregular ones) in English agree in the third-person singular of the present indicative by adding a suffix of either *-s* or *-es*.

Look at the present tense of *to love*, for example:

Person	Number	
	Singular	Plural
First	*I love*	*we love*
Second	*you love*	*you love*
Third	*he/she/it loves*	*they love*

The highly irregular verb *to be* is the only verb with more agreement than this in the present tense:

Person	Number	
	Singular	Plural
First	*I am*	*we are*
Second	*you are*	*you are*
Third	*he/she/it is*	*they are*

Exercise 21.4.1

Choose the correct verb to make the sentences agree:

1. Ann (walk / walks) really slowly.
2. You (is / am / are) dating Tom?
3. Donna and April (get / gets) along well.
4. Chris and Ben (is / am / are) the best duo this company has ever seen.

Answer

1. Ann **walks** really slowly.

- *Ann* is a singular, third-person subject.

2. You **are** dating Tom?

- *You* is a singular, second-person subject.

3. Donna and April **get** along well.

- *Donna and April* is a plural, third-person subject.

4. Chris and Ben **are** the best duo this company has ever seen.

- *Chris and Ben* is a plural, third-person subject.

Consistency

One of the most common mistakes in writing is a lack of tense consistency. Writers often start a sentence in one tense but ended up in another. Look back at that sentence. Do you see the error? The first verb *start* is in the present tense, but *ended* is in the past tense. The correct version of the sentence would be “Writers often start a sentence in one tense but end up in another.”

These mistakes often occur when writers change their minds halfway through writing the sentence, or when they come back and make changes but only end up changing half the sentence. It is very important to maintain a consistent tense, not just in a sentence but across paragraphs and pages. Decide if something happened, is happening, or will happen and then stick with that choice.

Read through the following paragraphs. Can you spot the errors in tense? Type your corrected passage in the text frame below:



***Figure* 21.4.1**

If you want to pick up a new outdoor activity, hiking is a great option to consider. It's a sport that is suited for a beginner or an expert—it just depended on the difficulty hikes you choose. However, even the earliest beginners can complete difficult hikes if they pace themselves and were physically fit.

Not only is hiking an easy activity to pick up, it also will have some great payoffs. As you walked through canyons and climbed up mountains, you can see things that you wouldn't otherwise. The views are breathtaking, and you will get a great opportunity to meditate on the world and your role in it. The summit of a mountain is unlike any other place in the world.

Answer

As we mentioned earlier, you want to make sure your whole passage is consistent in its tense. You may have noticed that the most of the verbs in this passage are in present tense; we've edited the passage be consistently in the present tense. All edited verbs have been bolded:

If you want to pick up a new outdoor activity, hiking is a great option to consider. (1) It's a sport that can be suited for a beginner or an expert—it just **depends** on the difficulty hikes you choose. However, even the earliest beginners can complete difficult hikes (2) if they pace themselves and **are** physically fit.

(3) Not only is hiking an easy activity to pick up, it also **has** some great payoffs. (4) As you **walk** through canyons and **climb** up mountains, you can see things that you wouldn't otherwise. (5) The views are breathtaking, and you **get** a great opportunity to meditate on the world and your role in it. The summit of a mountain is unlike any other place in the world.

Here's each original sentence, along with an explanation for the changes:

1. It's a sport that is suited for a beginner or an expert—it just **depended** on the difficulty hikes you choose.

- *depended* should be the same tense as *is*; it just **depends** on the difficulty

2. if they pace themselves and **were** physically fit.

- *were* should be the same tense as *pace*; if they pace themselves and **are** physically fit.

3. Not only is hiking an easy activity to pick up, it also **will have** some great payoffs.

- *will have* should be the same tense as *is*; it also **has** some great pay offs

4. As you **walked** through canyons and **climbed** up mountains

- *walked* and *climbed* are both past tense, but this doesn't match the tense of the passage as a whole. They should both be changed to present tense: As you **walk** through canyons and **climb** up mountains.

5. The views are breathtaking, and you **will get** a great opportunity to meditate on the world and your role in it.

- *will get* should be the same tense as *are*; you **get** a great opportunity

Exercise 21.4.1

Read the following sentences and identify any errors in verb tense. Type your corrections in the text frame below:

1. Whenever Maudeline goes to the grocery store, she had made a list and stick to it.
2. This experiment turned out to be much more complicated than Felipe thought it would be. It ended up being a procedure that was seventeen steps long, instead of the original eight that he had planned.
3. I applied to some of the most prestigious medical schools. I hope the essays I write get me in!

Answer

1. *had made* and *stick* do not match the present tense that was set up by *goes*. The sentence should read, "Whenever Maudeline goes to the store, she **makes** a list and **sticks** to it."
2. This sentence is correct.
3. *applied* and *write* do not match tense. If you've already applied, hopefully you've already written your essays as well! The sentences should read, "I applied to some of the most prestigious medical schools. I hope the essays I **wrote** get me in!"

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21.5: Non-Finite Verbs

Just when we thought we had verbs figured out, we're brought face-to-face with a new animal: the non-finite verbs. These words *look*similar to verbs we've already been talking about, but they *act* quite different from those other verbs.

By definition, a non-finite verb cannot serve as the root of an independent clause. In practical terms, this means that they don't serve as the action of a sentence. They also don't have a tense. While the sentence around them may be past, present, or future tense, the non-finite verbs themselves are neutral. There are three types of non-finite verbs: gerunds, participles, and infinitives.

Gerunds

Gerunds all end in *-ing*: *skiing*, *reading*, *dancing*, *singing*, etc. Gerunds **act like nouns** and can serve as subjects or objects of sentences. Let's take a look at a few examples:

- **Swimming** is fun.
- I like **swimming**.
- I never gave **swimming** all that much effort.
- Do you fancy **going out**?

Gerunds can be created using helping verbs as well:

- **Being deceived** can make someone feel angry.
- **Having read the book once before** makes me more prepared.

Often the "doer" of the gerund is clearly signaled:

- We enjoyed **singing** yesterday (we ourselves sang)
- Tomás likes **eating** apricots (Tomás himself eats apricots)

However, sometimes the "doer" must be overtly specified, typically in a position immediately before the non-finite verb:

- We enjoyed their **singing.**
- We were delighted at Bianca **being** awarded the prize.

Exercise 21.5.1

Identify the gerunds and their roles in the following sentences:

1. Sam was really bad at gardening.
2. Studying is one of Jazz's favorite things to do.
3. Danny just wanted to go skateboarding.

Answer

1. Sam was really bad at **gardening**.
   - *Gardening* is the object of the prepositional phrase "bad at gardening."
2. **Studying** is one of Jazz's favorite things to do.
   - *Studying* is the subject of the sentence.
3. Danny just wanted to go **skateboarding**.
   - *Skateboarding* is the direct object of the sentence.

Participles

A **participle** is a form of a verb that is used in a sentence to modify a noun, noun phrase, verb, or verb phrase, and then plays a role similar to an adjective or adverb. It is one of the types of nonfinite verb forms.

The two types of participle in English are traditionally called the **present participle** (forms such as *writing*, *singing* and *raising*) and the **past participle** (forms such as *written*, *sung* and *raised*).

The Present Participle

Even though they look exactly the same, gerunds and present participles do different things. As we just learned, the gerund acts as a noun: e.g., "I like *sleeping*"; "*Sleeping* is not allowed." Present participles, on the other hand, act similarly to an adjective or adverb: e.g., "The *sleeping* girl over there is my sister"; "*Breathing* heavily, she finished the race in first place."

The present participle, or participial phrases (clauses) formed from it, are used as follows:

- as an adjective phrase modifying a noun phrase: *The man **sitting** over there is my uncle.*
- adverbially, the subject being understood to be the same as that of the main clause: ***Looking** at the plans, I gradually came to see where the problem lay. He shot the man, **killing** him.*
- more generally as a clause or sentence modifier: *Broadly **speaking**, the project was successful.*

The present participle can also be used with the helping verb *to be* to form a type of present tense: *Marta was **sleeping**.* (We'll discuss this further in **Text: Advanced Verb Tenses**.) This is something we learned a little bit about in helping verbs and tense.

The Past Participle

Past participles often look very similar to the simple past tense of a verb: *finished, danced*, etc. However, some verbs have different forms. Reference lists will be your best help in finding the correct past participle. **Here is one such list of participles**. Here's a short list of some of the most common irregular past participles you'll use:

Verb	Simple Past	Past Participle
to be	was/were	been
to become	became	become
to come	came	come
to do	did	done
to give	gave	given
to go	went	gone
to know	knew	know
to run	ran	run
to see	saw	seen
to speak	spoke	spoken
to take	took	taken
to write	wrote	written

Past participles are used in a couple of different ways:

- as an adjective phrase: *The chicken **eaten** by the children was contaminated.*
- adverbially: ***Seen** from this perspective, the problem presents no easy solution.*
- in a nominative absolute construction, with a subject: *The task **finished**, we returned home.*

The past participle can also be used with the helping verb *to have* to form a type of past tense: *The chicken has **eaten**.* This is something we learned about in helping verbs and tense.

Exercise 21.5.2

Identify the participles in the following sentences, as well as the functions they perform:

1. Tucker had always wanted a pet dog.
2. Rayssa was practicing her flute when everything suddenly went wrong.

3. Having been born in the 1990s, Amber often found herself surrounded by nostalgia.

Answer

1. The past participle is *wanted*. In this case, it is used alongside the helping verb *had* to form the past tense.
2. *Practicing* is the present participle. It, along with the helping verb *was*, create a sense of continuity or process.
3. *Having been born in the 1990s* is a present participle phrase. It is used adverbially, and the subject is the same as the subject of the main phrase: Amber. Additionally, *been* is the past participle. It is used alongside the helping verb *having*to give a sense of the past tense.

Note

The past participle can also be used to form the passive voice: *The chicken was **eaten***. We'll discuss the passive voice more in **Text: Active and Passive Voice**.

Infinitives

> *To be or not to be, that is the question.*
>
> *—Hamlet*

The infinitive is the basic dictionary form of a verb, usually preceded by *to* (when it's not, it's called the **bare infinitive**, which we'll discuss more later). Thus *to go* is an infinitive. There are several different uses of the infinitive. They can be used alongside verbs, as a noun phrase, as a modifier, or in a question.

With Other Verbs

The *to*-infinitive is used with other verbs (we'll discuss exceptions when we talk about the bare infinitive):

- I aim **to convince** him of our plan's ingenuity.
- You already know that he'll fail **to complete** the task.

You can also use multiple infinitives in a single sentence: "Today, I plan **to run** three miles, **to clean** my room, and **to update** my budget." All three of these infinitives follow the verb *plan*. Other verbs that often come before infinitives include *want*, *convince*, *try*, *able*, and *like*.

As a Noun Phrase

The infinitive can also be used to express an action in an abstract, general way: "**To err** is human"; "**To know** me is **to love me**." No one in particular is completing these actions. In these sentences, the infinitives act as the subjects.

Infinitives can also serve as the object of a sentence. One common construction involves a dummy subject (*it*): "It was nice **to meet**you."

As a Modifier

Infinitives can be used as an adjective (e.g., "A request **to see** someone" or "The man **to save** us") or as an adverb (e.g., "Keen **to get**on," "Nice **to listen** to," or "In order **to win**").

In Questions

Infinitives can be used in elliptical questions as well, as in "I don't know where **to go**."

Note

The infinitive is also the usual dictionary form or citation form of a verb. The form listed in dictionaries is the bare infinitive, although the *to*-infinitive is often used in referring to verbs or in defining other verbs: "The word *amble* means 'to walk slowly'"; "How do we conjugate the verb *to go*?"

Certain helping verbs do not have infinitives, such *will*, *can*, and *may*.

Split Infinitives?

One of the biggest controversies among grammarians and style writers has been the appropriateness of separating the two words of the *to*-infinitive as in "to *boldly* go." Despite what a lot of people have declared over the years, there is absolutely nothing wrong with this construction. It is 100 percent grammatically sound.

Note

Part of the reason so many authorities have been against this construction is likely the fact that in languages such as Latin, the infinitive is a single word, and cannot be split. However, in English the infinitive (or at least the *to*-infinitive) is two words, and a split infinitive is a perfectly natural construction.

Exercise 21.5.3

Identify the infinitives in the following sentences, as well as their functions:

1. Paulina is the girl to beat.
2. It was really nice to hear from you again.
3. It looks like Dash wants to fail.

Answer

1. The infinitive *to beat* is used in this instance. It acts as an adjective, describing what kind of girl Paulina is.
2. The infinitive *hear* is used in this instance. It acts as the object of the sentence.
3. The infinitive *to fail is used in this instance.* It works along with the verb *want*.

The Bare Infinitive

As we mentioned previously, the infinitive can sometimes occur without the word *to*. The form without *to* is called the **bare infinitive** (the form with *to* is called the ***to*-infinitive**). In the following sentences both *sit* and *to sit* would each be considered an infinitive:

- I want **to sit** on the other chair.
- I can **sit** here all day.

Infinitives have a variety of uses in English. Certain contexts call for the *to*-infinitive form, and certain contexts call for the bare infinitive; they are not normally interchangeable, except in occasional instances like after the verb *help*, where either can be used.

As we mentioned earlier, some verbs require the bare infinitive instead of the *to*-infinitive:

- The helping verb *do*
  - Does she **dance**?
  - Zi doesn't **sing**.
- Helping verbs that express tense, possibility, or ability like *will*, *can*, *could*, *should*, *would*, and *might*
  - The bears will **eat** you if they catch you.
  - Lucas and Gerardo might **go** to the dance.
  - You should **give** it a try.
- Verbs of perception, permission, or causation, such as *see*, *watch*, *hear*, *make*, *let*, *and have* (after a direct object)
  - Look at Caroline **go**!
  - You can't make me **talk**.
  - It's so hard to let someone else **finish** my work.

The bare infinitive can be used as the object in such sentences like "What you should do is **make** a list." It can also be used after the word *why* to ask a question: "Why **reveal** it?"

The bare infinitive can be tricky, because it often looks exactly like the present tense of a verb. Look at the following sentences for an example:

- You **lose** things so often.
- You can **lose** things at the drop of a hat.

In both of these sentences, we have the word *lose*, but in the first sentence it's a present tense verb, while in the second it's a bare infinitive. So how can you tell which is which? The easiest way is to try changing the subject of the sentence and seeing if the verb should change:

- She **loses** things so often.
- She can **lose** things at the drop of a hat.

Exercise 21.5.4

Identify the infinitives in the following sentences, as well as their functions:

1. What you should do is stop talking for a moment and listen.
2. Oh, that must be Lebo at the door.
3. Why walk when I could run?

Answer

1. What you should do is **stop** talking for a moment and **listen**.

- There are two infinitives in this sentence: *stop* and *listen.* They are both the objects of the sentence. This sentence also includes the gerund *talking*, which the object in the phrase "stop talking."

2. Oh, that must **be** Lebo at the door.

- The infinitive *be* works with the helping verb *must.*

3. Why **walk** when I could **run**?

- There are two infinitives in this sentence: *walk* and *run*. *Walk* follows the word *why,* and it is asking a question. *Run* works with the helping verb *could*.

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21.6: Advanced Verb Tenses

Now we've mastered the different pieces that we need to understand in order to discuss some more advanced tenses. These advanced tenses were mentioned briefly in **Text: Verb Types**, and they came up again in **Text: Non-Finite Verbs**. These forms are created with different forms of *to be* and *to have*:

- He **had eaten** everything by the time we got there.
- She **is waiting** for us to get there!
- He **will have broken** it by next Thursday, you can be sure.
- She **was singing** for eight hours.



***Figure* 21.6.1**

When you combine a form of *to be* with the present participle, you create a **continuous tense;** these tenses indicate a sense of continuity. The subject of the sentence was (or is, or will be) doing that thing for awhile.

- **Present:** is working
- **Past:** was working
- **Future:** will be working (You can also say "is going to be working.")

Exercise 21.6.1

Convert these sentences from simple tenses to continuous tenses:

1. Ivone wrote a collection of short stories entitled *Vidas Vividas*.
2. As a pilot, Sara will fly a lot of cross-country flights.
3. Zachi reads all of the latest articles on archeology.

Answer

1. The past continuous is *was* + present participle, so the correct sentence is

- Ivone **was writing** a collection of short stories entitled *Vidas Vividas*.

2. The future continuous is either *will be* + present participle or *is going to be* + present participle:

- As a pilot, Sara **will be flying** a lot of cross-country flights.
- As a pilot, Sara **is going to be flying** a lot of cross-country flights.

3. The present continuous is *is* + present participle, so the correct sentence is:

- Zachi **is reading** all of the latest articles on archeology.

When you combine a form of *to have* with the past participle of a verb, you create a **perfect tense**; these tenses indicate a sense of completion. This thing had been done for a while (or has been, or will have been).

- **Present:** has worked
- **Past:** had worked
- **Future:** will have worked

Exercise 21.6.2

Convert these sentences from simple tenses to perfect tenses:

1. Ivone wrote a collection of short stories entitled *Vidas Vividas*.
2. As a pilot, Sara will fly a lot of cross-country flights.
3. Zachi reads all of the latest articles on archeology.

Answer

1. The past perfect is *had* + past participle:

- Ivone **had written** a collection of short stories entitled *Vidas Vividas*.

2. The future perfect is *will have* + past participle:

- As a pilot, Sara **will have flown** a lot of cross-country flights.

3. The present perfect is *has* + past participle:

- Zachi **has read** all of the latest articles on archeology.

You can also use these together. *To have* must always appear first, followed by the past participle *been*. The present participle of any verb can then follow. These **perfect continuous tenses** indicate that the verb started in the past, and is still continuing:

- **Present:** has been working
- **Past:** had been working
- **Future:** will have been working

Exercise 21.6.3

Convert these sentences from simple tenses to perfect continuous tenses:

1. Ivone wrote a collection of short stories entitled *Vidas Vividas*.
2. As a pilot, Sara will fly a lot of cross-country flights.
3. Zachi reads all of the latest articles on archeology.

Answer

1. The past perfect continuous is *had been* + present participle:

- Ivone **had been writing** a collection of short stories entitled *Vidas Vividas*.

2. The future perfect continuous is *will have been* + present participle:

- As a pilot, Sara **will have been flying** a lot of cross-country flights.

3. The present perfect continuous is *has been* + present participle:

- Zachi **has been reading** all of the latest articles on archeology.

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21.7: Self Check: Verbs

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21.8: Try It: Verbs

Verb Tense and Agreement

As you read the following passage, identify any errors in tense or agreement. Explain how to fix these errors. The sentence have been numbered to aid in your comments.

(1) Elizabeth Cochran Seaman (1864–1922), known by her pen name Nellie Bly, was an American journalist. (2) She were also a writer, an industrialist, an inventor, and a charity worker. (3) At that time, women in journalism customarily used pen names. (4) The editor chosen "Nellie Bly," adopted from the title character in the popular song *Nelly Bly* by Stephen Foster. (5) Bly originally intended that her pseudonym be "Nelly Bly," but her editor wrote "Nellie" by mistake and the error stuck.

(6) Bly best is known for two accomplishments: her record-breaking trip around the world in 72 days, in emulation of Jules Verne's fictional character Phileas Fogg, and her exposé in which she faked insanity to study a mental institution from within. (7) She is a pioneer in several fields, and she launches a new kind of investigative journalism.

Answer

In sentence 2, the linking verb *were* is used instead of *was*. Despite the fact that there are many objects in this sentence (a writer, an industrialist, an inventor, and a charity worker), the correct verb here is *was*. The verb should agree with the subject of the sentence, not the object.

In sentence 4, the past participle *chosen* is used where the simple past tense should be used: "The editor **chose** . . ."

Sentence 6 has an issue with word order. Even though the helping verb *is* works with the past participle *known* in this sentence, it is okay to divide the words with a modifier. The sentence should read: "Bly is best know for two accomplishments."

The second paragraph has some errors in tense. Now that we've corrected it, sentence 6 states that "Bly is best known for two accomplishments," and sentence 7 says "She is a pioneer . . . , and she launches." However, sentence 7 should be in the past tense: "She **was** a pioneer . . . , and she **launched**." Sentence 6 is a passive sentence: Bly is not doing any action in it. Since Bly passed away in 1922, all her actions are in the past. Thus, sentence 7, which details things she did, should be in the past.

Non-Finite Verbs

Read the following passage and identify the different types of non-finite verbs within, as well as the roles they perform. Type your answers in the text frame below. The sentence have been numbered to aid in your comments.



***Figure* 21.8.1**

(1) The Australian magpie is a medium-size black and white bird native to Australia. (2) Feeding magpies is a common practice among households around the country, and there generally is a peaceful co-existence. (3) However, in the spring a small minority of breeding magpies (almost always males) become aggressive and swoop and attack passersby.

(4) The birds are known to attack pedestrians at around 160 feet from their nest, and cyclists at around 330 feet. (5) Being unexpectedly swooped while cycling can result in loss of control of the bicycle, which may cause injury.

(6) If it is necessary to walk near a nest, wearing a broad-brimmed hat or using an umbrella will deter attacking birds, but beanies and bicycle helmets are of little value because birds attack the sides of the head and neck. (7) Cyclists can deter attack by attaching a long pole with a flag to a bike. (8) Using cable ties on helmets has become common as well, and it appears to be an effective deterrent.

Answer

Gerunds appear in the *–ing* form of a verb. They behave like nouns.

- “Feeding magpies” is the subject of sentence 2; this phrase contains the gerund *feeding*.
- “Being unexpectedly swooped” is the subject of sentence 5; this phrase contains the gerund *being*. “while cycling” is a prepositional phrase. The gerund *cycling* is the object of this phrase.
- Sentence 6 has two subjects: “wearing a broad-brimmed hat” and “using an umbrella.” Each of these subject has a gerund: *wearing* and *using*.
- In sentence 7, “by attaching a long pole with a flag to a bike” is a prepositional phrase. The gerund *attaching* is the object of this phrase.
- “Using cable ties on helmets” is the subject of sentence 8; this phrase contains the gerund *using*.

Present participles also appear as the *–ing* form of a verb. However, they typically act as modifiers rather than nouns. Past participles take unique past participle forms (many of them are identical to the simple past tense). They act as modifiers as well.

- In sentence 3, *breeding* is a present participle serving as an adjective. It modifies the noun *magpies*.
- In sentence 4, *known* is a past participle. It works with the verb *are* to form the passive voice.
- In sentence 5, *swooped* is a past participle. It works with the gerund *being* as a part of the subject of the sentence: “Being unexpectedly swooped while cycling.” *Being swooped* is a passive voice construction, so it requires the past participle *swooped*.
- In sentence 6, *attacking* is a present participle serving as an adjective. It modifies the noun *birds*.

Infinitives take two different forms: the dictionary form of the verb, with or without *to*.

- In sentence 4, *to attack* is the *to*-infinitive. It works with the verb phrase “are generally known.”
- In sentence 5, *result* is the bare-infinitive. It works with the verb *can*. *Can* indicates a possibility in this sentence.
- In sentence 5, *cause* is the bare-infinitive. It works with the verb *may*. *May* indicates a possibility in this sentence.
- In sentence 6, *to walk* is the *to*-infinitve. It is the object of this sentence; this sentence follows the common construction with the dummy subject *it*. *Deter* is the bare-infinitive. It works with the verb *will*. *Will* indicates certainty in this sentence.
- In sentence 7, *deter* is the bare-infinitive. It works with the verb *can*. *Can* indicates a possibility in this sentence. In sentence 8, *to be* is the *to*-infinitive. It works with the verb *appears*.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

22: Other Parts of Speech

22.1: Outcome: Other Parts of Speech
22.2: Adjectives
22.3: Adverbs
22.4: Comparing Adjectives and Adverbs
22.5: Conjunctions
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22.1: Outcome: Other Parts of Speech

Skills to Develop

- Explain the use of adjectives
- Explain the use of adverbs
- Explain the use of conjunctions
- Explain the use of prepositions
- Explain the use of articles

Explain the function of other parts of speech, including adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions, and articles



***Figure* 22.1.1**

Now that we've learned about the most common parts of speech (nouns, pronouns, and verbs), we're ready to move onto the other parts of speech.

First we have adjectives and adverbs, which modify other words: they change our understanding of things. For example, compare the phrase "the bear" to "the red bear" or the phrase "run" to "run slowly." In both of these cases, the adjective (red) or adverb (slowly) changes how we understand the phrase. When you first read the word bear, you probably didn't imagine a red bear. When you saw the word run you probably didn't think of it as something done slowly.

We also have the little connecting word categories: conjunctions, prepositions, and articles. These small words may not seem as important as verbs, nouns, and adjectives, but they are the backbone of English: these are the words that give our language structure.

The Learning Activities for this Outcome Include

- Text: Adjectives
- Text: Adverbs
- Text: Comparing Adjectives and Adverbs
- Text: Conjunctions
- Text: Prepositions
- Text: Articles
- Self Check: Other Parts of Speech
- Try It: Other Parts of Speech

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22.2: Adjectives

Adjectives



***Figure* 22.2.1**

An adjective modifies a noun; that is, it provides more detail about a noun. This can be anything from color to size to temperature to personality. Adjectives usually occur just before the nouns they modify. In the following examples, adjectives are in bold, while the nouns they modify are in italics (the **big** *bear*):

- The generator is used to convert **mechanical** *energy* into **electrical** *energy*.
- The **steel** *pipes* contain a **protective sacrificial** *anode* and are surrounded by **packing** *material*.

Adjectives can also follow a linking verb. In these instances, adjectives can modify pronouns as well. In the following examples, adjectives are still bold, while the linking verb is in italics this time (the sun *is* **yellow**):

- The schoolhouse *was* **red**.
- I *looked* **good** today.
- She *was* **funny**.

Numbers can also be adjectives in some cases. When you say "Seven is my lucky number," *seven* is a noun, but when you say "There are seven cats in this painting," *seven* is an adjective because it is modifying the noun *cats*.

Exercise 22.2.1

Identify the adjectives in the following sentences:

1. Of the four seasons, fall is my favorite; I love the red leaves, the cool weather, and the brisk wind.
2. My roommate, on the other hand, thinks that summer is the best season.
3. I think she is crazy.
4. Fall is better than summer. Summer is too hot and muggy to be enjoyable.

Answer

The adjectives have been bolded in the sentences below:

1. Of the **four** seasons, fall is my **favorite**; I love the **red** leaves, the **cool** weather, and the **brisk** wind.
2. My roommate, on the other hand, thinks that summer is the **best** season.
3. I think she is **crazy**.
4. Fall is **better** than summer. Summer is too **hot** and **muggy** to be **enjoyable**. (All of these adjectives follow linking verbs.)

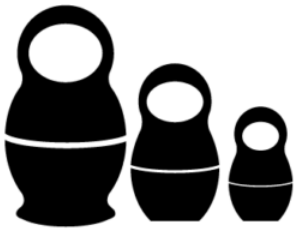


***Figure* 22.2.2**

Some adjectives are **comparable**. For example, a person may be polite, but another person may be more polite, and a third person may be the most polite of the three. The word *more* here modifies the adjective *polite* to indicate a comparison is being made (a **comparative**), and *most* modifies the adjective to indicate an absolute comparison (a **superlative**).

There is another way to compare adjectives in English. Many adjectives can take the suffixes *–er* and *–est* (sometimes requiring additional letters before the suffix; see forms for *far* below) to indicate the comparative and superlative forms, respectively:

great, *greater*, *greatest*
deep, *deeper*, *deepest*
far, *farther*, *farthest*

Some adjectives are *irregular* in this sense:

good, *better*, *best*
bad, *worse*, *worst*
little, *less*, *least*

Another way to convey comparison is by incorporating the words *more* and *most*. There is no simple rule to decide which means is correct for any given adjective, however. The general tendency is for shorter adjectives to take the suffixes, while longer adjectives do not—but sometimes *sound* of the word is the deciding factor.

more beautiful not *beautifuller*
more pretentious not *pretentiouser*

While there is no perfect rule to determine which adjectives will or won't take *–er* and *–est* suffixes, this video lays out some "sound rules" that can serve as helpful guidelines:



Note



***Figure* 22.2.3**

The adjective *fun* is one of the most notable exceptions to the rules. If you follow the sound rules we just learned about, the comparative should be *funner* and the superlative *funnest*. However, for a long time, these words were considered non-standard, with *more fun*and *most fun* acting as the correct forms.

The reasoning behind this rule is now obsolete (it has a lot to do with the way *fun* became an adjective), but the stigma against *funner* and *funnest* remains. While the tides are beginning to change, it's safest to stick to *more fun* and *most fun* in formal situations (such as in academic writing or in professional correspondence).

Non-Comparable Adjectives

Many adjectives do not naturally lend themselves to comparison. For example, some English speakers would argue that it does not make sense to say that one thing is "more ultimate" than another, or that something is "most ultimate," since the word *ultimate* is already an absolute. Such adjectives are called **non-comparable adjectives**. Other examples include *dead*, *true*, and *unique*.

Native speakers will frequently play with non-comparable adjectives. Although *pregnant* is logically non-comparable (someone is pregnant or she is not), you may hear a sentence like "She looks more and more pregnant each day." Likewise *extinct* and *equal* appear to be non-comparable, but one might say that a language about which nothing is known is "more extinct" than a well-documented language with surviving literature but no speakers, and George Orwell once wrote "All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others."

Exercise **22.2.2**

Read the following passage. Identify the adjectives, and categorize them by comparable and non-comparable.

The Principality of Sealand has been described as the world's smallest nation. However, it is more accurate to describe it as an unrecognized micronation. It claims Roughs Tower, an offshore platform located approximately 7.5 miles off the coast of Suffolk, England, as its territory. Roughs Tower is a disused Maunsell Sea Fort, originally called HM Fort Roughs, built as an anti-aircraft defensive gun platform by the British during World War II.

Since 1967, the decommissioned HM Fort Roughs has been occupied by family and associates of Paddy Roy Bates, who claim that it is an independent sovereign state. However, Sealand is not officially recognized by any established sovereign state. Bates moved to the mainland when he became elderly, naming his son Michael regent.

Answer

The adjectives are *smallest*, *accurate*, *unrecognized*, *Roughs*, *offshore*, *Roughs*, *disused*, *Maunsell Sea*, *anti-aircraft*, *defensive*, *gun*, *decommissioned*, *independent*, *sovereign*, *recognized*, *established*, *sovereign*, *elderly*

Here's the passage again with all the adjectives bolded:

The Principality of Sealand has been described as the world's **smallest** nation. However, it is **more accurate** to describe it as an **unrecognized** micronation. It claims **Roughs** Tower, an **offshore** platform located approximately 7.5 miles off the coast of Suffolk, England, as its territory. **Roughs** Tower is a **disused Maunsell Sea** Fort, originally called HM Fort Roughs, built as an **anti-aircraft defensive gun** platform by the British during World War II.

Since 1967, the **decommissioned** HM Fort Roughs has been occupied by family and associates of Paddy Roy Bates, who claim that it is an **independent sovereign** state. However, Sealand is not officially **recognized** by any **established sovereign** state. Bates moved to the mainland when he became **elderly,** naming his son Michael regent.

The comparable adjectives are *smallest*, *accurate*, *unrecognized*, *offshore*, *disused*, *defensive*, *independent*, *recognized*, *established*, and *elderly*.

The non-comparable adjectives are *Roughs*, *Maunsell Sea*, *anti-aircraft*, *gun*, *decommissioned*, and *sovereign*. As you can see, several of these non-comparable adjectives are places or things that have acted as adjectives in this passage (like *Maunsell Sea* and *gun*).

Now that you've identified the comparable adjectives, write their comparative and superlative forms:

Answer

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
small	smaller	smallest
accurate	more accurate	most accurate
unrecognized	more unrecognized	most unrecognized
offshore	more offshore	most offshore
disused	more disused	most disused
defensive	more defensive	most defensive
independent	more independent	most independent
recognized	more recognized	most recognized
established	more established	most established
elderly	more elderly	most elderly

Adjective Order

If you're a native English speaker, you may have noticed that "the big red house" sounds more natural than "the red big house." The video below explains the order in which adjectives occur in English:



Exercise **22.2.3**

Read the following sentences. Are the adjectives in the correct order? Type any corrections in the text frame below:

1. Ramin was throwing a party out at his ancient stone big house.
2. Can you believe James lost his leather dumb Italian wallet?
3. Sofía was transfixed by that green big singing fish.
4. He bought a pink new nice bouquet of flowers.

Answer

1. *Ancient* describes age, *stone* describes material, and *big* describes size. The correct order would be size, age, material:

- Ramin was throwing a party out at his big ancient stone house.

2. *Leather* describes material, *dumb* describes opinion, and *Italian* describes origin. The correct order would be opinion, origin, material:

- Can you believe James lost his dumb Italian leather wallet?

3. *Green* describes color, *big* describes size, and *singing* describes purpose. The correct order would be size, color, purpose:

- Sofía was transfixed by that big green singing fish.

4. *Pink* describes color, *new* describes age, *nice* describes opinion. The correct order would be opinion, age, color:

- He bought a nice new pink bouquet of flowers.

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22.3: Adverbs

Adverbs



***Figure* 22.3.1**

Adverbs can perform a wide range of functions: they can modify verbs, adjectives, and even other adverbs. They can come either before or after the word they modify. In the following examples, adverbs are in bold, while the words they modify are in italics (the **quite** *handsome* man):

- The desk is made of an **especially** *corrosion-resistant industrial* steel.
- The power company uses huge generators which are **generally** *turned* by steam turbines.
- Jaime won the race, because he *ran* **quickly**.
- This fence was *installed* **sloppily**. It needs to be redone.

An adverb may provide information about the manner, place, time, frequency, certainty, or other circumstances of the activity indicated by the verb. Some examples, where again the adverb is in bold and the words modified are in italics:

- Suzanne sang **loudly** (*loudly* modifies the verb *sang*, indicating the manner of singing)
- We left it **here** (*here* modifies the verb phrase *left it*, indicating place)
- I worked **yesterday** (*yesterday* modifies the verb *worked*, indicating time)
- You **often** make mistakes (*often* modifies the verb phrase *make mistakes*, indicating frequency)
- He **undoubtedly** did it (*undoubtedly* modifies the verb phrase *did it*, indicating certainty)

They can also modify noun phrases, prepositional phrases, or whole clauses or sentences, as in the following examples. Once again the adverbs are in bold, while the words they modify are in italics.

- I bought **only** the fruit (*only* modifies the noun phrase *the fruit*)
- Roberto drove us **almost** to the station (*almost* modifies the prepositional phrase *to the station*)
- **Certainly** we need to act (*certainly* modifies the sentence as a whole)

Exercise 22.3.1

Identify the adverbs in these paragraphs:

Mass extinctions are insanely catastrophic—but important—events that punctuate the history of life on Earth. The Jurassic/Cretaceous boundary was originally thought of to represent a mass extinction, but has subsequently been "downgraded" to a minor extinction event based on new discoveries.

However, compared to other important stratigraphic boundaries, like the end-Triassic or the end-Cretaceous, the Jurassic/Cretaceous boundary remains really poorly understood.

Answer

There are five adverbs in the paragraphs:

insanely; originally; subsequently; really; poorly

Here the adverbs have been bolded:

Mass extinctions are **insanely** catastrophic—but important—events that punctuate the history of life on Earth. The Jurassic/Cretaceous boundary was **originally** thought of to represent a mass extinction, but has **subsequently** been "downgraded" to a minor extinction event based on new discoveries.

However, compared to other important stratigraphic boundaries, like the end-Triassic or the end-Cretaceous, the Jurassic/Cretaceous boundary remains **really poorly** understood.

Intensifiers and Adverbs of Degree

Adverbs can also be used as modifiers of adjectives, and of other adverbs, often to indicate degree. Here are a few examples:

- You are **quite** right (the adverb *quite* modifies the adjective *right*)
- Milagros is **exceptionally** pretty (the adverb *exceptionally* modifies the adjective *pretty*)
- She sang **very** loudly (the adverb *very* modifies another adverb—*loudly*)
- Wow! You ran **really** quickly! (the adverb *really* modifies another adverb—*quickly*)

Other intensifiers include *mildly*, *pretty*, *slightly*, etc.

This video provides more discussion and examples of intensifiers:



Adverbs may also undergo comparison, taking comparative and superlative forms. This is usually done by adding *more* and *most*before the adverb (*more slowly, most slowly*). However, there are a few adverbs that take non-standard forms, such as *well*, for which *better* and *best* are used (i.e., "He did **well**, she did **better**, and I did **best**").

Relative Adverbs

Relative adverbs are a subclass of adverbs that deal with space, time, and reason. In this video, David gives a quick intro to the three most common relative adverbs: *when*, *where*, and *why*.



As we just learned, we can use these adverbs to connect ideas about where, when, and why things happen.

Exercise 22.3.2

Read the following questions and turn them into statements using relative adverbs:

1. Where did Nina last see her keys?
2. When are the repairmen going to get here?
3. Why did the desk just collapse?

Answer

1. I don't know where Nina last saw her keys.
2. I don't know when the repairmen are going to get here.
3. I don't know why the desk just collapsed.

Common Mistakes

Only

Have you ever noticed the effect the word *only* can have on a sentence, especially depending on where it's placed? Let's look at a simple sentence:

> *She loves horses.*

Let's see how *only* can influence the meaning of this sentence:

- *Only* she loves horses.
  - No one loves horses but her.
- She *only* loves horses.
  - The one thing she does is love horses.
- She loves *only* horses.
  - She loves horses and nothing else.

Only modifies the word that directly follows it. Whenever you use the word *only* make sure you've placed it correctly in your sentence.

Literally

A linguistic phenomenon is sweeping the nation: people are using *literally* as an intensifier. How many times have you heard things like "It was literally the worst thing that has ever happened to me," or "His head literally exploded when I told him I was going to be late again"?

So what's the problem with this? According to *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*, the actual definition of *literal* is as follows:

- involving the ordinary or usual meaning of a word
- giving the meaning of each individual word
- completely true and accurate : not exaggerated[1]

According to this definition, *literally* should be used only when something actually happened. Our cultural usage may be slowly shifting to allow *literally* as an intensifier, but it's best to avoid using *literally* in any way other than its dictionary definition, especially in formal writing.

Exercise 22.3.3

Identify and correct any errors in adverb usage in each sentence.

1. Presilah literally died when she heard the news.
2. Teddy is literally the best person on the planet.

3. Daveed often takes things too literally.
4. A pirate only sails the seas.
5. In their vows, they promised to love only each other.

Answer

1. This sentence is incorrect (hopefully). Try replacing *literally* with *practically* or *nearly*.

- Presilah **practically** died when she heard the news.
- Presilah **nearly** died when she heard the news.

2. This sentence may or may not be true; it's something that would be very hard to verify. When you're being purposefully hyperbolic, this may be okay in a non-formal setting, but you may want to consider replacing *literally* with an intensifier like *actually* or omitting the adverb altogether, since *literally* has such a stigma around it.

- Teddy is **actually** the best person on the planet.
- Teddy is the best person on the planet.

3. This sentence is correct.
4. This sentence is probably not true. It implies that a pirate sails the seas, and does nothing else. It may be an acceptable sentence if you're exaggerating on purpose, but a more likely sentence would be "A pirate sails only the seas." (A pirate sails the seas, and nowhere else.)
5. This sentence is correct.

References

1. "**Literal**." *Merriam-Webster.com*. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web. 20 June 2016. ↵

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22.4: Comparing Adjectives and Adverbs

As we've learned, adjectives and adverbs act in similar but different roles. A lot of the time this difference can be seen in the structure of the words:

- A **clever** new idea.
- A **cleverly** developed idea.

Clever is an adjective, and *cleverly* is an adverb. This adjective + *ly* construction is a short-cut to identifying adverbs.



While *–ly* is helpful, it's not a universal rule. Not all words that end in *–ly* are adverbs: *lovely*, *costly*, *friendly*, etc. Additionally, not all adverbs end in *-ly*: *here*, *there*, *together*, *yesterday*, *aboard*, *very*, *almost*, etc.

Some words can function both as an adjective and as and adverb:

- *Fast* is an adjective in "a **fast** car" (where it qualifies the noun *car*), but an adverb in "he drove fast" (where it modifies the verb *drove*).
- *Likely* is an adjective in "a likely outcome" (where it modifies the noun *outcome*), but an adverb in "we will likely go" (where it modifies the verb *go*).

Mistaking Adverbs and Adjectives

One common mistake with adjectives and adverbs is using one in the place of the other. For example:

- I wish I could write as neat as he can.
  - The word should be *neatly*, an adverb, since it's modifying a verb.
- Well, that's real nice of you.
  - Should be *really*, an adverb, since it's modifying an adjective

Remember, if you're modifying a noun or pronoun, you should use an adjective. If you're modifying anything else, you should use an adverb.

Good v. Well

One of the most commonly confused adjective/adverb pairs is *good* versus *well*. There isn't really a good way to remember this besides memorization. *Good* is an adjective. *Well* is an adverb. Let's look at a couple of sentence where people often confuse these two:

- She plays basketball good.
- I'm doing good.

In the first sentence *good* is supposed to be modifying *plays*, a verb; therefore the use of *good*—an adjective—is incorrect. *Plays* should be modified by an adverb. The correct sentence would read "She plays basketball well."

In the second sentence, *good* is supposed to be modifying *doing*, a verb. Once again, this means that *well*—an adverb—should be used instead: “I’m doing well.”

Note

The sentence “I’m doing good” can be grammatically correct, but only when it means “I’m doing good things,” rather than when it is describing how a person is feeling.



***Figure* 22.4.1**

Exercise 22.4.1

Select the correct modifier for each sentence. Identify whether each modifier is an adjective or an adjective. Type your sentences in the text frame below:

1. Billy has to work (real / really) hard to be (healthy / healthily).
2. Kate is really (good / well) with bows. She shoots really (good / well).
3. Eli reads (quick / quickly), and he retains the information (good / well).

Answer

1. Billy has to work **really** hard to be **healthy**.

- *Really* modifies the adjective *hard*.
- Remember that *to be* is a linking verb. Linking verbs often connect the subject of the sentence (Billy) to an adjective that describes it (*healthy*).

2. Kate is really **good** with bows. She shoots really **well**.

- *Good* is an adjective. The linking verb *good* connects it to the noun Kate.
- *Well* is an adverb that modifies the verb *shoots*.

3. Eli reads **quickly**, and he retains the information **well**.

- *Quickly* is an adverb that modifies the verb *reads*.
- *Well* is an adverb that modifies the verb *retains*.

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22.5: Conjunctions

Conjunctions are the words that join sentences, phrases, and other words together. Conjunctions are divided into several categories, all of which follow different rules. We will discuss coordinating conjunctions, adverbial conjunctions, correlative conjunctions, and subordinating conjunctions.

Coordinating Conjunctions

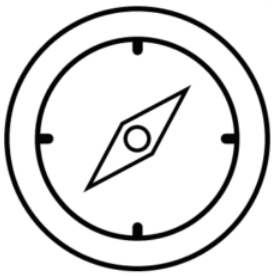


***Figure* 22.5.1**

The most common conjunctions are *and*, *or*, and *but*. These are all **coordinating conjunctions**. Coordinating conjunctions are conjunctions that join, or coordinate, two or more equivalent items (such as words, phrases, or sentences). The mnemonic acronym *FANBOYS* can be used to remember the most common coordinating conjunctions: *for*, *and*, *nor*, *but*, *or*, *yet*, and *so*.

- **For:** presents a reason ("They do not gamble or smoke, for they are ascetics.")
- **And:** presents non-contrasting items or ideas ("They gamble, and they smoke.")
- **Nor:** presents a non-contrasting negative idea ("They do not gamble, nor do they smoke.")
- **But:** presents a contrast or exception ("They gamble, but they don't smoke.")
- **Or:** presents an alternative item or idea ("Every day they gamble, or they smoke.")
- **Yet:** presents a contrast or exception ("They gamble, yet they don't smoke.")
- **So:** presents a consequence ("He gambled well last night, so he smoked a cigar to celebrate.")

Here are some examples of these used in sentences:

- Nuclear-powered artificial hearts proved to be complicated, bulky, **and** expensive.
- In the 1960s, artificial heart devices did not fit well **and** tended to obstruct the flow of venous blood into the right atrium.
- The blood vessels leading to the device tended to kink, obstructing the filling of the chambers **and** resulting in inadequate output.
- Any external injury **or** internal injury put patients at risk of uncontrolled bleeding because the small clots that formed throughout the circulatory system used up so much of the clotting factor.
- The current from the storage batteries can power lights, **but** the current for appliances must be modified within an inverter.

Exercise 22.5.1

Are the correct coordinating conjunctions being used in each of the following sentences? Explain your reasoning why or why not:

1. I love boxing or sewing. They're both a lot of fun.
2. Martin is pretty good at writing, for Jaden is better.
3. Juana had to choose. Would she join the red team and the blue team?

Answer

1. The conjunction *or* presents an alternative. However, the second sentence indicates that the speaker enjoys both activities. The correct sentence would use *and*: "I love boxing **and** sewing. They're both a lot of fun."

2. The conjunction *for* presents a reason. It's unlikely that Jaden being better is the reason Martin is pretty good at writing, so a different conjunction should be used. *But* would be a good fit here, since the ideas contrast: "Martin is pretty good at writing, **but** Jaden is better."
3. The conjunction *and* presents non-contrasting items or ideas. Since the first sentence sets up a choice, we know that Juana can't be on both teams. The conjunction *or* presents an alternative and is the correct conjunction to use in this sentence: "Would she join the red team **or** the blue team?"

As you can see from the examples above, a comma only appears before these conjunctions sometimes. So how can you tell if you need a comma or not? There are three general rules to help you decide.

Rule 1: Joining Two Complete Ideas

Let's look back at one of our example sentences:

The current from the storage batteries can power lights, but the current for appliances must be modified within an inverter.

There are two complete ideas in this sentence. A complete idea has both a subject (a noun or pronoun) and a verb. The subjects have been italicized, and the verbs bolded:

- The *current* from the storage batteries **can power** lights.
- The *current* for appliances **must be modified** within an inverter.

Because each of these ideas could stand alone as a sentence, the coordinating conjunction that joins them must be preceded by a comma. Otherwise you'll have a run-on sentence.

Run-on sentences are one of the most common errors in college-level writing. Mastering the partnership between commas and coordinating conjunctions will go a long way towards resolving many run-on sentence issues in your writing. We'll talk more about run-ons a strategies to avoid them in **Text: Run-on Sentences**.

Rule 2: Joining Two Similar Items

So what if there's only one complete idea, but two subjects or two verbs?

- Any external injury or internal injury put patients at risk of uncontrolled bleeding because the small clots that formed throughout the circulatory system used up so much of the clotting factor.
  - This sentence has two subjects: *external injury* and *internal injury*. They are joined with the conjunction *and*; we don't need any additional punctuation here.
- In the 1960s, artificial heart devices did not fit well and tended to obstruct the flow of venous blood into the right atrium.
  - This sentence has two verbs: *did not fit well* and *tended to obstruct*. They are joined with the conjunction *and*; we don't need any additional punctuation here.

Rule 3: Joining Three or More Similar Items

What do you do if there are three or more items?

- Anna loves to run, David loves to hike, and Luz loves to dance.
- Fishing, hunting, and gathering were once the only ways for people do get food.
- Emanuel has a very careful schedule planned for tomorrow. He needs to work, study, exercise, eat, and clean.

As you can see in the examples above, there is a comma after each item, including the item just prior to the conjunction. There is a little bit of contention about this, but overall, most styles prefer to keep the additional comma (also called the serial comma). We discuss the serial comma in more depth in **Text: Commas**.

STARTING A SENTENCE

Many students are taught—and some style guides maintain—that English sentences should not start with coordinating conjunctions.

This video shows that this idea is not actually a rule. And it provides some background for why so many people may have adopted this writing convention:



Exercise 22.5.2

In this practice, you will combine multiple sentences into a single sentence. For example, look at the sentences "Clint was very skilled at his job. Wade was very skilled at his job." You would combine these two sentences into something like this, using coordinating conjunctions:

- Clint and Wade were both very skilled at their jobs.
- Clint was very skilled at his job, and Wade was too.

When you combine sentences, you can remove repeated information. As you complete this exercise, type your answers in the text frame below.

1. Wade was really impressed by Clint. Wade was anxious about working with him.
2. Clint thought Wade was annoying. Clint thought Wade was unpredictable. Clint thought Wade was possibly dangerous.
3. In the end, Clint worked well with Wade. In the end, Wade worked well with Clint.

Answer

1. In this first item, both sentences have the same subject: *Wade*. Since they have the same subject, we can turn these two sentences into a single sentence with two verbs. Since the ideas present a contrast, the conjunction *but* is a good choice for this sentence:

- Wade was really impressed by Clint but was anxious about working with him.
- Wade was really impressed by Clint, but he was anxious about working with Clint.

2. All three of the sentences in this item have the same subject and verb. We can combine them together by joining these three similar items:

- Clint thought Wade was annoying, unpredictable, and possibly dangerous.

3. This last item is a little trickier. While the two sentences are very similar, they have different subjects and objects (the thing the sentence does something to or with). We could combine just the introductory phrase and then join the two sentences together, or we could change the wording of the sentence a little bit:

- In the end, Clint worked well with Wade, and Wade worked well with Clint.
- In the end, Clint and Wade worked well together.



***Figure* 22.5.2**

Adverbial conjunctions link two separate thoughts or sentences. When used to separate thoughts, as in the example below, a comma is required on either side of the conjunction.

The first artificial hearts were made of smooth silicone rubber, which apparently caused excessive clotting and, **therefore**, uncontrolled bleeding.

When used to separate complete ideas (items with both a subject and a verb), as in the examples below, a semicolon is required before the conjunction and a comma after.

- The Kedeco produces 1200 watts in 17 mph winds using a 16-foot rotor; **on the other hand**, the Dunlite produces 2000 watts in 25 mph winds.
- For short periods, the fibers were beneficial; **however**, the eventual buildup of fibrin on the inner surface of the device would impair its function.
- The atria of the heart contribute a negligible amount of energy; **in fact**, the total power output of the heart is only about 2.5 watts.

Adverbial conjunctions include the following words; however, it is important to note that this is by no means a complete list.

therefore	however	in other words
thus	then	otherwise
nevertheless	on the other hand	in fact

Exercise 22.5.3

Fill in the missing punctuation marks for the sentences below. Type the corrected sentences in the text frame below:

1. My roommate decided to drive to work __ therefore __ I decided to get a ride with her.
2. We needed to turn left on 140th Street. That street __ however __ was under construction.
3. In other words __ we couldn't turn on the street we needed to.

Answer

1. My roommate decided to drive to work **_;_** therefore **_,_** I decided to get a ride with her.
   - There is a complete idea before and after *therefore*. Thus, this sentence needs a semicolon (or a period) before the conjunction and a comma afterward.
2. We needed to turn left on 140th Street. That street **_,_** however **_,_** was under construction.
   - *However* comes in the middle of a complete idea; it just needs commas on either side of it.
3. In other words **_,_** we couldn't turn on the street we needed to.
   - *In other words* comes before a complete idea. We just need a comma at the end of the conjunction.



***Figure* 22.5.3**

Correlative conjunctions are word pairs that work together to join words and groups of words of equal weight in a sentence. This video will define this types of conjunction before it goes through five of the most common correlative conjunctions:



The table below shows some examples of correlative conjunctions being used in a sentence:

Correlative Conjunction	Example
either…or	You **either** do your work **or** prepare for a trip to the office. (Either do, or prepare)
neither…nor	**Neither** the basketball team **nor** the football team is doing well.
not only…but (also)	He is **not only** handsome, **but also** brilliant. (Not only A, but also B)
	Not only is he handsome, **but also** he is brilliant. (Not only is he A, but also he is B.)
both…and	**Both** the cross country team **and** the swimming team are doing well.
whether…or	You must decide **whether** you stay **or** you go. (It's up to you)
	Whether you stay **or** you go, the film must start at 8 pm. (It's not up to you)
just as…so	**Just as** many Americans love basketball, **so** many Canadians love ice hockey.
as much…as	Football is **as much** an addiction **as** it is a sport.
no sooner…than	**No sooner** did she learn to ski, **than** the snow began to thaw.
rather…than	I would **rather** swim **than** surf.
the…the	**The** more you practice dribbling, **the** better you will be at it.
as…as	Football is **as** fast **as** hockey (is (fast)).

Exercise 22.5.4

Re-write the following items. Your new sentences should use correlative conjunctions. Type your revisions in the text frame below:

1. She finished packing right when the moving truck showed up.
2. There are two shifts you can work: Thursday night or Saturday afternoon.
3. Chemistry and physics are both complex.

Answer

1. The only correlative conjunction that deals with time is *no sooner…than*. Your sentence should look something like "**No sooner** did she finish packing, **than** the moving truck showed up."
2. There are two correlative conjunctions that involve a positive choice: *either…or* and *whether…or* (*Neither…nor* involves a negative choice). Your revision should look something like one of these:

- You can work **either** Thursday night **or** Saturday afternoon.
- You must choose **whether** you will work Thursday night **or** Saturday afternoon.

3. There are two correlative conjunctions that involve similar items: *as…as* and *just as…as*. Your revision should look something like one of these:

- Chemistry is **as** complex **as** physics.
- **Just as** chemistry is complex, **so** physics is complex.



***Figure* 22.5.4**

Subordinating conjunctions, are conjunctions that join an independent clause and a dependent clause. Here are some examples of subordinating conjunctions:

- The heart undergoes two cardiac cycle periods: diastole, **when** blood enters the ventricles, and systole, **when** the ventricles contract and blood is pumped out of the heart.
- **Whenever** an electron acquires enough energy to leave its orbit, the atom is positively charged.
- **If** the wire is broken, electrons will cease to flow and current is zero.
- I'll be here **as long as** it takes for you to finish.
- She did the favor **so that** he would owe her one.

Let's take a moment to look back at the previous examples. Can you see the pattern in comma usage? The commas aren't dependent on the presence subordinating conjunctions—they're dependent on the placement of clauses they're in. Let's revisit a couple examples and see if we can figure out the exact rules:

- The heart undergoes two cardiac cycle periods: diastole, **when** blood enters the ventricles, and systole, **when** the ventricles contract and blood is pumped out of the heart.
  - These clauses are both extra information: information that is good to know, but not necessary for the meaning of the sentence. This means they need commas on either side.
- **Whenever** an electron acquires enough energy to leave its orbit, the atom is positively charged.
  - In this sentence, the dependent clause comes before an independent clause. This means it should be followed by a comma.
- She did the favor **so that** he would owe her one.
  - In this sentence, the independent clause comes before an dependent clause. This means no comma is required.

The most common subordinating conjunctions in the English language are shown in the table below:

after	although	as	as far as	as if	as long as	as soon as
as though	because	before	even if	even though	every time	if
in order that	since	so	so that	than	though	unless
until	when	whenever	where	whereas	wherever	while



Exercise 22.5.5

All of the commas have been removed from the following passage. Re-type the passage in the text frame below, adding in the correct punctuation. Identify all of the subordinating conjunctions as well.

Thales came to the silent auction in order to win the chance to be drawn by his favorite artist. Before anyone else could bid Thales went to the bidding sheet and placed an aggressive bid. He knew he would have to come back and check on it while the auction was still open but he felt confident in his ability to win. He was determined to win the auction even if it took all of his money to do so.

Answer

Here is the passage again. The subordinating conjunctions have been bolded, and the correct commas added:

Thales came to the silent auction **in order to** win the chance to be drawn by his favorite artist. **Before** anyone else could bid **_,_** Thales went to the bidding sheet and placed an aggressive bid. He knew he would have to come back and check on it **while** the auction was still open **_,_** but he felt confident in his ability to win. He was determined to win the auction **even if it took** all of his money to do so.

Note that the comma following the dependent clause “while the auction was still open” is because of the coordinating conjunction *but*, not because of the subordinate conjunction at the beginning of the clause.

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22.6: Prepositions

Prepositions



***Figure* 22.6.1**

Prepositions are relation words; they can indicate location, time, or other more abstract relationships. Prepositions are noted in bold in these examples:

- The woods **behind** my house are super creepy **at** night.
- She sang **until** three in the morning.
- They were happy **for** him.
- He counted **to** three.

A preposition combines with another word (usually a noun or pronoun) called the complement. Prepositions are still in bold, and their complements are in italics:

- The woods **behind** *my house* are super creepy **at** *night*.
- She sang **until** *three in the morning*.
- They were happy **for** *him*.
- He counted **to** *three*.

Prepositions generally come before their complements (e.g., **in** England, **under** the table, **of** Elena). However, there are a small handful of exceptions, including **notwithstanding** and **ago**:

- *Financial limitations* **notwithstanding**, Phil paid back his debts.
- He was released *three days* **ago**.

Prepositions of location are pretty easily defined (*near*, *far*, *over*, *under*, etc.), and prepositions about time are as well (*before*, *after*, *at*, *during*, etc.). Prepositions of "more abstract relationships," however, are a little more nebulous in their definition. The video below gives a good overview of this category of prepositions:



Note

The video said that prepositions are a closed group, but it never actually explained what a closed group is. Perhaps the easiest way to define a closed group is to define its opposite: an open group. An open group is a part of speech allows new words to be added. For example, nouns are an open group; new nouns, like *selfie* and *blog*, enter the language all the time (verbs, adjectives, and adverbs are open groups as well).

Thus a closed group simply refers to a part of speech that doesn't allow in new words. Prepositions, pronouns, articles, and conjunctions are all examples of closed groups.

Exercise 22.6.1

Identify the prepositions in the following sentences:

1. The cow jumped over the moon.
2. My favorite painting is *The Girl with the Pearl Earring.*
3. Beatriz wanted to know if she would see Alexandre before lunch.
4. All he does is talk about his band.

Answer

The prepositions have been bolded in the sentences below:

1. The cow jumped **over** the moon.
2. My favorite painting is *The Girl **with** the Pearl Earring*
3. Beatriz wanted to know if she would see Alexandre **before** lunch.
4. All he does is talk **about** his band.

So far, all of the prepositions we've looked at have been one word (and most of them have been one syllable). The most common prepositions are one-syllable words. According to one ranking, the most common English prepositions are *on*, *in*, *to*, *by*, *for*, *with*, *at*, *of*, *from*, *as*.

There are also some prepositions that have more than one word:

- in spite of (She made it to work in spite of the terrible traffic.)
- by means of (He traveled by means of boat.)
- except for (Joan invited everyone to her party except for Ben.)
- next to (Go ahead and sit down next to Jean-Claude.)

Prepositions in Sentences

You'll often hear about **prepositional phrases**. A prepositional phrase includes a preposition and its complement (e.g., "**behind** *the house*," "*a long time* **ago**," and "**as** *the saying goes*"). These phrases can appear at the beginning or end of sentences. When they appear at the beginning of a sentence, they typically need a comma afterwards:

- You can drop that off behind the house.
- A long time ago, dinosaurs roamed the earth.
- As the saying goes, hard work always pays off.

ENDING A SENTENCE WITH A PREPOSITION



As we just learned, it is totally okay to end a sentence with a preposition. And, as we saw, it can often make your writing smoother and more concise to do so.

However, it's still best to avoid doing it unnecessarily. If your sentence ends with a preposition and would still mean the same thing without the preposition, take it out. For example:

Where are you at?

That's not what it's used for.

If you remove *at*, the sentence becomes "Where are you?" This means the same thing, so removing *at* is a good idea. However, if you remove *for*, the sentence becomes "That's not what it's used," which doesn't make sense.

Exercise 22.6.2

Read each sentence and determine if the prepositions are being used correctly. If they are not, re-write the sentence.

1. Do you have any idea why Olivia keeps calling for?
2. You have no idea how much trouble you're in.
3. Luiz handed his credit card over to the cashier.
4. He was going the beach after class.

Answer

1. Incorrect. The preposition *for* does not work with the preposition *why*. There are two potential revisions for this sentence:

- Do you have any idea *why* Olivia keeps calling?
- Do you have any idea **what** Olivia keeps calling **for**?

2. Correct. The preposition **in** at the end of the sentence is necessary. "You have no idea how much trouble you are" means something different than the sentence's original intent.
3. Correct. The preposition is **over**.
4. Incorrect. There's a missing preposition in the sentence. It should read: "He was going **to** the beach after class." The preposition *after* is used correctly.

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22.7: Articles

There are three articles in the English language: *the*, *a*, and *an*. These are divided into two types of articles: definite (*the*) and indefinite (*a*, *an*). The definite article indicates a level of specificity that the indefinite does not. “An apple” could refer to any apple; however “the apple” is referring back to a specific apple.

Thus, when using the definite article, the speaker assumes the listener knows the identity of the noun’s referent (because it is obvious, because it is common knowledge, or because it was mentioned in the same sentence or an earlier sentence). Use of an indefinite article implies that the speaker assumes the listener does not have to be told the identity of the referent.

There are also cases where no article is required:

- with generic nouns (plural or uncountable): *cars have accelerators*, *happiness is contagious*, referring to cars in general and happiness in general (compare *the happiness I felt yesterday*, specifying particular happiness);
- with most proper names: *Sabrina*, *France*, *London*, etc.

Watch this quick introduction to indefinite and definite articles and the difference between the two:



Indefinite Article

The indefinite article of English takes the two forms *a* and *an*. These can be regarded as meaning “one,” usually without emphasis.

Distinction between *a* and *an*



***Figure* 22.7.1**

You’ve probably learned the rule that *an* comes before a vowel, and that *a* comes before a consonant. While this is generally true, it’s more accurate to say that *an* comes before a vowel *sound*, and *a* comes before a consonant *sound*. Let’s look at a couple of examples with *a*:

- *a box*
- *a HEPA filter* (HEPA is pronounced as a word rather than as letters)
- *a one-armed bandit* (pronounced “won. . . “)

- *a unicorn* (pronounced “yoo. . . “)



***Figure* 22.7.2**

Let’s try it again with *an*:

- *an apple*
- *an EPA policy* (the letter *E* read as a letter still starts with a vowel sound)
- *an SSO* (pronounced “es-es-oh”)
- *an hour* (the *h* is silent)
- *an heir* (pronounced “air”)

Note

Some speakers and writers use *an* before a word beginning with the sound *h* in an unstressed syllable: *an historical novel*, *an hotel*. However, where the *h* is clearly pronounced, this usage is now less common, and *a* is preferred.

Exercise 22.7.1

Look at the following words. When they require an indefinite article, should it be *a* or *an*? Explain your answers.

1. ewe
2. SEO specialist
3. apple
4. URL
5. herb

Answer

1. a ewe: The word is pronounced “you”; it starts with a consonant sound.
2. an SEO specialist: The word is pronounced “es-ee-oh”; it starts with a vowel sound.
3. an apple: The word starts with, *a*, a vowel sound.
4. a URL: The word is pronounced “yoo-ar-el”; it starts with a consonant sound.
5. an herb: The *h* is silent, so the word is pronounced “erb”; it starts with a vowel sound.

Definite Article



***Figure* 22.7.3**

The definite article *the* is used when the referent of the noun phrase is assumed to be unique or known from the context. For example, in the sentence "The boy with glasses was looking at the moon," it is assumed that in the context the reference can only be to one boy and one moon.

The can be used with both singular and plural nouns, with nouns of any gender, and with nouns that start with any letter. This is different from many other languages which have different articles for different genders or numbers. *The* is the most commonly used word in the English language.

Exercise 22.7.2

Choose the article that should go in each sentence and explain your reasoning.

1. Every day, I eat (a / an / the) egg salad sandwich.
2. I love looking at (a / an / the) stars with you.
3. Dani was planning to buy (a / an / the) book she had been eyeing as soon as she got paid.
4. (A / An / The) brain like that will get you far in life.

Answer

1. an; Every day, I eat **an** egg salad sandwich.

- Since you can only eat a sandwich once, there must be a different sandwich every day—thus we need an indefinite article. *Egg* starts with an *e* sound, so it requires *an* not *a*.

2. the; I love looking at **the** stars with you.

- *stars* is plural, so it cannot take an indefinite article

3. the; Dani was planning to buy **the** book she had been eyeing as soon as she got paid.

- While *a* would be an acceptable answer (as *book* starts with a consonant sound), the sentence implies that there is a specific book she wants. Thus, the definite article is required.

4. a; **A** brain like that will get you far in life.

- The sentence is about one "brain like that"; there could be several, but the sentence is just talking about one. Thus, the indefinite article is required. *Brain* starts with a consonant sound, so *a* is required, not *an*.

Word Order

In most cases, the article is the first word of its noun phrase, preceding all other adjectives and modifiers.

The little old red bag held *a* very big surprise.

There are a few exceptions, however:

- Certain determiners, such as *all*, *both*, *half*, *double*, precede the definite article when used in combination (*all the team*, *both the girls*, *half the time*, *double the amount*).
- *Such* and *what* precede the indefinite article (*such an idiot*, *what a day!*).
- Adjectives qualified by *too*, *so*, *as* and *how* generally precede the indefinite article: *too great a loss*, *so hard a problem*, *as delicious an apple as I have ever tasted*, *I know how pretty a girl she is*.
- When adjectives are qualified by *quite* (particularly when it means "fairly"), the word *quite* (but not the adjective itself) often precedes the indefinite article: *quite a long letter*. **Note:** the phrase *a quite long letter* is also a correct construction. However the two have different meanings:
  - In *quite a long letter*, *quite* modifies *letter*: it's quite a letter.
  - In *a quite long letter*, *quite* modifies *long*: the letter is quite long.

Exercise **22.7.3**

Read the following passage and make any necessary changes. Explain your reasoning for each change.

A Hubble Space Telescope (HST) is a space telescope that was launched into low Earth orbit in 1990, and remains in operation. Although not the first space telescope, Hubble is one of the largest and most versatile, and is well known as both an vital research tool and an public relations boon for astronomy. The HST is named after the astronomer Edwin Hubble.

Hubble's orbit outside the distortion of Earth's atmosphere allows it to take extremely high-resolution images. Hubble has recorded the some of most detailed visible-light images ever, allowing the deep view into space and time.

Answer

Here is the corrected passage. Each correction has been numbered. Explanations for each correction are given below the passage.

(1) **The** Hubble Space Telescope (HST) is a space telescope that was launched into low Earth orbit in 1990, and remains in operation. Although not the first space telescope, Hubble is one of the largest and most versatile, and is well known as both (2) **a** vital research tool and (3) **a** public relations boon for astronomy. The HST is named after the astronomer Edwin Hubble.

Hubble's orbit outside the distortion of Earth's atmosphere allows it to take extremely high-resolution images. Hubble has recorded (4) **some of the** most detailed visible-light images ever, allowing (5) **a** deep view into space and time.

So why were these changes necessary?

1. There is only one Hubble Space Telescope, so it requires the definite article: *the*.
2. *Vital* starts with a consonant sound, so it requires *a* not *an*.
3. *Public* starts with a consonant sound, so it requires *a* not *an*.
4. As we discussed, phrases like "some of" are exceptions to the general word order rule, and they come before articles.
5. There are several different views into space, and this is just one of them. Thus, we need to use the indefinite article. *Deep* starts with a consonant, so it requires *a* not *an*.

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22.8: Self Check: Other Parts of Speech

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22.9: Try It: Other Parts of Speech

Adjectives and Adverbs

Read the following passage. Identify any errors in adjective or adverb use. Explain how to fix each error. The sentences have been numbered to aid your comments:

(1) Satyendra Nath Bose (1894–1974) was an Indian physicist specializing in mathematical physics. (2) He is most well known for his work on quantum mechanics in the early 1920s, providing the foundation for Bose–Einstein statistics and the theory of the Bose–Einstein condensate, which both took his name. (3) A Fellow of the Royal Society, he was awarded the Padma Vibhushan, India's second most high civilian award, in 1954 by the Government of India.

(4) A self-taught scholar and a polyglot, he had a real varied range of interests in diverse fields including physics, mathematics, chemistry, biology, mineralogy, philosophy, arts, literature, and music. (5) He served on many research committees in sovereign India.

Answer

- Sentence 2 uses the wrong superlative form. The sentence should read "He is **best** known. . . "
- Sentence 3 uses the wrong superlative form. The sentence should read ". . . India's second **highest** civilian award . . ."
- In sentence 4, the adjective *real* appears where *really* should be used: "He had a **really** varied range of interests."

As an aside, look at the adjective *many* in sentence 5. You may remember from our discussion of nouns that non-count nouns, like *research* require the adjective *much* not *many*. So why is *many* correct here? Because *many* is modifying the noun *committees* (a noun that is is also being modified by *research*).

Conjunctions, Prepositions, and Articles

Read the following passage. Identify any errors in the use of conjunctions, prepositions, or articles. Explain how to fix each error. Please note that the quoted letter has been left in its original form; you do not need to critique it. The sentences have been numbered to aid your comments:

(1) While presenting the lecture in the University of Dhaka on the theory of radiation and the ultraviolet catastrophe Bose intended to show his students that the current theory was inadequate, because it predicted results not in accordance to experimental results.

(2) In the process of describing this discrepancy, Bose for the first time took the position that the Maxwell–Boltzmann distribution would not be true for microscopic particles, where fluctuations due to Heisenberg's uncertainty principle will be significant. (3) Bose adapted this lecture into an short article called "Planck's Law and the Hypothesis of Light Quanta" and sent it to Albert Einstein with a following letter:

> *Respected Sir, I have ventured to send you the accompanying article for your perusal and opinion. I am anxious to know what you think of it. . . . I do not know sufficient German to translate the paper. If you think the paper worth publication I shall be grateful if you arrange for its publication in Zeitschrift für Physik. Though a complete stranger to you, I do not feel any hesitation in making such a request. Because we are all your pupils though profiting only by your teachings through your writings.*

(4) Einstein, recognizing the importance of the paper, translated it into German himself and had it published in *Zeitschrift für Physik* under Bose's name. (5) As a result of this recognition Bose was able to work for two years in European X-ray and crystallography laboratories; during this time, he worked with Louis de Broglie, Marie Curie and Einstein.

Answer

Sentence 1 has three separate ideas in it, two of which have subordinating conjunctions:

- While presenting a lecture in the University of Dhaka on the theory of radiation and the ultraviolet catastrophe
- Bose intended to show his students that the current theory was inadequate

- because it predicted results not in accordance to experimental results

There should be a comma after the first, but not before the third, which is the opposite of how the sentence currently stands:

- While presenting a lecture in the University of Dhaka on the theory of radiation and the ultraviolet catastrophe, Bose intended to show his students that the current theory was inadequate because it predicted results not in accordance to experimental results

In the quoted letter, you may have noticed the sentence “Because we are all your pupils though profiting only by your teachings through your writings.” As we learned, subordinating conjunctions change an independent clause into a dependent clause. Thus, this clause shouldn’t exist on its own—especially in a formal context. However, exceptions are occasionally made in correspondence.

In sentence 5 the coordinating conjunction *and* is used twice. The first instance is used correctly: it doesn’t need a comma. The second *and* needs a comma beforehand. It’s joining items in a list, so it needs a serial comma.

Sentence 1 has two incorrect prepositions: *in* should be *at*, and *to* should be *with*:

- While presenting a lecture **at** the University of Dhaka
- Because it predicted results not in accordance **with** experimental results.

The prepositional phrase at the beginning of sentence 5 needs a comma afterwards:

- **As a result of this recognition,** Bose was able to work for two years in European X-ray and crystallography laboratories; during this time, he worked with Louis de Broglie, Marie Curie and Einstein.

In sentence 1, *the lecture* should be *a lecture* because we haven’t defined a specific lecture yet. Thus the indefinite is needed, not the definite. Since *lecture* starts with a consonant sound, *a* is needed, not *an*.

In sentence 3, *an short article* should be *a short article*. This may have happened because the original draft read “an article,” but the adjective was added in later. Additionally, *a following letter* should be *the following letter* because the sentence is referring to a specific letter:

- Bose adapted this lecture into **a** short article called “Planck’s Law and the Hypothesis of Light Quanta” and sent it to Albert Einstein with **the** following letter:

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

23: Punctuation

Topic hierarchy

23.1: Outcome: Punctuation
23.2: End Punctuation
23.3: Commas
23.4: Semicolons and Colons
23.5: Hyphens and Dashes
23.6: Apostrophes
23.7: Quotation Marks
23.8: Parentheses and Brackets
23.9: Ellipses
23.10: Self Check: Punctuation
23.11: Try It: Punctuation

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23.1: Outcome: Punctuation

Skills to Develop

- Explain the role of end punctuation: periods, question marks, exclamation points
- Explain the role of commas
- Explain the role of semicolons
- Explain the role of colons
- Explain the role of hyphens and dashes
- Explain the role of apostrophes
- Explain the role of quotation marks
- Explain the role of brackets
- Explain the role of ellipses
- Explain the role of parentheses

Explain common punctuation marks and the rules for their correct usage

In this short skit, comedian Victor Borge illustrates just how prevalent punctuation is (or should be) in language.



As you've just heard, punctuation saturates our language. Punctuation guides readers through sentences, passages, and books; it lets them know which words and ideas are related (as well as how close that relationship is). The rules of punctuation can seem daunting, but just remember that punctuation is here to help.

As we mentioned at the beginning of this module, different style guides have slightly different rules for grammar. This is especially true when it comes to punctuation. This outcome will cover the MLA rules for punctuation, but we'll also make note of rules from other styles when they're significantly different.

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Text: End Punctuation
- Text: Commas
- Text: Semicolons and Colons
- Text: Hyphens and Dashes
- Text: Apostrophes
- Text: Quotation Marks
- Text: Parentheses and Brackets
- Text: Ellipses
- Self Check: Punctuation
- Try It: Punctuation

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23.2: End Punctuation

There are three punctuation marks that come at the end of a sentence: the period (.), the question mark (?), and the exclamation point (!). A sentence is always followed by a single space, no matter what the concluding punctuation is.

Periods



***Figure* 23.2.1**

Periods indicate a neutral sentence, and as such are by far the most common ending punctuation mark. They've been at the end of every sentence on this page so far. They occur at the end of statements.

Punctuation Clusters

Occasionally, you'll come across an instance that seems to require multiple punctuation marks right next to each other. Sometimes you need to keep all the marks, but other times, you should leave some out.

You should never use more than one ending punctuation mark in a row (period, question mark exclamation point). When quoting a question, you would end with a question mark, not a question mark and a period. If an abbreviation, like *etc*., ends a sentence, you should only use one period.

- Carlos leaned forward and asked, "Did you get the answer to number six?"
- I think we'll have enough food. Mary bought the whole store: chips, soda, candy, cereal, etc.

However, you can place a comma immediately after a period, as you can see above with *etc.* This rule also applies to the abbreviations *e.g.* and *i.e.*

Note

For those who are curious, *e.g.* stands for *exempli gratia*, which means "for example," and *i.e.* stands for *id est*, which means "that is."

Periods and parentheses can also appear right next to each other. Sometimes the period comes after the closing parenthesis (as you can see earlier in this section), but sometimes it appears inside the parentheses. (This is an example of a sentence where the period falls within the parentheses.) We'll learn more about this in **Text: Parentheses and Brackets**.

Exercise 23.2.1

Identify punctuation errors in the following sentences. Type the corrected sentences in the text frame below:

1. Dana had a lot of skills: reading, writing, note-taking, listening, etc..
2. My sister looked over and asked, "Why do you have so many grapes in the shopping cart?."
3. Lucinda was the reigning Spring Queen (i.e. she had won the student vote at the last spring dance).

Answer

1. Dana had a lot of skills: reading, writing, note-taking, listening, etc.

- There should only be one period at the end of a sentence.

2. My sister looked over and asked, "Why do you have so many grapes in the shopping cart?"

- Since a question mark can mark the end of a sentence, there is no need for a period here.

3. Lucinda was the reigning Spring Queen (i.e., she had won the student vote at the last spring dance).

- There should be a comma following the second period of the abbreviation *i.e.*

Question Marks



***Figure* 23.2.2**

A question mark comes at the end of a question. A question is a request for information. The information requested should be provided in the form of an answer.

A rhetorical question is asked to make a point, and does not expect an answer (often the answer is implied or obvious). Some questions are used principally as polite requests (e.g., "Would you pass the salt?").

All of these questions can be categorized as direct questions, and all of these questions require a question mark at their ends.

Indirect Questions

Indirect questions can be used in many of the same ways as direct ones, but they often emphasize knowledge or lack of knowledge:

- I can't guess **how Tamika managed it**.
- I wonder **whether I looked that bad**.
- Cecil asked **where the reports were**.

Such clauses correspond to **direct questions**, which are questions actually asked. The direct questions corresponding to the examples above are *How did Tamika manage it? Did I look that bad? Where are the reports?* Notice how different word order is used in direct and indirect questions: in direct questions the verb usually comes before the subject, while indirect questions the verb appears second. Additionally, question marks should not be used at the end of indirect questions.

Exercise 23.2.2

Are the following sentences declarative or indirect sentences? Which need a question mark at the end?

1. Jackie wondered where her keys were
2. Can you pass the butter
3. Is anyone here
4. Megan asked how you were doing
5. Why won't you admit I'm right

Answer

1. Indirect; no question mark
2. Declarative; *Can you pass the butter?*
3. Declarative; *Is anyone here?*
4. Indirect; no question mark
5. Declarative; *Why won't you admit I'm right?*



***Figure* 23.2.3**

The exclamation point is a punctuation mark usually used after an interjection or exclamation to indicate strong feelings or high volume, and often marks the end of a sentence. You've likely seen this overused on the internet:

!!!! !! I'm jUST SO!!!!!!

While this kind of statement is excessive, there are appropriate ways to use exclamation points. A sentence ending in an exclamation mark may be an exclamation (such as "Wow!" or "Boo!"), or an imperative ("Stop!"), or may indicate astonishment: "They were the footprints of a gigantic duck!" Exclamation marks are occasionally placed mid-sentence with a function similar to a comma, for dramatic effect, although this usage is rare: "On the walk, oh! there was a frightful noise."

Informally, exclamation marks may be repeated for additional emphasis ("That's great!!!"), but this practice is generally considered only acceptable in casual or informal writing, such as text messages or online communication with friends and family.

The exclamation mark is sometimes used in conjunction with the question mark. This can be in protest or astonishment ("Out of all places, the water-hole?!").

Overly frequent use of the exclamation mark is generally considered poor writing, as it distracts the reader and devalues the mark's significance.

> *Cut out all these exclamation points. . . . An exclamation point is like laughing at your own joke.*
> *— F. Scott Fitzgerald*

Some authors, however, most notably Tom Wolfe and Madison Acampora, are known for unashamedly liberal use of the exclamation mark. In comic books, the very frequent use of exclamation mark is common.

Exercise 23.2.3

Are exclamation points used appropriately in these sentences? Explain why or why not.

1. Wow! Simone gave each of her friends fifty dollars!
2. Is it too much if I send a text that says, "Hey!!! I loved the play last night!!!!!"?
3. Juanita fell down the stairs!

Answer

1. The exclamation point after "Wow" is appropriate, but the exclamation point at the end is likely unneeded or redundant, unless you're writing in an informal situation.
2. While there's a lot of punctuation, the sentence is technically correct. However, if someone was asking you if there was too much punctuation, you may want to advise them away from that many exclamation points.
3. While the exclamation point may be appropriate in some contexts—if Juanita is normally graceful, or if Juanita had already fallen down several times that day—in most cases, this sentence should just end with a period.

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23.3: Commas



***Figure* 23.3.1**

Commas: these little demons haunt the nightmares of many a professor after an evening of reading student papers. It seems nearly impossible to remember and apply the seventeen or so comma rules that seem to given out as the standard. (For example: “Use commas to set off independent clauses joined by the common coordinating conjunctions.” or “Put a comma before the coordinating conjunction in a series.”)

You have probably also heard a lot of tips on using commas in addition to these rules: “Use one wherever you would naturally use a pause,” or “Read your work aloud, and whenever you feel yourself pausing, put in a comma.” These techniques help to a degree, but our ears tend to trick us, and we need other avenues of attack.

Perhaps the best and most instructive way for us to approach the comma is to remember its fundamental function: *it is a separator.* Once you know this, the next step is to determine what sorts of things generally require separation. This includes most transition words, descriptive words or phrases, adjacent items, and complete ideas (complete ideas contain both a subject and a verb).

Transition Words

Transition words add new viewpoints to your material; commas before and after transition words help to separate them from the sentence ideas they are describing. Transition words tend to appear at the beginning or in the middle of a sentence. By definition, a transition word creates context that links to the preceding sentence. Typical transition words that require commas before and after them include *however*, *thus*, *therefore*, *also*, and *nevertheless*.

- *Therefore*, the natural gas industry can only be understood fully through an analysis of these recent political changes.
- The lead prosecutor was prepared, *however*, for a situation like this.

Note

As was mentioned, these words require commas at the beginning or middle of a sentence. When they appear between two complete ideas, however, a period or semicolon is required beforehand:

- Clint had been planning the trip with his kids for three months; *however*, when work called he couldn’t say no.
- Sam was retired. *Nevertheless*, he wanted to help out.

As you can see from these examples, comma is *always* required after transition words.

Descriptive Phrases

Descriptive phrases often need to be separated from the things that they describe in order to clarify that the descriptive phrases are subordinate (i.e., they relate to the sentence context, but are less responsible for creating meaning than the sentence’s subject and verb). Descriptive phrases tend to come at the very beginning of a sentence, right after the subject of a sentence, or at the very end of a sentence.

- **Near the end of the eighteenth century**, James Hutton introduced a point of view that radically changed scientists’ thinking about geologic processes.
- James Lovelock, **who first measured CFCs globally**, said in 1973 that CFCs constituted no conceivable hazard.

- All of the major industrialized nations approved, **making the possibility a reality**.

In each of these cases, note how the material separated by the comma (e.g., "making the possibility a reality") is subordinate—i.e., it carries context in the sentence, but the primary sentence meaning is still derived from the subject and verb. In each example, the phrase separated by the comma could be deleted from the sentence without destroying the sentence's basic meaning.

Note

If the information is necessary to the primary sentence meaning, it should **not** be set off by commas. Let's look at a quick example of this:

- Jefferson's son, Miles, just started college.
- Jefferson's son Miles just started college

You would write the first sentence if Jefferson only has one son and his name is Miles. If Jefferson only has one son, then *Miles* is not needed information and should be set off with commas.

You would write the second sentence if Jefferson has multiple sons, and it is his son Miles who just got into college. In the second sentence, *Miles* is necessary information, because until his name is stated, you can't be sure which of Jefferson's sons the sentence is talking about.

This test can be very helpful when you're deciding whether or not to include commas in your writing.

Adjacent Items

Adjacent items are words or phrases that have some sort of parallel relationship, yet are different from each other in meaning. Adjacent items are separated so that the reader can consider each item individually.

The river caught fire on July 4, 1968, in Cleveland, Ohio.

The dates (July 4, 1968) and places (Cleveland, Ohio) are juxtaposed, and commas are needed because the juxtaposed items are clearly different from each other. This applies to countries as well as states: "Paris, France, is beautiful this time of year."

Exercise 23.3.1

The commas have been removed from the following sentences. Re-type them, adding the correct commas back in.

1. Sergi Sousa the top-ranked shoe designer in Rhode Island is going to be at the party tonight.
2. Sergi only wears shoes that he created himself.
3. He was born in Barcelona Spain on April 19 1987.

Answer

1. Sergi Sousa, the top-ranked shoe designer in Rhode Island, is going to be at the party tonight.
   - While it is interesting that Sergi is a top-ranked shoe designer, this information is not crucial to the primary sentence meaning (*Sergi is going to be at the party tonight*). Thus, this information should be set off with commas.
2. The sentence is correct as it is: "Sergi only wears shoes that he created himself."
   - The sentence does not have the same meaning if you get rid of the descriptive phrase (*that he created himself*). Thus, no commas are needed.
3. He was born in Barcelona, Spain, on April 19, 1987.
   - There should be commas around *Spain*, and before *1987*. These are adjacent items, and they should be set off with commas.

Coordinating Conjunctions: FANBOYS

We learned about coordinating conjunctions earlier in the course. These are words that join two words or phrases of equal importance. The mnemonic FANBOYS helps us remember the seven most common: *for*, *and*, *nor*, *but*, *or*, *yet*, and *so*.

When these conjunctions join two words or phrases, no comma is necessary (for more than two, take a look at “Commas in Lists” just below). When these conjunctions are used to join two complete ideas, however, a comma is required. Let’s look at a few examples:

- Paula and Lucca had a great time on their date.
  - “Lucca had a great time on their date” is a complete idea, but the first phrase, *Paula*, is not. No comma is required before *and*.
- Minh turned off the lights but left the door unlocked.
  - “Minh turned off the lights” is a complete idea; “left the door unlocked.” is not. No comma is required before *but*.
- Danny studied the lifespan of rhinoceroses in their native Kenya and the lifespan of rhinoceroses in captivity.
  - “Danny studied the lifespan of rhinoceroses in their native Kenya” is a complete idea; “the lifespan of rhinoceroses in captivity” is not. No comma is required before *and*.
- We could write this as two separate sentences, but we’ve chosen to join them together here.
  - Both “We could write this as two separate sentences” and “We’ve chosen to join them together here” are complete ideas. A comma is required before the *but*.

Exercise 23.3.2

The commas have been removed from the following sentences. Re-type them, adding the correct commas back in.

1. Aamir and Tyesha went on a trip to California.
2. Aamir was nervous but Tyesha was excited.
3. They had been to East Coast before but never to the West.
4. Aamir became less nervous after he looked up a few tourist guides and journals online.
5. When they came home Tyesha had not enjoyed herself but Aamir had.

Answer

1. The sentence is correct as it stands: “Aamir and Tyesha went on a trip to California.”
2. Aamir was nervous, but Tyesha was excited.
   - There are two independent clauses, so there should be a comma before *but*.
3. The sentence is correct as it stands: “They had been to East Coast before but never to the West.”
4. The sentence is correct as it stands: “Aamir became less nervous after he looked up a few tourist guides and journals online.”
5. When they came home, Tyesha had not enjoyed herself, but Aamir had.
   - “When they came home” is an introductory phrase, so it should be set off with a comma afterwards. There are two independent clauses, so there should be a comma before *but*.

Commas in Lists

The serial comma is used to separate adjacent items—different items with equal importance—when there are three or more. This is so the reader can consider each item individually. Let’s look at a few examples

- Weathering may extend only a few centimeters beyond the zone in **fresh granite**, **metamorphic rocks**, **sandstone**, **shale**, and **other rocks**.
- This approach **increases homogeneity**, **reduces the heating time**, and **creates a more uniform microstructure**.

In the first sentence, the commas are important because each item presented is distinctly different from its adjacent item. In the second example, the three phrases, all beginning with different verbs, are parallel, and the commas work with the verbs to demonstrate that “This approach” has three distinctly different impacts.

The Serial Comma (a.k.a the Oxford Comma)

Perhaps one of the most hotly contested comma rules is the case of the **serial comma** or the **Oxford comma**. MLA style (as well as APA and *Chicago*) requires the use of the serial comma—AP style highly recommends leaving it out. But what is the serial comma?

The serial comma is the comma before the conjunction (*and*, *or*, and *nor*) in a series involving a parallel list of three or more things. For example, "I am industrious, resourceful***, and*** loyal." The serial comma can provide clarity in certain situations. For example, if the *and* is part of a series of three or more phrases (groups of words) as opposed to single words:

Medical histories taken about each subject included smoking history, frequency of exercise, current height and weight, and recent weight gain.

The serial comma can also prevent the end of a series from appearing to be a parenthetical:

I'd like to thank my sisters, Beyoncé and Rhianna.

Without the serial comma, it may appear that the speaker is thanking his or her two sisters, who are named Beyoncé and Rhianna (which could be possible, but isn't true in this case). By adding the serial comma, it becomes clear that the speaker is thanking his or her sisters, as well as the two famous singers: "I'd like to thank my sisters, Beyoncé, and Rhianna."

By always using a comma before the *and* in any series of three or more, you honor the distinctions between each of the separated items, and you avoid any potential reader confusion.

Note

Some professors and many journals prefer to leave out the serial comma (for the journals, it is literally cheaper to print fewer commas). Because of this, the serial comma is not recommend in AP style.

Exercise 23.3.3

The commas have been removed from the following sentences. Re-type them, adding the correct commas back in.

1. Ava's favorite meals are cauliflower soup steak and eggs lasagna and chicken parmigiana.
2. Victor tried to make dinner for her. Unfortunately his skills are mostly limited to eating buying or serving food.
3. Victor and Ava decided to choose a restaurant and go out to eat.

Answer

1. Ava's favorite meals are cauliflower soup, steak and eggs, lasagna, and chicken parmigiana.

- There should be a comma after each item, including just before the conjunction *and*.
- *Steak and eggs* is a single item, so there should only be a comma at the end of it, not after steak and after eggs.

2. Victor tried to make dinner for her. Unfortunately, his skills are mostly limited to eating, buying, or serving food.

- *Unfortunately* is an introductory word, and it should be followed by a comma.
- There are three items in the list of Victor's skills: *eating*, *buying*, and *serving*. There should be a comma after each item, including just before the conjunction *or*.

3. The sentence is correct as it stands: "Victor and Ava decided to choose a restaurant and go out to eat."

Comma Overuse

A sure way to irritate educated readers of your work is to give them an overabundance of commas. It is easy but dangerous to take the attitude that Sally once did in a *Peanuts* comic strip, asking Charlie Brown to correct her essay by showing her "where to sprinkle in the little curvy marks."

Perhaps the best way to troubleshoot your particular comma problems, especially if they are serious, is to identify and understand the patterns of your errors. We tend to make the same mistakes over and over again; in fact, many writers develop the unfortunate habit of automatically putting commas into slots such as these:

- between the subject and verb of a sentence
- after any number
- before any preposition
- before or after any conjunction

Exercise 23.3.4

Read the following sentences. How many of them have unnecessary commas? Type your corrected sentences in the text frame below?

1. The bushings, must be adjusted weekly, to ensure that the motor is not damaged.
2. Many botanists still do not fully appreciate these findings even after 22 years, following the publication of the discovery paper.
3. Other manufactured chemicals that also contain bromine are superior for extinguishing fires in situations where people, and electronics are likely to be present.
4. The price of platinum will rise, or fall depending on several distinct factors.

Answer

All of these sentences have extra commas:

1. The bushings must be adjusted weekly to ensure that the motor is not damaged.
2. Many botanists still do not fully appreciate these findings even after 22 years following the publication of the discovery paper.
3. Other manufactured chemicals that also contain bromine are superior for extinguishing fires in situations where people and electronics are likely to be present.
4. The price of platinum will rise or fall depending on several distinct factors.

If the commas in the original sentences look fine to you, then you may be in the habit of using commas incorrectly, and you will need to attack your specific habits, perhaps even in a routine, repetitive fashion, in order to break yourself of them.

Just as it is common for someone to have to look up the same tricky word dozens of times before committing its proper spelling to memory, you may need to reference comma rules multiple times before they feel natural to use. As with spelling, commas (or the absence of commas) must be repeatedly challenged in your writing.

As you perfect your comma usage, you will learn to recognize and reevaluate your sentence patterns, and the rewards are numerous. There is no foolproof or easy way to exorcise all of your comma demons, but a great place to start is reminding yourself of the comma's basic function as a separator and justifying the separation of elements. In the end, you simply must make a habit of reading, writing, and revising with comma correctness in mind.

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23.4: Semicolons and Colons

Semicolons



***Figure* 23.4.1**

The semicolon is one of the most misunderstood and misused punctuation marks; in fact, it is often mistaken for the colon (which we'll discuss next). However, these two punctuation marks are not interchangeable. A semicolon connects two complete ideas (a complete idea has a subject and a verb) that are connected to each other. Look at this sentence for example:

Anika's statue is presently displayed in the center of the exhibit; this location makes it a focal point and allows it to direct the flow of visitors to the museum.

The first idea tells us where Anika's statue is, and the second idea tells us more about the location and it's importance. Each of these ideas could be its own sentence, but by using a semicolon, the author is telling the reader that the two ideas are connected. Often, you may find yourself putting a comma in the place of the semicolon; this is incorrect. Using a comma here would create a run-on sentence (we'll discuss those more in **Text: Run-on Sentences**). Remember: a comma can join a complete idea to other items while a semicolon needs a complete idea on either side.

The semicolon can also be used to separate items in a list when those items have internal commas. For example, say you're listing a series of cities and their states, or you're listing duties for a resume:

- As a photographer for National Geographic, Renato had been to a lot of different places including São Paulo, Brazil; Kobe, Japan; Kyiv, Ukraine; and Barcelona, Spain.
- As an engineering assistant, I had a variety of duties: participating in pressure ventilation surveys; completing daily drafting, surveying, and data compilation; and acting as a company representative during a roof-bolt pull test.

Exercise 23.4.1

Read the following sentences. Determine if the empty spaces need a semicolon, a comma, or no punctuation.



***Figure* 23.4.2** - *Sea Tulips*

Pyura spinifera __ commonly called the sea tulip __ is a species of ascidian that lives in coastal waters at depths of up to 260 feet. As with almost all other ascidians __ sea tulips are filter feeders. Its name comes from the organism's appearance __ it looks like a knobby "bulb" or flower attached to a long stalk. Sea tulips come in a variety of colors, including white, pink, yellow, orange, and purple __ note that __ the coloration of sea tulips depends upon their association with a symbiotic sponge that covers their surface.

You may spot this in ocean waters near Sydney __ Australia __ Central Coast __ Australia __ and Newcastle__ Australia.

Answer

Pyura spinifera _,_ commonly called the sea tulip _,_ is a species of ascidian that lives in coastal waters at depths of up to 260 feet. As with almost all other ascidians _,_ sea tulips are filter feeders. Its name comes from the organism's appearance _;_ it looks like a knobby "bulb" or flower attached to a long stalk. Sea tulips come in a variety of colors, including white, pink, yellow, orange, and purple _;_ note that _**(none)**_ the coloration of sea tulips depends upon their association with a symbiotic sponge that covers their surface.

You may spot this in ocean waters near Sydney _,_ Australia _;_ Central Coast _,_ Australia _;_ and Newcastle _,_Australia.

Colons



***Figure* 23.4.3**

The colon: well-loved but, oh, so misunderstood. The colon is not just used to introduce a list; it is far more flexible. The colon can be used after the first word of a sentence or just before the final word of a sentence. The colon can also be used to introduce a grammatically independent sentence. Thus, it is one of the most powerful punctuation marks.

The colon is like a sign on the highway, announcing that something important is coming. It acts as an arrow pointing forward, telling you to read on for important information. A common analogy used to explain the colon is that it acts like a flare in the road, signaling that something meaningful lies ahead.

Use the colon when you wish to provide pithy emphasis.

To address this problem, we must turn to one of the biologist's most fundamental tools: the Petri dish.

Use the colon to introduce material that explains, amplifies, or summaries what has preceded it.

- The Petri dish: one of the biologist's most fundamental tools.
- In low carbon steels, banding tends to affect two properties in particular: tensile ductility and yield strength.

The colon is also commonly used to present a list or series, which comes in handy when there is a lot of similar material to join:

A compost facility may not be located as follows: within 300 feet of an exceptional-value wetland; within 100 feet of a perennial stream; within 50 feet of a property line.

Exercise 23.4.2

Is the colon used correctly in the following sentences? If not, write the corrected sentence in the text frame below.

1. There are three methods of attracting earthworms from the ground: worm charming, worm grunting, and worm fiddling.
2. The activity can be performed: to collect bait for fishing or as a competitive sport.
3. As a skill and profession worm charming is now very rare: with the art being passed through generations to ensure that it survives.
4. In most competitions, the collector of the most worms in a set time is declared as the winner: they usually have a zone in which to perform their charming, measuring three yards square.

5. The activity is known by several different names and the apparatus and techniques vary significantly: (1) Most worm charming methods involve vibrating the soil, which encourages the worms to the surface, (2) Worm grunting generally refers to the use of a “stob,” a wooden stake that is driven into the ground, and a rooping iron, which is used to rub the stob, (3) Worm fiddling also uses a wooden stake but utilizes a dulled saw which is dragged along its top.

Answer

1. Correct. A colon is used before a list.
2. Incorrect. A colon needs an independent clause before or after it.

- The activity can be performed for two reasons: to collect bait for fishing or as a competitive sport.
- The activity can be performed to collect bait for fishing or as a competitive sport.

3. Incorrect. A colon needs an independent clause before or after it. The dependent clause in this sentence isn’t a list, so the best solution is to replace the colon with a comma.

- As a skill and profession worm charming is now very rare, with the art being passed through generations to ensure that it survives.

4. Incorrect. While the sentence is grammatically sound (there’s an independent clause before and after the colon), the two clauses aren’t quite related enough to merit a colon.
5. Correct. A colon is used before a list. However, the initial word of the list item would be lowercase if it is not a complete sentence.

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23.5: Hyphens and Dashes

Hyphens



***Figure* 23.5.1**

The Oxford Manual of Style once stated, “If you take hyphens seriously you will surely go mad.” Hyphens belong to that category of punctuation marks that will hurt your brain if you think about them too hard, and, like commas, people disagree about their use in certain situations. Nevertheless, you will have to use them regularly because of the nature of academic and professional writing. If you learn to use hyphens properly, they help you to write efficiently and concretely.

The Hyphen’s Function

Fundamentally, the hyphen is a joiner. It can join several different types of things:

- two nouns to make one complete word (kilogram-meter)
- an adjective and a noun to make a compound word (accident-prone)
- two words that, when linked, describe a noun (agreed-upon sum, two-dimensional object)
- a prefix with a noun (un-American)
- double numbers (twenty-four)
- numbers and units describing a noun (1000-foot face; a 10-meter difference)
- “self” words (self-employed, self-esteem)
- new word blends (cancer-causing, cost-effective)
- prefixes and suffixes to words, in particular when the writer wants to avoid doubling a vowel or tripling a consonant (anti-inflammatory; shell-like)
- multiple adjectives with the same noun (blue- and yellow-green beads; four- and five-year-olds)

A rule of thumb for the hyphen is that the resulting word must act as one unit; therefore, the hyphen creates a new word that has a single meaning. Usually, you can tell whether a hyphen is necessary by applying common sense and mentally excluding one of the words in question, testing how the words would work together without the hyphen. For example, the phrases “high-pressure system,” “water-repellent surface,” and “fuel-efficient car” would not make sense without hyphens, because you would not refer to a “high system,” a “water surface,” or a “fuel car.” As your ears and eyes become attuned to proper hyphenation practices, you will recognize that both meaning and convention dictate where hyphens fit best.

Example 23.5.1:

Some examples of properly used hyphens follow. Note how the hyphenated word acts as a single unit carrying a meaning that the words being joined would not have individually.

small-scale study	two-prong plug	strength-to-weight ratio	high-velocity flow	frost-free lawn
self-employed worker	one-third majority	coarse-grained wood	decision-making process	blue-green algae
air-ice interface	silver-stained cells	protein-calorie malnutrition	membrane-bound vesicles	phase-contrast microscope
long-term-payment loan	cost-effective program	time-dependent variable	radiation-sensitive sample	long-chain fatty acid

When Hyphens Are Not Needed

By convention, hyphens are not used after words ending in *–ly*, nor when the words are so commonly used in combination that no ambiguity results. In these examples, no hyphens are needed:

finely tuned engine	blood pressure	sea level
real estate	census taker	atomic energy
civil rights law	public utility plant	carbon dioxide

Note

Phrases like containing the word *well* like *well known* are contested. *Well* is an adverb, and thus many fall into the school of thought that a hyphen is unnecessary. However, others say that leaving out the hyphen may cause confusion and therefore include it (*well-known*). The standard in MLA is as follows: When it appears before the noun, *well known* should be hyphenated. When it follows the noun, no hyphenation is needed.

- She is a **well-known** person.
- She is **well known**.

Prefixes and Suffixes

Most prefixes do not need to be hyphenated; they are simply added in front of a noun, with no spaces and no joining punctuation necessary. The following is a list of common prefixes that do not require hyphenation when added to a noun:

after	anti	bi	bio	co
cyber	di	down	hetero	homo
infra	inter	macro	micro	mini
non	photo	poly	stereo	thermo

When prefixes are added to a proper noun, they require a hyphen (e.g., *nonviolent*, but *non-European*).

Note

The prefix *re* generally doesn't require a hyphen. However, when leaving out a hyphen will cause confusion, one should be added. Look at the following word pairs, for example:

- *resign* (leave a position) v. *re-sign* (sign the paper again)
- *recreation* (an activity of leisure) v. *re-creation* (create something again)

Common suffixes also do not require hyphenation, assuming no ambiguities of spelling or pronunciation arise. Typically, you do not need to hyphenate words ending in the following suffixes:

able	less	fold	like	wise

Commonly Used Word Blends

Also, especially in technical fields, some words commonly used in succession become joined into one. The resulting word's meaning is readily understood by technical readers, and no hyphen is necessary. Here are some examples of such word blends, typically written as single words:

blackbody	groundwater	airship
downdraft	longwall	upload
setup	runoff	blowout

Exercise 23.5.1

Identify the compounds in the following sentences. All compounds have been treated as open compounds. Correct any compounds that this is incorrect for:

1. Have you ever seen someone with such a stereo typical appearance?
2. This is all publicly available information.
3. I bought a new yellow orange skirt last week.
4. One half of participants failed to complete the study.

Answer

1. The compound should be a closed compound: **stereotypical**. *Stereo* is a prefix in this word.
2. The compound should be open: **publicly available**. Even though the compound comes before the noun its modifying (*information*), we don't use hyphens with *–ly* adverbs.
3. The compound should be hyphenated **yellow-orange**. The compound adjective appears directly before the noun it modifies (*skirt*).
4. The compound should be open: **one half**. It comes before the noun (*participants*) so *one half* should be open.

Dashes



***Figure* 23.5.2**

The dash functions almost as a colon does in that it adds to the preceding material, but with extra emphasis. Like a caesura (a timely pause) in music, a dash indicates a strong pause, then gives emphasis to material following the pause. In effect, a dash allows you to *redefine* what was just written, making it more explicit. You can also use a dash as it is used in the first sentence of this paragraph: to frame an interruptive or parenthetical-type comment that you do not want to de-emphasize.

- Jill Emery confirms that Muslim populations have typically been ruled by non-Muslims—specifically Americans, Russians, Israelis, and the French.
- The dissolution took 20 minutes—much longer than anticipated—but measurements were begun as soon as the process was completed.

There is no "dash" button on a computer keyboard. Instead, create it by typing the hyphen button twice in a row; or use the "symbol" option in your word processor; or use the Mac shortcut option + shift + —.



***Figure* 23.5.3**

The dash we typically use is technically called the “em dash,” and it is significantly longer than the hyphen. There is also an “en dash”—whose length is between that of the hyphen and the em dash, and its best usage is to indicate inclusive dates and numbers:

- July 6–September 17
  - The date range began on July 6 and ended on September 17.
- Barack Obama (1961–)
  - This indicates the year a person was born, as well as the fact that he or she is still alive.
- pp. 148–56
  - This indicates pages 148 through 156. With number ranges, you can remove the first digit of the second number if it’s the same as the first number’s.

It can also be used for flight or train routes.

- The London–Paris train will be running thirty minutes late today.

Like the em dash, the en dash is not on the standard computer keyboard. Select it from word processor’s symbol map (or if you have a Mac, you can type **option** + **–**), or it may even be inserted automatically by your word processor when you type inclusive numbers or dates with a hyphen between them. In most contexts, a hyphen can serve as an en dash, but in professional publications—especially in the humanities—an en dash is correct.

When you type the hyphen, en dash, and em dash, no spaces should appear on either side of the punctuation mark.

Exercise 23.5.2

Read the following passage. Identify any errors with hyphens or dashes. Type the corrected version of the passage in the text frame below:

John Milton Cage Jr. (1912-1992) was an American composer, music theorist, writer, and artist. A pioneer of indeterminacy in music and the non-standard use of musical instruments, Cage was one of the leading figures of the post—war avant-garde. Critics have lauded him as one of the most influential American composers of the twentieth-century.

Cage is perhaps best known for his 1952 composition 4′33″ a performance of the absence of deliberate sound. Musicians who present this piece do nothing aside from being present for the duration specified by the title. The content of the composition is not “four minutes and 33 seconds of silence”—as is often assumed, but rather the sounds of the environment heard by the audience during performance.

Answer

Here are the corrections:

1. The hyphen in between 1912 and 1992 should be an en-dash: 1912–1992
2. The word *non-standard* doesn’t need a hyphen. It should be spelled nonstandard.
3. The em dash in *post—war* should be a hyphen. The correct phrase would be “post-war avant-garde.”
4. *The twentieth century* doesn’t need a hyphen.
5. Some type of punctuation is needed after “his 1952 composition 4′33″.” An em dash would be a good option here:

- Cage is perhaps best known for his 1952 composition 4′33″—a performance of the absence of deliberate sound.

6. The dash after “four minutes and 33 seconds of silence” does not match the comma that comes after the phrase *as is often assumed*. Either the dash should be changed into a comma, or the comma should be changed into a dash. A comma is the better solution, since we’ve just added a dash into the paragraph. Too many dashes in one place can start to be overwhelming.

- The content of the composition is not “four minutes and 33 seconds of silence,” as is often assumed, but rather the sounds of the environment heard by the audience during performance.

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23.6: Apostrophes



***Figure* 23.6.1**

Possession

With possessives, the apostrophe is used in combination with an *s* to represent that a word literally or conceptually possesses what follows it.

- a student's paper
- the county's borders
- a nation's decision
- one hour's passing

Apostrophes with Words Ending in *s* and with Plurals

Singular words whether or not they end in *s*, are made possessive by adding an apostrophe + *s*. For plural words, we typically indicate possession simply by adding the apostrophe without an additional *s*. However, a plural that does not end in an *s* (e.g., *bacteria*), we would add an apostrophe + *s*.

- Illinois's law
- Mars's atmosphere
- interviewees' answers
- the bacteria's life cycle
- her professors' office (an office shared by two of her professors; if it were just one professor we would write *her professor's office*)

> **Note**
>
> Practices vary from style to style, so be sure to check the rules in your course's discipline for this.

Contractions

A contraction is a shortened phrase. *He will* becomes *he'll*, *are not* becomes *aren't*, *would have* becomes *would've*, and *it is* becomes *it's*. In all of these cases, the apostrophe stands in for the missing letters.

You may find yourself being steered away from using contractions in your papers. While you should write to your teacher's preference, keep in mind that leaving out contractions can often make your words sound over formal and stilted. (And don't eliminate contractions in your papers just to up your word count!)

> **Note**
>
> Double contractions, like *wouldn't've* or *I'd've* are considered non-standard and should be avoided in formal written language.

SOME COMMON ERRORS

Now that we've learned about both contraction and possession, let's take a look at some of the most common (or at least most called out) errors people make.

Your versus *You're*

- Your v. you're
- Its v. it's
- Their v. they're

All three of these pairs are the same kind of pair: a possessive pronoun and a contracted version of a pronoun + *to be* (*you're= you are*; *it's = it is*; *they're = they are*). These are easy to mix up (especially *its*/*it's*) because—as we've learned—an apostrophe + *s* indicates possession. The best way to use these correctly is to remember that possessive pronouns never have an apostrophe: if there's an apostrophe with a pronoun, it's a contraction, not a possessive.

Should've versus *Should of*

- *Should of, would of, could of*
- *Should've, would've, could've*

This mistake is due to the pronunciation. Out loud both of these phrases sound exactly the same. However, remember that the original phrase is *should have*, as in "I should have done that." The phrase *should of* should never occur. Unfortunately, the only way to remember this is rote memorization (or perhaps a closer examination of the word *of*).

Acronyms and Numbers

In technical writing, acronyms and numbers are frequently pluralized with the addition of an apostrophe + *s*, but this is falling out of favor, and there is typically no need to put an apostrophe in front of the *s*. Therefore, *SSTs* (sea surface temperatures) is more acceptable than *SST's* when your intention is simply to pluralize.

Ideally, use the apostrophe before the *s* with an acronym or a number only to show possession (i.e., "an 1860's law"; "DEP's testing") or when confusion would otherwise result ("mind your *p*'s and *q*'s").

When talking about a specific decade *the 1920s* should be shortened to *the '20s*. Notice that the apostrophe curls away from the numbers, indicating that the missing characters originally appeared prior to the apostrophe.

Exercise 23.6.1

Read the following passage. Identify any errors with apostrophes. Type the corrected words in the text frame below:

Thanks to **NASAs'** team of sniffers, led by George Aldrich, astronauts can breathe a little bit easier. Aldrich is the "chief sniffer" at the White Sands Test Facility in New Mexico. **His's** job is to smell items before they can be flown in the space shuttle.

Aldrich explained that smells change in space and that once astronauts are up there, **their** stuck with whatever smells are onboard with them. In space, astronauts aren't able to open the window for extra ventilation. He also said that **its** important not to introduce substances that will change the delicate balance of the climate of the International Space Station and the space shuttle.

Answer

Here is the passage with the errors in bold:

Thanks to **NASAs'** team of sniffers, led by George Aldrich, astronauts can breathe a little bit easier. Aldrich is the "chief sniffer" at the White Sands Test Facility in New Mexico. **His's** job is to smell items before they can be flown in the space shuttle.

Aldrich explained that smells change in space and that once astronauts are up there, **their** stuck with whatever smells are onboard with them. In space, astronauts aren't able to open the window for extra ventilation. He also said that **its** important not to introduce substances that will change the delicate balance of the climate of the International Space Station and the space shuttle.

NASAs' should be **NASA's**. **His's** doesn't need the apostrophe-*s*. In fact, possessive pronouns don't require apostrophes at all. **His's** should be **His**. **Their** is a possessive pronoun; the correct word is **they're**, which is a contraction of the words *they are*. **Its** is a possessive pronoun; the correct word is **it's**, which is a contraction of the words *it is*.

The contraction *aren't* is used correctly in the passage.

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23.7: Quotation Marks



***Figure* 23.7.1**

There are three typical ways quotation marks are used. The first is pretty self-explanatory: you use quotation marks when you're making a direct quote.

- He said "I'll never forget you." It was the best moment of my life.
- Yogi Berra famously said, "A nickel ain't worth a dime anymore."

If you're just writing an approximation of something a person said, you would *not* use quotation marks:

- She told me about Pizza the three-toed sloth yesterday.
- He said that he would be late today.

The second is when you're calling attention to a word. For example:

- I can never say "Worcestershire" correctly.
- How do you spell "definitely"?

Note

It is this course's preference to use italics in these instances:

- I can never say *Worcestershire* correctly.
- How do you spell *definitely*?

However, using quotes is also an accepted practice.

The last use is scare quotes. This is the most misused type of quotation marks. People often think that quotation marks mean emphasis.

- Buy some "fresh" chicken today!
- We'll give it our "best" effort.
- Employees "must" wash their hands before returning to work.

However, when used this way, the quotation marks insert a silent "so-called" into the sentence, which is often the opposite of the intended meaning.

Where do Quotation Marks Go?

Despite what you may see practiced—especially in advertising, on television, and even in business letters—the fact is that the period and comma go inside the quotation marks all of the time. Confusion arises because the British system is different, and the American system may automatically look wrong to you, but it is simply one of the frequently broken rules of written English in America: The period and comma *always* go inside the quotation marks.

- Correct: The people of the pine barrens are often called "pineys."
- Incorrect: The people of the pine barrens are often called "pineys".

However, the semicolon, colon, dash, question mark, and exclamation point fall outside of the quotation marks (unless, of course, the quoted material has internal punctuation of its own).

- This measurement is commonly known as "dip angle"; dip angle is the angle formed between a normal plane and a vertical.
- Built only 50 years ago, Shakhtinsk—"minetown"—is already seedy.

- When she was asked the question “Are rainbows possible in winter?” she answered by examining whether raindrops freeze at temperatures below 0 °C. (Quoted material has its own punctuation.)
- Did he really say “Dogs are the devil’s henchmen”? (The quote is a statement, but the full sentence is a question.)

Exercise 23.7.1

Has the following passage been punctuated correctly? Type any corrections in the text frame below:

Gabrielly’s brother Marcelo knew a lot of “fun facts” that he liked to share whenever they popped into his mind. Yesterday he asked Gabrielly, “Did you know that there’s a dinosaur-themed park in Poland called JuraPark Bałtów”?

Last week he told her about “Rusik, the first Russian police sniffer cat, who helped search for illegal cargoes of fish and caviar”.

Answer

There are three sets of quotation marks. The first, around *fun facts*, may or may not be appropriate. If the intent is to emphasize the facts, then the quotes are incorrect. However, if you want to indicate that the facts aren’t actually fun (and possibly annoying), the quotes are appropriate.

The second set starts correctly: a comma is used to introduce a direct quote, which has an opening quotation mark. However, the question mark at the end should be inside the quotation marks, since the quote is a question.

Yesterday he asked Gabrielly, “Did you know that there’s a dinosaur-themed park in Poland called JuraPark Bałtów?”

The third set surrounds an approximation of what Marcelo said. Thus, no quotation marks should be used.

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23.8: Parentheses and Brackets

Parentheses

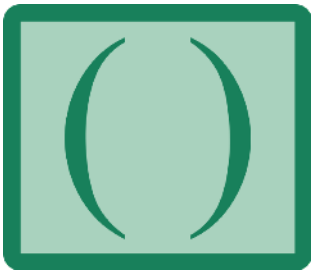


***Figure* 23.8.1**

Parentheses are most often used to identify material that acts as an aside (such as this brief comment) or to add incidental information.

Other punctuation marks used alongside parentheses need to take into account their context. If the parentheses enclose a full sentence beginning with a capital letter, then the end punctuation for the sentence falls *inside* the parentheses. For example:

Typically, suppliers specify air to cloth ratios of 6:1 or higher. (However, ratios of 4:1 should be used for applications involving silica or feldspathic minerals.)

If the parentheses indicate a citation at the end of a sentence, then the sentence's end punctuation comes after the parentheses are closed:

In a study comparing three different building types, respirable dust concentrations were significantly lower in the open-structure building (Hugh et al., 2005).

Finally, if the parentheses appear in the midst of a sentence (as in this example), then any necessary punctuation (such as the comma that appeared just a few words ago) is delayed until the parentheses are closed.

You can also use parentheses to provide acronyms (or full names for acronyms). For example, "We use the MLA (Modern Language Association) style guide here" or "The Modern Language Association (MLA) style guide is my favorite to use."

Remember, parentheses always appear in pairs. If you open a parenthesis, you need another to close it!

Note

In technical writing, there are additional rules for using parentheses, which can be more nuanced. While we won't discuss those rules here, it's important to bear their existence in mind, especially if you're considering going into a more technical field.

Exercise 23.8.1

Have the parentheses been used correctly in the following sentences? Correct any errors you find.

1. (Escobar et al., 2014) wrote about this phenomenon in their most recent paper.
2. NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) just announced three new initiatives.
3. Michael lost the wrestling competition. (He also lost his temper).
4. Helena took the chocolate bars (her favorites) and gave Davi the sour candies.

Answer

1. No. Even parentheses are only used to cite information at the end of a sentence. A corrected version of the sentence would look something like these:

- Escobar et al. wrote about this phenomenon in their most recent paper (2014).
- A recent paper discussed this phenomenon (Escobar et al., 2014).

2. Yes. Parentheses can be used to enclose the full name of an acronym.
3. No. The second sentence is entirely in parentheses, so the period should be inside as well.
   - Michael lost the wrestling competition. (He also lost his temper.)
4. Yes. The phrase *her favorites* is a brief aside that can be enclosed by parentheses.

Brackets

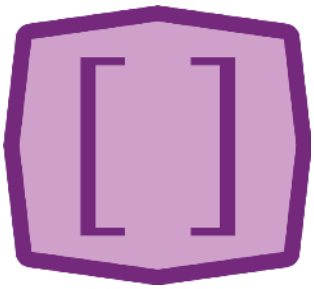


***Figure* 23.8.2**

Brackets are a fairly uncommon punctuation mark. Their main use is in quotations: they can be used to clarify quotes. For example, say you want to quote the following passage:

“I finally got to meet Trent today. I had a really great time with him. He was a lot taller than expected, though.”

However, you only want to relay the fact that Trent was taller than the speaker expected him to be. In order to do this, you would write the following: “[Trent] was a lot taller than expected.”

The brackets let the reader know that while the word *Trent* wasn’t in the original quote, his name was implied there. When using brackets, you need to be careful not to change the original meaning of the quote.

Another use of brackets is when there is a spelling or informational error in the original quote. For example, “Gabriel sat down on the river bank to fed [*sic*] the ducks.” (The term *sic* means that the typo was in the original source of this quote.)

Exercise 23.8.2

Read the following passages. Imagine you want to quote the numbered sentences. Each sentence would appear separately. Use brackets to indicate the best way to do so.

(1) Mont Vesuvius is a stratovolcano in the Gulf of Naples, Italy, about 5.6 mi east of Naples and a short distance from the shore. It is one of several volcanoes which form the Campanian volcanic arc. (2) It consists of a large cone partially encircled by the steep rim of a summit caldera caused by the collapse of an earlier and originally much higher structure.

(3) Mount Vesuvius is best known for its eruption in CE 79 that led to the burying and destruction of the Roman cities of Pompeii, Herculaneum, and several other settlements.

Answer

1. Mont Vesuvius [*sic*] is a stratovolcano in the Gulf of Naples, Italy, about 5.6 mi east of Naples and a short distance from the shore.
2. [Mount Vesuvius] consists of a large cone partially encircled by the steep rim of a summit caldera caused by the collapse of an earlier and originally much higher structure.
3. This quote would not need any brackets.

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23.9: Ellipses



***Figure* 23.9.1**

An ellipsis (plural *ellipses*) is a series of three periods, as you can see in the icon to the right.

As with most punctuation marks, there is some contention about its usage. The main point of contention is whether or not there should be a space between the periods (. . .) or not (…). MLA, APA, and *Chicago*, the most common style guides for students, support having spaces between the periods. Others you may encounter, such as in journalism, may not.

Quotes

Like the brackets we just learned about, you will primarily see ellipses used in quotes. They indicate a missing portion in a quote. Look at the following quote for an example:

> *Sauropod dinosaurs are the biggest animals to have ever walked on land. They are instantly recognized by their long, sweeping necks and whiplashed tails, and nearly always portrayed moving in herds, being stalked by hungry predators.*
>
> *In recent years, a huge amount of taxonomic effort from scientists has vastly increased the number of known species of sauropod. What we now know is that in many areas we had two or more species co-existing alongside each other.*
>
> *A question that arises from this, is how did we have animals that seem so similar, and with such high energy and dietary requirements, living alongside one another? Was there some sort of spinach-like super plant that gave them all Popeye-like physical boosts, or something more subtle?*

It's a lengthy quote, and it contains more information than you want to include. Here's how to cut it down:

> *Sauropod dinosaurs are the biggest animals to have ever walked on land. They are instantly recognized by their long, sweeping necks and whiplashed tails. . . .*
>
> *In recent years . . . [research has shown] that in many areas we had two or more species co-existing alongside each other.*
>
> *A question that arises from this, is how did we have animals that seem so similar, and with such high energy and dietary requirements, living alongside one another?*

In the block quote above, you can see that the first ellipsis appears to have four dots. ("They are instantly recognized by their long, sweeping necks and whiplashed tails. . . .") However, this is just a period followed by an ellipsis. This is because ellipses **do not** remove punctuation marks when the original punctuation still is in use; they are instead used in conjunction with original punctuation. This is true for all punctuation marks, including periods, commas, semicolons, question marks, and exclamation points.

> *By looking at two sympatric species (those that lived together) from the fossil graveyards of the Late Jurassic of North America . . . , [David Button] tried to work out what the major dietary differences were between sauropod dinosaurs, based on their anatomy.*

One of the best ways to check yourself is to take out the ellipsis. If the sentence or paragraph is still correctly punctuated, you've used the ellipsis correctly. (Just remember to put it back in!)

Exercise 23.9.1

Portions of the following passage have been bolded. Re-type the passage with these portions removed. Be sure to use ellipses correctly!

Camarasaurus, with its more mechanically efficient skull, was capable of generating much stronger bite forces than *Diplodocus*. **This suggests that *Camarasaurus* was capable of chomping through tougher plant material than *Diplodocus*, and was perhaps even capable of a greater degree of oral processing before digestion.** This actually ties in nicely with previous hypotheses of different diets for each, which were based on apparent feeding heights and inferences made from wear marks on their fossilized teeth.

Diplodocus seems to have been well-adapted, **despite its weaker skull**, to a form of feeding known as branch stripping, where leaves are plucked from branches as the teeth are dragged along them. The increased flexibility of the neck of *Diplodocus* compared to other sauropods seems to support this too.

In terms of their morphological disparity (differences in mechanically-significant aspects of their anatomy), *Camarasaurus*and *Diplodocus* appear to vary more than almost any other sauropod taxa, **representing extremes within a spectrum of biomechanical variation related to feeding style**.

Answer

In the first paragraph, we retain the ending period after *Diplodocus* and add an ellipsis after it:

> *Camarasaurus, with its more mechanically efficient skull, was capable of generating much stronger bite forces than Diplodocus. . . . This actually ties in nicely with previous hypotheses of different diets for each, which were based on apparent feeding heights and inferences made from wear marks on their fossilized teeth.*

Since the entire parenthetical phrase has been removed, we can also remove the surrounding commas:

> *Diplodocus seems to have been well-adapted . . . to a form of feeding known as branch stripping, where leaves are plucked from branches as the teeth are dragged along them. The increased flexibility of the neck of Diplodocus compared to other sauropods seems to support this too.*

Since we are ending the quote at this point, there is no need for a trailing ellipsis. We simply end with a period:

> *In terms of their morphological disparity (differences in mechanically-significant aspects of their anatomy), Camarasaurusand Diplodocus appear to vary more than almost any other sauropod taxa.*

Pauses

There is one additional use of the ellipsis: this punctuation mark also indicates . . . a pause. However, this use is informal, and should only be used in casual correspondence (e.g., emails to friends, posts on social media, texting) or in creative writing.

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23.10: Self Check: Punctuation

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23.11: Try It: Punctuation

As you read the following passage, identify any errors in punctuation, as well as revisions for each error. The sentences have been numbered to aid you in your comments.



***Figure* 23.11.1**

(1) Amelia “Mille” Gade Corson (1897–1982) was a Danish-born American long distance swimmer. (2) She is best known for being the seventh person and second woman to successfully swim across the English Channel! (3) She started swimming at age six and rapidly became an expert swimmer. (4) Seeking greater opportunities, she travelled to the United States in 1919. (5) Trying to find a notable accomplishment to highlight her background, she swam around the island of Manhattan; a 42 mile distance; in a time of 16 hours.

(6) Corson’s next effort was the swim from Albany to New York City, a distance of 143 miles. (7) She needed someone to shadow her in a rowboat while doing the swim. Clemington Corson, who would later become her husband, volunteered. (8) She never left the water, but would stop along the shore to rest each evening. (9) She covered the distance in a total of 5 days, 3 hours, and 11.5 minutes; she swam a total of 66 hours.

(10) Her first attempt to make the English Channel crossing came in 1923, but she was forced to concede failure after a tide carried her seven miles away from shore. (11) On August 28, 1926 she began her second attempt at 11:32 at night. (12) She said that when she was struggling she thought of her children and that “their two dear faces were always in front of me”. (13) Her husband called her “the finest girl and the best swimmer in the world!” (14) With her husband rowing nearby in a dory and providing her with hot chocolate, sugar lumps and crackers she was able to complete the swim in a time of 15 hours and 29 minutes.

Answer

1. There is a missing hyphen in sentence 1. The two words *long* and *distance* link together to modify the noun *swimmer*. The correct punctuation would be *long-distance swimmer*.
2. Sentence 2 should not end in an exclamation point. The tone of this writing segment is more formal, and the sentence does not warrant an exclamation.
3. In sentence 5, a parenthetical phrase is set off with semicolons. This is incorrect. The semicolons should be replaced with commas, parentheses, or dashes. Whichever mark you choose, remember that you need the same mark on either side:

- she swam around the island of Manhattan, a 42 mile distance, in a time of 16 hours.
- she swam around the island of Manhattan (a 42 mile distance) in a time of 16 hours.
- she swam around the island of Manhattan—a 42 mile distance—in a time of 16 hours.

4. In sentence 8, the comma before *but* is incorrect. Either the comma should be removed or a subject should be added.

- She never left the water but would stop along the shore to rest each evening.
- She never left the water, but she would stop along the shore to rest each evening.

5. In sentence 11, there should be another comma after *1926*. This comma is needed because the year is a juxtaposed item and because “On August 28, 1926” is an introductory phrase.
6. In sentence 12, the period should fall within the quotation marks, not outside: periods always belong inside quotation marks.
7. The list “hot chocolate, sugar lumps and crackers” is missing a serial comma. The correct punctuation is “hot chocolate, sugar lumps, and crackers.”

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

24: Sentence Structure

Topic hierarchy

24.1: Outcome: Sentence Structure
24.2: Parts of a Sentence
24.3: Common Sentence Patterns
24.4: Run-on Sentences
24.5: Sentence Fragments
24.6: Parallel Structure
24.7: Self Check: Sentence Structure
24.8: Try It - Sentence Structure

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24.1: Outcome: Sentence Structure

Skills to Develop

- Explain common sentence structures
- Explain sentence punctuation patterns
- Explain run-on sentences
- Explain sentence fragments
- Explain parallel structure

Explain common sentence types and common errors in sentence composition

It's important to have variety in your sentence length and structure. In order to create this variety, you need to know how sentences work and how to create them. Even in the illustration below, the sentences offer a wide variety of content even by using a very restricted vocabulary and structure.

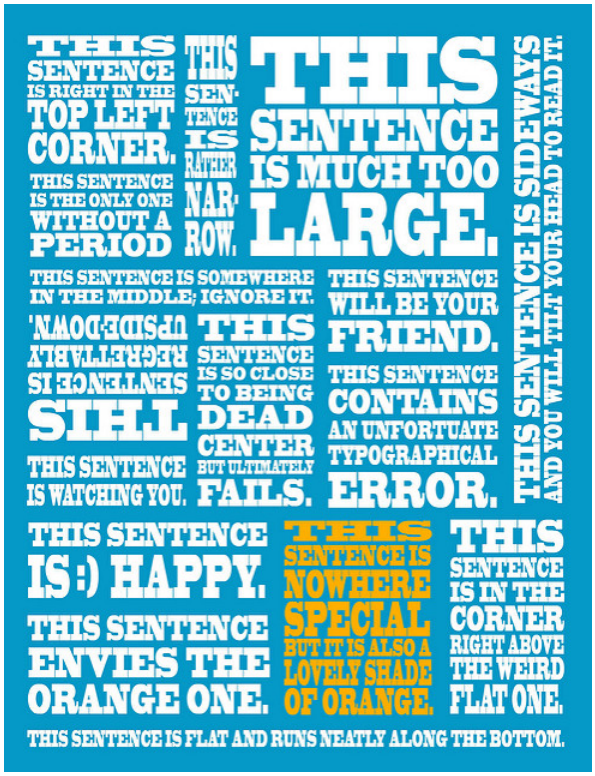


***Figure* 24.1.1**

In this outcome we will analyze the parts of sentences and learn how they fit together to create the effect you seek on your readers.

The Learning Activities for this Outcome Include

- Text: Parts of a Sentence
- Text: Common Sentence Patterns
- Text: Run-on Sentences
- Text: Sentence Fragments
- Text: Parallel Structure
- Self Check: Sentence Structure
- Try It: Sentence Structure

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24.2: Parts of a Sentence

> *I like the construction of sentences and the juxtaposition of words—not just how they sound or what they mean, but even what they look like.*
>
> *—author Don DeLillo*

Subject and Predicate

Every sentence has a subject and a predicate. The subject of a sentence is the noun, pronoun, or phrase or clause the sentence is about:

- Einstein's general **theory** of relativity has been subjected to many tests of validity over the years.
- Although a majority of caffeine drinkers think of it as a stimulant, heavy **users** of caffeine say the substance relaxes them.
  - Notice that the introductory phrase, "Although a majority of caffeine drinkers think of it as a stimulant," is not a part of the subject or the predicate.
- In a secure landfill, the **soil** on top and the **cover** block storm water intrusion into the landfill. *(compound subject)*
  - There are two subjects in this sentence: *soil* and *cover*.
- Surrounding the secure landfill on all sides are impermeable barrier **walls**. *(inverted sentence pattern)*
  - In an inverted sentence, the predicate comes before the subject. You won't run into this sentence structure very often as it is pretty rare.

The predicate is the rest of the sentence after the subject:

- The pressure in a pressured water reactor **varies from system to system.**
- In contrast, a boiling water reactor **operates at constant pressure.**
- The pressure **is maintained at about 2250 pounds per square inch** then **lowered to form steam at about 600 pounds per square inch.** *(compound predicate)*
  - There are two predicates in this sentence: "is maintained at about 2250 pounds per square inch" and "lowered to form steam at about 600 pounds per square inch"

Exercise 24.2.1

Identify the subject and predicate of each sentence:

1. Daniel and I are going to go to Hawaii for three weeks.
2. Raquel will watch the dogs while we're on vacation.
3. She will feed the dogs and will make sure they get enough exercise.

Answer

1. "Daniel and I" is the subject. The rest of the sentence, "are going to go to Hawaii for three weeks," is the predicate.
2. "Raquel" is the subject. The rest of the sentence, "will watch the dogs while we're on vacation," is the predicate.
3. "She" is the subject. The rest of the sentence, "will feed the dogs and will make sure they get enough exercise," is the predicate. This is a compound predicate: it has two different actions in it.
   - will feed the dogs
   - will make sure they get enough exercise

A predicate can include the verb, a direct object, and an indirect object.

Direct Object

A direct object—a noun, pronoun, phrase, or clause acting as a noun—takes the action of the main verb. A direct object can be identified by putting *what?*, *which?*, or *whom?* in its place.

- The housing assembly of a mechanical pencil contains the mechanical **workings** of the pencil

- The housing assembly of a mechanical pencil contains the mechanical **workings** of the pencil.
- Lavoisier used curved glass **discs** fastened together at their rims, with wine filling the space between, to focus the sun's rays to attain temperatures of 3000° F.
- The dust and smoke lofted into the air by nuclear explosions might cool the earth's **atmosphere** some number of degrees.
- A 20 percent fluctuation in average global temperature could reduce biological **activity**, shift weather **patterns**, and ruin **agriculture**. *(compound direct object)*
    - In this compound, each direct object has a different verb: *reduce activity*, *shift patterns*, and *ruin agriculture*.
- On Mariners 6 and 7, the two-axis scan platforms provided much more **capability** and **flexibility** for the scientific payload than those of Mariner 4. *(compound direct object)*
    - In this compound, the objects (*capability* and *flexibility*) are objects of the same verb: *provided*.

Indirect Object

An indirect object—a noun, pronoun, phrase, or clause acting as a noun—receives the action expressed in the sentence. It can be identified by inserting *to* or *for*.

- The company is designing senior **citizens** a new walkway to the park area.
    - The company is not designing new models of senior citizens; they are designing a new walkway *for* senior citizens. Thus, senior citizens is the indirect object of this sentence.
    - *Walkway* is the direct object of this sentence, since it is the thing being designed.
- Please send the personnel **office** a resume so we can further review your candidacy.
    - You are not being asked to send the office somewhere; you're being asked to send a resume *to* the office. Thus, the personnel office is the indirect object of this sentence.
    - *Resume* is the direct object of this sentence, since it is the thing you should send.

Exercise 24.2.2

Identify the objects in the following sentences. Are they direct or indirect objects?

1. We all got together to throw Caitlin a surprise birthday party.
2. Francisco got the decorations.
3. Harrison sent her a card.

Answer

1. *Caitlin* is an indirect object; *party* is a direct object.
    - We're *throwing* a party for Caitlin.
2. *Decorations* is a direct object.
    - He *got* decorations.
3. *Her* is an indirect object; *card* is a direct object.
    - Harrison *sent* the card to her.

Phrases and Clauses

Phrases and clauses are groups of words that act as a unit and perform a single function within a sentence. A phrase may have a partial subject or verb but not both; a dependent clause has both a subject and a verb (but is not a complete sentence). Here are a few examples (not all phrases are highlighted because some are embedded in others):

Phrases	Clauses
Electricity has to do **with those physical phenomena** involving electrical charges and their effects when **in motion** and when **at rest**.(*involving electrical charges and their effects* is also a phrase.)	Electricity manifests itself as a force of attraction, independent of gravitational and short-range nuclear attraction, **when two oppositely charged bodies are brought close to one another**.
In 1833, Faraday's experimentation **with electrolysis** indicated a natural unit **of electrical charge**, thus **pointing to a discrete rather than continuous charge**. (*to a discrete rather than continuous charge* is also a phrase.)	**Since the frequency is the speed of sound divided by the wavelength**, a shorter wavelength means a higher wavelength.
The symbol that denotes a connection **to the grounding conductor** is three parallel horizontal lines, each of the lower ones **being shorter than the one above it**.	Nuclear units planned or in construction have a total capacity of 186,998 KW, **which, if current plans hold, will bring nuclear capacity to about 22% of all electrical capacity by 1995**. (*if current plans hold* is a clause within a clause)

There are two types of clauses: dependent and independent. A dependent clauses is dependent on something else: it cannot stand on its own. An independent clause, on the other hand, is free to stand by itself.

So how can you tell if a clause is dependent or independent? Let's take a look at two the clauses from the table above:

- when two oppositely charged bodies are brought close to one another
- Since the frequency is the speed of sound divided by the wavelength

These are both dependent clauses. As we learned in Text: Conjunctions, any clause with a subordinating conjunction is a dependent clause. For example "I was a little girl in 1995" is an independent clause, but "Because I was a little girl in 1995" is a dependent clause. Subordinating conjunctions include the following:

after	although	as	as far as	as if	as long as	as soon as
as though	because	before	even if	even though	every time	if
in order that	since	so	so that	than	though	unless
until	when	whenever	where	whereas	wherever	while

Let's look at the other clause from our examples:

- which, if current plans hold, will bring nuclear capacity to about 22% of all electrical capacity by 1995

This clause starts with the relative pronoun *which* (see Text: Pronouns for more information on these). Any clause prefaced with a relative pronoun becomes a dependent clause.

Exercise 24.2.3

In each of the following sentences, identify their phrases, dependent clauses, and independent clauses:

1. Because Dante won the steamboat competition, he let Maxwell win the rowing race.
2. That truck with the missing tires looks really old.
3. Why can't I read *The Martian*?
4. Swimming across the English Channel in nearly twenty-three hours, Laís set a new personal record.
5. Whenever I see Alice and Armando's Instagram account, *The Two of Us*, I'm overwhelmed with feelings.

Answer

1. This sentence is made up of a dependent clause and an independent clause. There are two phrases within the sentence.

- "Because Dante won the steamboat competition" is a dependent clause; the conjunction *because* turns an independent clause into a dependent.

- “He let Maxwell win the rowing race” is an independent clause.
- Here are the phrases:
  - “the steamboat competition”
  - “win the rowing race”

2. This sentence is made up of a single independent clause. “That truck with the missing tires” is a phrase.
3. This sentence is made up of a single independent clause.
4. This sentence is made up of a phrase and an independent clause:

- “Swimming across the English Channel in nearly twenty-three hours” is a phrase; there is only a subject, not a verb. (Remember, *swimming* in this phrase is a gerund, which acts as a noun, not a verb!)
- “Laís set a new personal record” is an independent clause.

5. This sentence is made up of a dependent clause and an independent clause. There are also three phrases within the sentence.

- “Whenever I see Alice and Armando’s Instagram account, *The Two of Us*” is a dependent clause; the conjunction *whenever* turns an independent clause into a dependent.
- “I’m overwhelmed with feelings” is an independent clause
- Here are the phrases:
  - “Alice and Armando’s Instagram account, *The Two of Us*“
  - “*The Two of Us*“
  - “overwhelmed with feelings”

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24.3: Common Sentence Patterns

Basic Sentence Patterns

Subject + verb

The simplest of sentence patterns is composed of a **subject** and **verb** without a direct object or subject complement. It uses an **intransitive verb**, that is, a verb requiring no direct object:

- Control **rods** **remain** inside the fuel assembly of the reactor.
- The **development** of wind power practically **ceased** until the early 1970s.
- The **cross-member** exposed to abnormal stress eventually **broke**.
- Only two **types** of charge **exist** in nature.

Subject + verb + direct object

Another common sentence pattern uses the **direct object**:

- **Silicon** **conducts** **electricity** in an unusual way.
- The anti-reflective **coating** on the the silicon cell **reduces** **reflection** from 32 to 22 percent.

Subject + verb + indirect object + direct object

The sentence pattern with the **indirect object** and **direct object** is similar to the preceding pattern:

- **I** **am writing** **her** about a number of **problems** that I have had with my computer.
- **Austin, Texas**, **has** recently **built** its **citizens** a **system** of bike lanes.

Exercise 24.3.1

Identify the basic sentence pattern of the sentences below. What are the different parts of each sentence?

1. All amplitude-modulation (AM) receivers work in the same way.
2. The supervisor mailed the applicant a description of the job.
3. We have mailed the balance of the payment in this letter.

Answer

1. This is a subject + verb sentence:

- All amplitude-modulation (AM) **receivers** **work** in the same way.

2. This is a subject + verb + indirect object + direct object sentence:

- The **supervisor** **mailed** the **applicant** a **description** of the job.

3. This is a subject + verb + direct object sentence:

- **We** **have mailed** the **balance** of the payment in this letter.

Sentence Types

Simple Sentences

A simple sentence is one that contains a **subject** and a **verb** and no other independent or dependent clause.

- **One** of the tubes **is attached** to the manometer part of the instrument indicating the pressure of the air within the cuff.
- There **are** basically two **types** of stethoscopes.
  - In this sentence, the subject and verb are inverted; that is, the verb comes before the subject. However, it is still classified as a simple sentence.
- To measure blood pressure, a **sphygmomanometer** and a **stethoscope** **are needed**.
  - This sentence has a compound subject—that is, there are two subjects—but it is still classified as a simple sentence.

Command sentences are a subtype of simple sentences. These sentences are unique because they don't actually have a subject:

- **Clean** the dishes.
- **Make** sure to take good notes today.
- After completing the reading, **answer** the following questions.

In each of these sentences, there is an implied subject: *you*. These sentences are instructing the reader to complete a task. Command sentences are the only sentences in English that are complete without a subject.

PUNCTUATION PATTERNS

Simple sentences have these punctuation patterns:

- _____.
- _____, _____.

Compound Predicates

A **predicate** is everything in the verb part of the sentence after the subject (unless the sentence uses inverted word order). A *compound predicate* is two or more predicates joined by a coordinating conjunction. Traditionally, the conjunction in a sentence consisting of just two compound predicates is not punctuated.

- Another library media specialist **has been using Accelerated Reader for ten years** and **has seen great results**.
- This cell phone app lets users **share pictures instantly with followers** and **categorize photos with hashtags**.

PUNCTUATION PATTERNS

Compound predicate sentences have this punctuation pattern: _____ _____ and _____.

Compound Sentences

A compound sentence is made up of two or more *independent clauses* joined by a coordinating conjunction (and, or, nor, but, yet, for) and a comma, an adverbial conjunction and a semicolon, or just a semicolon.

- In sphygmomanometers, too narrow a cuff can result in erroneously high readings, and too wide a cuff can result in erroneously low readings.
- Some cuff hook together; others wrap or snap into place.

PUNCTUATION PATTERNS

Compound Sentences have this punctuation pattern:

- _____, and _____.
- _____; _____.

Command sentences can be compound sentences as well:

- Never give up; never surrender.
- Turn the handle 90 degrees and push the button four times.

When you have a compound command sentence with a coordinating conjunction, you do not need to include a comma, because the two have the same subject.

Exercise 24.3.1

Identify the type of each sentence below. How can you tell?

1. The sphygmomanometer is usually covered with cloth and has two rubber tubes attached to it.
2. There are several types of sentences; using different types can keep your writing lively.
3. Words, sentences, and paragraphs are all combined to create a book.
4. Before giving up, take a deep breath and look at things from a different perspective.

Answer

1. This sentence has a compound predicate—that is, there are two predicates, joined with the conjunction *and*:

- is usually covered with cloth
- has two rubber tubes attached to it

2. This is a compound sentence. There are two independent clauses joined together by a semicolon.
3. This is a simple sentence with a compound subject.

- Subject: Words, sentences, and paragraphs
- Predicate: are all combined to create a book

4. This is a command sentence with a compound predicate—that is, there are two predicates, joined with the conjunction *and*:

- take a deep breath
- look at things from a different perspective.

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24.4: Run-on Sentences

A *run-on* sentence is a sentence that goes on and on and needs to be broken up. Run-on sentences occur when two or more independent clauses are improperly joined. (We talked about clauses in Text: Parts of a Sentence.) One type of run-on that you've probably heard of is the *comma splice*, in which two independent clauses are joined by a comma without a coordinating conjunction (*and*, *or*, *but*, etc.).

Let's look at a few examples of run-on sentences:

- Often, choosing a topic for a paper is the hardest part it's a lot easier after that.
- Sometimes, books do not have the most complete information, it is a good idea then to look for articles in specialized periodicals.
- She loves skiing but he doesn't.

All three of these have two independent clauses. Each clause should be separated from another with a period, a semicolon, or a comma and a coordinating conjunction:

- Often, choosing a topic for a paper is the hardest part. It's a lot easier after that.
- Sometimes, books do not have the most complete information; it is a good idea then to look for articles in specialized periodicals.
- She loves skiing, but he doesn't.

Common Causes of Run-Ons

We often write run-on sentences because we sense that the sentences involved are closely related and dividing them with a period just doesn't seem right. We may also write them because the parts seem to short to need any division, like in "She loves skiing but he doesn't." However, "She loves skiing" and "he doesn't" are both independent clauses, so they need to be divided by a comma and a coordinating conjunction—not just a coordinating conjunction by itself.

Another common cause of run-on sentences is mistaking adverbial conjunctions for coordinating conjunctions. For example if we were to write, "She loved skiing, however he didn't," we would have produced a comma splice. The correct sentence would be "She loved skiing; however, he didn't."

Fixing Run-On Sentences

Before you can fix a run-on sentence, you'll need to identify the problem. When you write, carefully look at each part of every sentence. Are the parts independent clauses, or are they dependent clauses or phrases? Remember, only independent clauses can stand on their own. This also means they have to stand on their own; they can't run together without correct punctuation.

Let's take a look at a few run-on sentences and their revisions:

1. Most of the hours I've earned toward my associate's degree do not transfer, however, I do have at least some hours the University will accept.
2. The opposite is true of stronger types of stainless steel they tend to be more susceptible to rust.
3. Some people were highly educated professionals, others were from small villages in underdeveloped countries.

Let's start with the first sentence. This is a comma-splice sentence. The adverbial conjunction *however* is being treated like a coordinating conjunction. There are two easy fixes to this problem. The first is to turn the comma before *however* into a period. If this feels like too hard of a stop between ideas, you can change the comma into a semicolon instead.

- Most of the hours I've earned toward my associate's degree do not transfer. However, I do have at least some hours the University will accept.
- Most of the hours I've earned toward my associate's degree do not transfer; however, I do have at least some hours the University will accept.

The second sentence is a run-on as well. "The opposite is true of stronger types of stainless steel" and "they tend to be more susceptible to rust." are both independent clauses. The two clauses are very closely related, and the second clarifies the information provided in the first. The best solution is to insert a colon between the two clauses:

The opposite is true of stronger types of stainless steel: they tend to be more susceptible to rust.

What about the last example? Once again we have two independent clauses. The two clauses provide contrasting information. Adding a conjunction could help the reader move from one kind of information to another. However, you may want that sharp contrast. Here are two revision options:

- Some people were highly educated professionals, while others were from small villages in underdeveloped countries.
- Some people were highly educated professionals. Others were from small villages in underdeveloped countries.

Exercise **24.4.1**

Identify the run-on sentences in the following paragraph. Type a corrected version of the paragraph in the text frame below:

I had the craziest dream the other night. My cousin Jacob and I were on the run from the law. Apparently we were wizards and the law was cracking down on magic. So, we obviously had to go into hiding but I lost track of Jacob and then I got picked up by a cop. But I was able to convince him that the government was corrupt and that he should take me to my escape boat.

Answer

The first two sentences are grammatically sound. The next sentence, however, is not.

Apparently we were wizards and the law was cracking down on magic.

This sentence just needs a comma inserted before the word *and*: Apparently we were wizards**,** and the law was cracking down on magic.

Let's look at the next sentence:

So, we obviously had to go into hiding but I lost track of Jacob and then I got picked up by a cop.

This is also a run-on sentence. While *So* at the beginning of the sentence is technically fine, it's unnecessary, and many teachers dislike it as a transition word. There are three clauses in this run-on sentence, so there are a few different ways you could rework it:

We obviously had to go into hiding**,** but I lost track of Jacob. After that, I got picked up by a cop. We obviously had to go into hiding. Unfortunately, I had lost track of Jacob and had gotten picked up by a cop.

I was able to convince the cop that the government was corrupt and that he should take me to my escape boat.

Let's look at the final sentence:

But I was able to convince him that the government was corrupt and that he should take me to my escape boat.

This sentence is technically okay, but the *but* at the start of the sentence is unnecessary, and it could be removed without affecting the meaning of the sentence. Additionally, it may be helpful to clarify who *he* is:

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24.5: Sentence Fragments

Fragments are simply grammatically incomplete sentences—they are phrases and dependent clauses. We talked about phrases and clauses a bit in **Text: Parts of a Sentence**. These are grammatical structures that cannot stand on their own: they need to be connected to an independent clause to work in writing. So how can we tell the difference between a sentence and a sentence fragment? And how can we fix fragments when they already exist?

Common Causes of Fragments

Part of the reason we write in fragments is because we often speak that way. However, there is a difference between writing and speech, and it is important to write in full sentences. Additionally, fragments often come about in writing because a fragment may already seem too long.

Non-finite verbs (gerunds, participles, and infinitives) can often trip people up as well. Since non-finite verbs don't act like verbs, we don't count them as verbs when we're deciding if we have a phrase or a clause. Let's look at a few examples of these:

- Running away from my mother.
- To ensure your safety and security.
- Beaten down since day one.

Even though all of the above have non-finite verbs, they're phrases, not clauses. In order for these to be clauses, they would need an additional verb that acts as a verb in the sentence.

Words like *since*, *when*, and *because* turn an independent clause into a dependent clause. For example "I was a little girl in 1995" is an independent clause, but "Because I was a little girl in 1995" is a dependent clause. This class of word includes the following:

after	although	as	as far as	as if	as long as	as soon as
as though	because	before	even if	even though	every time	if
in order that	since	so	so that	than	though	unless
until	when	whenever	where	whereas	wherever	while

The words *that* and *which* do the same type of thing as those listed above.

Coordinating conjunctions (our FANBOYS) can also cause problems. If you start a sentence with a coordinating conjunction, make sure that it is followed a complete clause, not just a phrase!

As you're identifying fragments, keep in mind that command sentences are *not* fragments, despite not having a subject. Commands are the only grammatically correct sentences that lack a subject:

- Drop and give me fifty!
- Count how many times the word *fragrant* is used during commercial breaks.

Fixing Sentence Fragments

Let's take a look at a couple of examples:

1. Ivana appeared at the committee meeting last week. And made a convincing presentation of her ideas about the new product.
2. The committee considered her ideas for a new marketing strategy quite powerful. The best ideas that they had heard in years.
3. She spent a full month evaluating his computer-based instructional materials. Which she eventually sent to her supervisor with the strongest of recommendations.

Let's look at the phrase "And made a convincing presentation of her ideas about the new product" in example one. It's just that: a phrase. There is no subject in this phrase, so the easiest fix is to simply delete the period and combine the two statements:

Ivana appeared at the committee meeting last week and made a convincing presentation of her ideas about the new product.

Let's look at example two. The phrase "the best ideas they had heard in years" is simply a phrase—there is no verb contained in the phrase. By adding "they were" to the beginning of this phrase, we have turned the fragment into an independent clause, which can now stand on its own:

The committee considered her ideas for a new marketing strategy quite powerful; they were the best ideas that they had heard in years.

What about example three? Let's look at the clause "Which she eventually sent to her supervisor with the strongest of recommendations." This is a dependent clause; the word *which* signals this fact. If we change "which she eventually" to "eventually, she," we also turn the dependent clause into an independent clause.

She spent a full month evaluating his computer-based instructional materials. Eventually, she sent the evaluation to her supervisor with the strongest of recommendations.

Exercise 24.5.1

Identify the fragments in the sentences below. Type corrected versions of the sentences in the text frame below:

1. The corporation wants to begin a new marketing push in educational software. Although the more conservative executives of the firm are skeptical.
2. In a proposal, you must include a number of sections. For example, a discussion of your personnel and their qualifications, your expectations concerning the schedule of the project, and a cost breakdown.
3. The research team has completely reorganized the workload. Making sure that members work in areas of their own expertise and that no member is assigned proportionately too much work.

Answer

Here are some possible revisions for the sentences. Remember, there are multiple solutions. Pay attention to the principles used to create the revised sentence.

1. Although the more conservative executives of the firm are skeptical, the corporation wants to begin a new marketing push in educational software.

- We moved the dependent clause "Although the more conservative executives of the firm are skeptical" to the beginning of the sentence and linked it to the independent clause with a comma after it.

2. In a proposal, you must include a number of sections: for example, a discussion of your personnel and their qualifications, your expectations concerning the schedule of the project, and a cost breakdown.

- We simply changed the period before "for example" to a colon. Colons can be followed by a phrase or dependent clause.

3. The research team has completely reorganized the workload. They made sure that members work in areas of their own expertise and that no member is assigned proportionately too much work.

- Changing the gerund *making* to the subject-verb "they made" is a simple way to change a phrase into a independent clause. Remember that gerunds act like nouns, and therefore cannot be the main verbs of a sentence.

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24.6: Parallel Structure

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

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



***Figure* 24.6.1**

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

Compare the following examples:

Example 24.6.1:

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

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

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

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

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

You can also apply parallelism across a passage:

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

Each of the sentences in the preceding paragraph has the same structure: Name + *-ed* verb + number of things + *in the* past time period. When using parallelism across multiple sentences, be sure that you're using it well. If you aren't careful, you can stray into being repetitive. Unfortunately, really the only way to test this is by re-reading the passage and seeing if it "feels right." While this test doesn't have any rules to it, it can often help.

Exercise 24.6.1

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

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

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

Answer

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RHETORIC AND PARALLELISM

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

- “**The inherent vice** of capitalism is the unequal sharing of blessings; **the inherent virtue** of socialism is the equal sharing of miseries.” —Winston Churchill
- “Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall **pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe** to assure the survival and the success of liberty.” —John F. Kennedy
- “And that government **of the people, by the people, for the people**, shall not perish from the earth.” —Abraham Lincoln, *Gettysburg Address*

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

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24.7: Self Check: Sentence Structure

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24.8: Try It - Sentence Structure

Identify run-on sentences, sentence fragments, and nonparallel structures as you read the passage. Explain why each item is incorrect, and explain how to correct the error. The sentences have been numbered to help you organize your comments.



***Figure* 24.8.1**

(1) Because Mount Everest is the highest mountain in the world, attracting considerable attention from adventurers world wide. (2) Whether the mountain was climbed in ancient times is unknown, it may have been climbed in 1924. (3) The first confirmed success was recorded in 1953.

(4) In 1953, an expedition led by John Hunt. (5) This was the ninth British attempt to summit the mountain. (6) Hunt selected two climbing pairs to attempt to reach the summit. (7) The first pair came within 100 m of the summit on May 26, 1953, but turned back after running into oxygen problems. (8) As planned, their work in route finding and breaking trail and their caches of extra oxygen were of great aid to the following pair.

(9) Two days later, the expedition made its second and final assault on the summit with its second climbing pair, the New Zealander Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay, a Nepali sherpa climber from Darjeeling, India. (10) They reached the summit at 11:30 am local time on May 29, 1953. (11) At the time, both acknowledged it as a team effort by the whole expedition but Tenzing revealed a few years later that Hillary had put his foot on the summit first. (12) They paused at the summit to take photographs and buried a few sweets and a small cross in the snow before descending.

Answer

1. Sentence 1 is a fragment made up of two dependent clauses. To revise this sentence, one dependent clause needs to be converted to an independent clause. This can be accomplished by changing the participle *attracting* to a verb or by removing the conjunction *because*:

- Because Mount Everest is the highest mountain in the world, it has attracted considerable attention from adventurers world wide.
- Mount Everest is the highest mountain in the world, attracting considerable attention from adventurers world wide.

2. Sentence 2 is a run-on sentence. specifically, it's a comma splice. The best solutions are to change the comma to a semicolon or to break it into two sentences:

- Whether the mountain was climbed in ancient times is unknown; it may have been climbed in 1924.
- Whether the mountain was climbed in ancient times is unknown. It may have been climbed in 1924.

3. Sentence 4 is a phrase. To complete this fragment, we must add a verb: "In 1953, an expedition led by John Hunt set out."
4. The tasks accomplished in sentence 8 are not parallel. One possible revision is as follows:

- As planned, their work in **route finding**, **trail breaking**, and **caching extra oxygen** was of great aid to the following pair.

5. In sentence 9, the two men are not presented in a parallel way. Here are two possible revisions:

- the New Zealander Edmund Hillary and the Nepali Tenzing Norgay
- Edmund Hillary, a mountaineer from New Zealand, and Tenzing Norgay, a Nepali sherpa climber from India

6. Sentence 11 is a run-on. It’s just missing a comma before the coordinating conjunction:

- At the time, both acknowledged it as a team effort by the whole expedition, but Tenzing revealed a few years later that Hillary had put his foot on the summit first.

7. The tasks accomplished in sentence 12 are not parallel. The two men paused at the top of the mountain to do two things:

- They paused at the summit **to take** photographs and **to bury** a few sweets and a small cross in the snow before descending.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

25: Voice

Topic hierarchy

25.1: Outcome: Voice
25.2: Active and Passive Voice
25.3: Using the Passive Voice
25.4: Self Check: Voice
25.5: Try It: Voice
25.6: Conclusion: Grammar

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25.1: Outcome: Voice

Skills to Develop

- Explain the active voice
- Explain the passive voice

Explain the active and passive voices, as well as the reasons to use both



***Figure* 25.1.1**

The term *voice* is used to mean several different things in writing. In this course, the focus will be on the more technical sense of the term as the active and passive voices are discussed. The passive voice has likely been heard of by you. The passive voice is often warned against because a lack of urgency and a feeling of monotony can be created by overuse of the passive voice.

Was that last paragraph a difficult read? Perhaps you found yourself rereading sentences to determine exactly what thing was doing what action. The previous paragraph was written entirely in the passive voice. This kind of passive voice stack up is what makes English teachers (and word processors) rail against the passive voice as a whole. However, there are some instances where the passive voice is a better choice than the active.

In this outcome, we'll learn about the active and passive voices, their construction, and their correct use.

The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Text: Active and Passive Voice
- Text: Using the Passive Voice
- Self Check: Voice
- Try It: Voice

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25.2: Active and Passive Voice

There are two main "voices" in English writing: the active voice and the passive voice. You've probably heard a lot about them—and you've probably been warned away from the passive voice. But what exactly are they?

In the simplest terms, an active voice sentence is written in the form of "A does B." (For example, "Carmen sings the song.") A passive voice sentence is written in the form of "B is done by A." (For example, "The song is sung by Carmen.") Both constructions are grammatically sound and correct.

Let's look at a couple more examples of the passive voice:

- I've been hit! (*or*, I have been hit!)
- Jasper was thrown from the car when it was struck from behind.

You may have noticed something unique about the previous two sentences: the subject of the sentence is not the person (or thing) performing the action. The passive voice "hides" who does the action. Despite these sentences being completely grammatically sound, we don't know who hit "me" or what struck the car.

The passive is created using the verb *to be* and the past participle. Because *to be* has other uses than just creating the passive voice, we need to be careful when we identify passive sentences. It's easy to mistake a sentence like "She was falling." or "He is short." for a passive sentence. However, in "She was falling," *was* simply indicates that the sentence takes place in the past. In "He is short," *is* is a linking verb. If there is no "real" action taking place, *is* is simply acting as a linking verb.

There are two key features that will help you identify a passive sentence:

1. Something is happening (the sentence has a verb that is not a linking verb).
2. The subject of the sentence is not doing that thing.

Usage

As you read at the two sentences below, think about the how the different voice may affect the meaning or implications of the sentence:

- **Passive voice:** The rate of evaporation is controlled by the size of an opening.
- **Active voice:** The size of an opening controls the rate of evaporation.

The passive choice slightly emphasizes "the rate of evaporation," while the active choice emphasizes "the size of an opening." Simple. So why all the fuss? Because passive constructions can produce grammatically tangled sentences such as this:

Groundwater flow is influenced by zones of fracture concentration, as can be recognized by the two model simulations (see Figures 1 and 2), by which one can see . . .

The sentence is becoming a burden for the reader, and probably for the writer too. As often happens, the passive voice here has smothered potential verbs and kicked off a runaway train of prepositions. But the reader's task gets much easier in the revised version below:

Two model simulations (Figures 1 and 2) illustrate how zones of fracture concentration influence groundwater flow. These simulations show . . .

To revise the above, all I did was look for the two buried things (simulations and zones) in the original version that could actually *do* something, and I made the sentence clearly about these two nouns by placing them in front of active verbs. This is the general principle to follow as you compose in the active voice: Place concrete nouns that can perform work in front of active verbs.

Exercise 25.2.1

Are the following sentences in the active or passive voice? How can you tell?

1. Jayden drank more sodas than anyone else at the party.
2. The samples were prepared in a clean room before being sent out for further examination.
3. Karen was dancing with Joshua when she suddenly realized she needed to leave.

4. Carlos was a very serious scientist with unique interests.
5. When I returned to my room, my luggage had been stolen.

Answer

1. This sentence uses the active voice. **Jayden** does the action (**drank**) to the object (**more sodas**). If this sentence were written in the passive it would read "More sodas were drunk by Jayden than by anyone else at the party."
2. This sentence uses the passive voice. The action (prepared) was done to the subject of the sentence (samples). If this sentence were written in the active it would be something like this: "[Actor] prepared the samples in a clean room before sending them out for further examination." Since we do not know who prepared the samples, the active sentence is incomplete.
3. This sentence uses the active voice. In this case *was* indicates that the sentence happened in the past; it does not indicate the passive voice.
4. This sentence uses the active voice. In this case *was* is acting as a linking verb. It links **Carlos** with the phrase *very serious scientist*.
5. The introductory phrase to the sentence (When I returned to my room) is in the active voice. The second phrase (my luggage had been stolen) uses the passive voice.

Revise Weak Passive-Voice Sentences

As we've mentioned, the passive voice can be a shifty operator—it can cover up its source, that is, who's doing the acting, as this example shows:

- **Passive:** The papers **will be graded** according to the criteria stated in the syllabus.
  - *Graded by whom though?*
- **Active: The teacher** will grade the papers according to the criteria stated in the syllabus.

It's this ability to cover the actor or agent of the sentence that makes the passive voice a favorite of people in authority—policemen, city officials, and, yes, teachers. At any rate, you can see how the passive voice can cause wordiness, indirectness, and comprehension problems.

Passive	Question	Active
Your figures **have been reanalyzed** in order to determine the coefficient of error. The results **will be announced** when the situation is judged appropriate.	Who analyzes, and who will announce?	**We** have reanalyzed your figures in order to determine the range of error. **We** will announce the results when the time is right.
With the price of housing at such inflated levels, those loans **cannot be paid** off in any shorter period of time.	Who can't pay the loans off?	With the price of housing at such inflated levels, **homeowners** cannot pay off those loans in any shorter period of time.
After the arm of the hand-held stapler **is pushed** down, the blade from the magazine **is raised by** the top-leaf spring, and the magazine and base.	Who pushes it down, and who or what raises it?	After **you** push down on the arm of the hand-held stapler, **the top-leaf spring** raises the blade from the magazine, and the magazine and base move apart.
However, market share **is being lost by** 5.25-inch diskettes as is shown in the graph in Figure 2.	Who or what is losing market share, who or what shows it?	However, **5.25-inch diskettes** are losing market share as the graph in **Figure 2** shows.
For many years, federal regulations concerning the use of wire-tapping **have been ignored**. Only recently **have** tighter restrictions **been imposed** on the circumstances that warrant it.	Who has ignored the regulations, and who is now imposing them?	For many years, **government officials** have ignored federal regulations concerning the use of wire-tapping. Only recently has **the federal government** imposed tighter restrictions on the circumstances that warrant it.

Exercise 25.2.2

Convert these passive voice sentences into the active voice:

1. The process, which was essential for the experiment's success, was completed by Enzo.
2. Alana's toes were crushed by the garage door.
3. The cake that I worked on all day long is being eaten by Justin.
4. Rebeca's favorite spot in the lecture hall had been taken by the time she got to class.

Answer

1. Enzo completed the process, which was essential for the experiment's success.
2. The garage door crushed Alana's toes.
3. Justin is eating the cake that I worked on all day long.
4. Because there's a descriptive phrase, there are a few options when revising this sentence:

- Someone had taken Rebeca's favorite spot in the lecture hall by the time she got to class.
- By the time Rebeca got to class, someone had taken her favorite spot in the lecture hall.

Don't get the idea that the passive voice is always wrong and should never be used. It is a good writing technique when we don't want to be bothered with an obvious or too-often-repeated subject and when we need to rearrange words in a sentence for emphasis. The next page will focus more on how and why to use the passive voice.

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25.3: Using the Passive Voice

There are several different situations where the passive voice is more useful than the active voice.

- When you don't know who did the action: *The paper had been moved.*
  - The active voice would be something like this: "Someone had moved the paper." While this sentence is technically fine, the passive voice sentence has a more subtle element of mystery, which can be especially helpful in creating a mood in fiction.
- When you want to hide who did the action: *The window had been broken.*
  - The sentence is either hiding who broke the window or they do not know. Again, the sentence can be reformed to say "Someone had broken the window," but using the word *someone* clearly indicates that someone (though we may not know who) is at fault here. Using the passive puts the focus on the window rather than on the person who broke it, as he or she is completely left out of the sentence.
- When you want to emphasize the person or thing the action was done to: *Caroline was hurt when Kent broke up with her.*
  - We automatically focus on the subject of the sentence. If the sentence were to say "Kent hurt Caroline when he broke up with her," then our focus would be drawn to Kent rather than Caroline.
- A subject that can't actually *do* anything: *Caroline was hurt when she fell into the trees.*
  - While the trees hurt Caroline, they didn't actually do anything. Thus, it makes more sense to have Caroline as the subject rather than saying "The trees hurt Caroline when she fell into them."

Note

It's often against convention in scholarly writing to use first-person "I." While this may seem like a forced rule, it also stems from the fact that scholars want to emphasize the science or research as opposed to the author of the paper. This often results in the passive voice being the best choice.

Exercise 25.3.1

Read the following sentences. Are they using the passive effectively? Or should they be rewritten as active sentences?

1. The machine was reset at 10:23, 11:12, and 11:56 last night.
2. Maren was hit by several branches as she slid down the hill.
3. The final steps, which need to be finished before the sun sets over the mountains, are going to be completed by Kajuana.

Answer

1. Yes. In this case, we don't know who accomplished the action. If this sentence appeared in an academic article, it may be even more appropriate, as that style often demands the actor be left out of the sentence. However, if it is important to know who completed the action, then the active voice may be more appropriate.
2. Yes. Since the subject of this sentence—*several branches*—can't actually do anything, it's best to put the emphasis on *Maren*, the person the actions were done to.
3. No. This would be better in the active voice. There are a lot of different parts to the sentence, and by converting the sentence to the active voice, they come in a more logical order that is easier to understand:

- Kajuana is going to complete the final steps, which need to be finished before the sun sets over the mountains.

Using the Passive

Now that we know there are some instances where passive voice is the best choice, how do we use the passive voice to it fullest? The answer lies in writing direct sentences—in passive voice—that have simple subjects and verbs. Compare the two sentences below:

- Photomicrographs were taken to facilitate easy comparison of the samples.
- Easy comparison of the samples was facilitated by the taking of photomicrographs.

Both sentences are written in the passive voice, but for most ears the first sentence is more direct and understandable, and therefore preferable. Depending on the context, it does a clearer job of telling us what was done and why it was done. Especially if this sentence appears in the “Experimental” section of a report (and thus readers already know that the authors of the report took the photomicrographs), the first sentence neatly represents what the authors actually did—took photomicrographs—and why they did it—to facilitate easy comparison.

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25.4: Self Check: Voice

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25.5: Try It: Voice

As you read the following passage, identify which sentences use the passive voice well and which use the passive voice ineffectively. Revise any ineffective sentences. The sentences have been numbered to aid in your comments:



***Figure* 25.5.1**

(1) Franklin Ramón Chang Díaz is a veteran of seven Space Shuttle missions, making him a shared record holder for the highest number of spaceflights. (2) Chang Díaz was born in San José, Costa Rica, on April 5, 1950, to Ramón Ángel Chang Morales and María Eugenia Díaz Romero. (3) He attended school in Costa Rica until 1967 when he moved to the United States to finish his high school education. (4) The University of Connecticut, where a Bachelor of Science in mechanical engineering was earned in 1973, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where a Doctor of Science in applied plasma physics was earned in 1977, were attended by Chang Díaz.

(5) Chang Díaz was selected as an astronaut candidate by NASA in 1980, and he first flew aboard Space Shuttle mission STS-61-C in 1986. (6) He went on six other missions between 1989 and 2002. (7) During his final mission, three spacewalks with Philippe Perrin as part of the construction of the International Space Station were performed by Chang Díaz. (8) He then worked as the director of the Advanced Space Propulsion Laboratory at the Johnson Space Center from 1993 to 2005.

(9) Chang Díaz retired from NASA in 2005 to set up the Ad Astra Rocket Company, which became dedicated to the development of advanced plasma rocket propulsion technology. (10) Years of research and development have produced the VASIMR (Variable Specific Impulse Magnetoplasma Rocket), an electrical propulsion device for use in space. (11) With a flexible mode of operation, the rocket can achieve very high exhaust speeds, and it even has the theoretical capability to take a manned rocket to Mars in 39 days.

Answer

There are five passive sentences in this passage: sentences 2, 4, 5, 7, and 10. Let's look at each sentence individually.

1. Sentence 2 is an effective use of the passive voice. We want to focus on Chang Díaz; using the passive places him as the subject of the sentence, creating this emphasis.
2. Sentence 4 not an effective use of the passive voice. Putting this in passive makes the sentence very complicated and difficult to understand. The active voice lends itself to a much more understandable sentence:

- He went on to attend the University of Connecticut, where he earned a Bachelor of Science in mechanical engineering in 1973, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he earned a Doctor of Science in applied plasma physics in 1977.

3. Sentence 5 is an effective use of the passive voice. Once again, we want to focus on Chang Díaz, so having him as the subject in a passive sentence is a great way to do that.

4. Sentence 7 not an effective use of the passive voice. We want to focus on Chang Díaz, so he should be the subject of the sentence. In this case, that means we should use the active voice:

- During his final mission, Chang Díaz performed three spacewalks with Philippe Perrin as part of the construction of the International Space Station.

5. Sentence 10 is an effective use of the passive voice. We want to focus on the research and development, not on the people who completed the research. Additionally, it would be difficult to pin down exactly who completed all of the research and development, so using the passive voice to omit the actor of the sentence is helpful here.

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25.6: Conclusion: Grammar

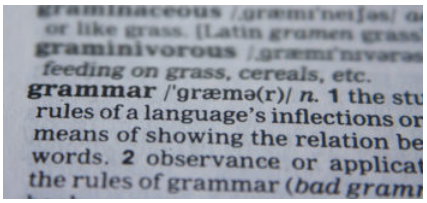


***Figure* 25.6.1**

We've covered a lot of rules and conventions in this section: how to use different parts of speech and different punctuation marks and how to use them together to create sentences. As with any set of rules, you shouldn't expect yourself to immediately remember them all. Your goal shouldn't be to memorize all the rules but to be familiar enough with grammar that you can tell when something is wrong. You can refer back to the pages in this module as often as you need as you progress through your college career. They'll be here to help you when you need them.

And we *all* need help with these patterns from time to time. One example of this comes from William Bradshaw, author of a writing handbook:

> *Soon after my grammar book was released, I learned that a nearby school district purchased more than three hundred copies of my book. I went to the main office of the district to express my gratitude for the district's interest in my book. I was referred to the staff person responsible for high school curriculum development.*
>
> *I had assumed the books were for the students, but learned that, instead, they were for faculty and non-teaching staff members. The curriculum development officer said her research led her to conclude that the typical high school student in the district was lacking in an adequate knowledge of correct grammar. After meeting with high school teachers for the purpose of developing enhancement classes that high school students could take to help them in understanding and using correct English, she concluded that faculty and staff members also needed a refresher course in English. It was for that purpose she ordered copies of my book: The Big Ten of Grammar: Identifying and Fixing the Ten Most Frequent Grammatical Errors.*[1]

As this example shows, even teachers make grammatical mistakes, and we *all* need to brush up on our skills from time to time.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Success Skills

26.1: Introduction to Success Skills
26.2: Habits for Success
26.3: Critical Thinking
26.4: Time Management
26.5: Writing in College
26.6: Computer-Based Writing
26.7: Conclusion to Success Skills

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26.1: Introduction to Success Skills

Learning Objectives

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

Why should we define and evaluate our college success skills?

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

But going to college, and doing well once we're there, also relies heavily on our **behaviors** while we're there. Professors and college administrators will expect you to behave in certain ways, without any explicit instructions on their part. For instance, professors will expect you to spend several hours a week working on class concepts (homework, writing, preparing for exams) on your own time. They will not tell you WHEN to spend those hours, but leave it up to you to recognize the need to put in the effort and schedule the time accordingly.

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

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

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



To recap, those 8 traits are

Passion	Work	Good	Focus
Push	Serve	Ideas	Persist

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

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26.2: Habits for Success

Learning Objectives

- Develop a personal definition of success
- Identify specific strategies to achieve success
- Identify support network options

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



***Figure* 26.2.1**

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

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

A Personal Definition for Success

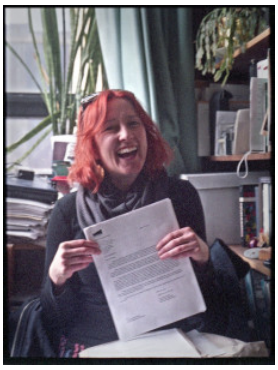


***Figure* 26.2.2**

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

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

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

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

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



Strategies to Achieve Success

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

Perhaps some common misconceptions are at play. For example, we often hear students say, "I just can't do it!" or "I'm not good at math," or "I guess college isn't for me…," or "I'm not smart enough." But these explanations for success or failure aren't necessarily accurate. Considerable research into college success reveals that **intellect usually has nothing to do with having**

difficulty in or failing college courses. More often, success depends on how fully you embrace and master the following seven strategies:

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

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

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



***Figure* 26.2.3**

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

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

Campus Support Networks

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

Benefits of Participating in Student Life

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



Figure 26.2.4

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

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

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

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

Major College Resources and How To Use Them

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

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

Advising



***Figure* 26.2.5**

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

Tutoring and Writing Centers

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

Other Academic Support Facilities

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

Library Reference Desk

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

Campus Health Center

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

Campus Counseling

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

Career Services

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

Spiritual Life

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

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

Self-Check

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26.3: Critical Thinking

Learning Objectives

- Define critical thinking
- Identify the role that logic plays in critical thinking
- Apply critical thinking skills to problem-solving scenarios
- Apply critical thinking skills to evaluation of information



***Figure* 26.3.1**

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

"THINKING CRITICALLY AND CREATIVELY"

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

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

The academic setting demands more of us in terms of critical thinking than everyday life. It demands that we evaluate information and analyze myriad issues. It is the environment where our critical thinking skills can be the difference between success and failure. In this environment we must consider information in an analytical, critical manner. We must ask questions—What is the source of this information? Is this source an expert one and what makes it so? Are there multiple perspectives to consider on an issue? Do multiple sources agree or disagree on an issue? Does quality research substantiate information or opinion? Do I have any personal biases that may affect my consideration of this information?

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

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

Defining Critical Thinking

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

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

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

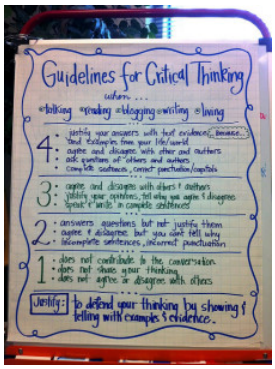


***Figure* 26.3.2**

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

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

Who are critical thinkers, and what characteristics do they have in common? Critical thinkers are usually curious and reflective people. They like to explore and probe new areas and seek knowledge, clarification, and new solutions. They ask pertinent questions, evaluate statements and arguments, and they distinguish between facts and opinion. They are also willing to examine their own beliefs, possessing a manner of humility that allows them to admit lack of knowledge or understanding when needed. They are open to changing their mind. Perhaps most of all, they actively enjoy learning, and seeking new knowledge is a lifelong pursuit.

This may well be you!

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

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

Critical Thinking in Action

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



Critical Thinking and Logic

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

Logic's Relationship to Critical Thinking

The word **logic** comes from the Ancient Greek *logike*, referring to the science or art of reasoning. Using logic, a person evaluates arguments and strives to distinguish between good and bad reasoning, or between truth and falsehood. Using logic, you can evaluate ideas or claims people make, make good decisions, and form sound beliefs about the world.[1]

Questions of Logic in Critical Thinking

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

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

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

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

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

Questions a Critical Thinker Asks



UBC a place of mind learningcommons.ubc.ca

Figure 26.3.3

Problem-Solving With Critical Thinking

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



Figure 26.3.4

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

Problem-Solving Action Checklist

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

	STRATEGIES	ACTION CHECKLIST[2]
1	Define the problem	• Identify the problem • Provide as many supporting details as possible • Provide examples • Organize the information logically
2	Identify available solutions	• Use logic to identify your most important goals • Identify implications and consequences • Identify facts • Compare and contrast possible solutions
3	Select your solution	• Use gathered facts and relevant evidence • Support and defend solutions considered valid • Defend your solution

Evaluating Information With Critical Thinking

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

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



***Figure* 26.3.5**

1. Read for Understanding Using Text Coding

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

With text coding, mark important arguments and key facts. Indicate where you agree and disagree or have further questions. You don’t necessarily need to read every word, but make sure you understand the concepts or the intentions behind what is written. Feel

free to develop your own shorthand style when reading or taking notes. The following are a few options to consider using while coding text.

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

See more text coding from **PBWorks** and **Collaborative for Teaching and Learning**.

2. Examine Arguments

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



3. Clarify Thinking

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

4. Cultivate "Habits of Mind"

"Habits of mind" are the personal commitments, values, and standards you have about the principle of good thinking. Consider your intellectual commitments, values, and standards. Do you approach problems with an open mind, a respect for truth, and an inquiring attitude? Some good habits to have when thinking critically are being receptive to having your opinions changed, having respect for others, being independent and not accepting something is true until you've had the time to examine the available evidence, being fair-minded, having respect for a reason, having an inquiring mind, not making assumptions, and always,

especially, questioning your own conclusions—in other words, developing an intellectual work ethic. Try to work these qualities into your daily life.

Self-Check

References

1. **"logic." *Wordnik*. n.d. Web. 16 Feb 2016.** ↵
2. **"Student Success-Thinking Critically In Class and Online." *Critical Thinking Gateway*. St Petersburg College, n.d. Web. 16 Feb 2016.** ↵

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26.4: Time Management

Learning Objectives

- Define your current uses of time in daily life
- Explore time management strategies to add time for college success activities
- Identify procrastination behaviors and strategies to avoid them

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



***Figure* 26.4.1**

How You Use Your Time

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

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



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

Step 1: Identify Your Time Management Style

The following self-assessment survey can help you determine your time-management personality type. Read each question in the Questions column. Then read the possible responses. Select one response for each question. Each response should reflect what you probably would do in a given situation, not what you think is the “right” answer. Put a checkmark in the My Time Management Type column next to your likely response.

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

	QUESTIONS	RESPONSES: Which response most closely matches what you would do? In the right column, check one response (a, b, c or d) for each question.	MY TIME MANAGEMENT TYPE
	instructions for your next assignment and you read them but don't quite understand what he's asking for in a certain part. What would you probably do?	that afternoon. When he doesn't respond that night, email him again. This is your worst nightmare—you just want to know what he wants!!	
		b. Send him an email asking for clarification, giving yourself enough time to wait for his response and then complete the assignment. Better to be safe than sorry.	O Balancing act
		c. Try to figure it out for yourself. You're pretty sure what he's trying to say, and you'll give it your best shot.	O Pressure cooker
		d. Don't say anything until after the assignment is due. Other people in the class felt the same way too, probably!	O Improviser
4	The course you are taking requires you to post in a weekly discussion forum by Sunday night each week so the class can talk about everyone's posts on Monday. When do you submit your posts?	a. Tuesday night, after the first day of class that week. Then it's out of the way.	O Early bird
		b. Thursday or Friday night. You want to let the week's discussion sink in a little so you can collect your thoughts.	O Balancing act
		c. Sunday night. You always forget during the weekend!	O Pressure cooker
		d. Monday at 3 AM. That still counts as Sunday night, right?	O Improviser
5	You have an important assignment due Monday morning, and you have a social/work/family obligation that will keep you busy for most of the weekend. It is now the Wednesday before the assignment is due. How would you approach this dilemma?	a. You already finished it yesterday, the day it was assigned. Done!	O Early bird
		b. You tell yourself that you'll finish it by Friday night, and you manage this by chipping away at it over those 3 days. … Little. By. Little.	O Balancing act
		c. You tell yourself that you'll finish it by Friday night, so you can have your weekend free,	O Pressure cooker

	QUESTIONS	RESPONSES: Which response most closely matches what you would do? In the right column, check one response (a, b, c or d) for each question.	MY TIME MANAGEMENT TYPE
		but you still have a little left to do on Sunday—no big deal.	
		d. You tell yourself that you'll take the weekend off, then stay up late on Sunday or wake up early on Monday to finish it. It's not a final or anything, and you have a life.	O Improviser
6	You have to read 150 pages before your next class meeting. You have 4 days to do so. What would you most likely do?	a. 150 pages divided by 4 days means… a little less than 40 pages a day. You like to chunk it this way because then you'll also have time to go over your notes and highlights, and come up with questions for the instructor.	O Early bird
		b. 150 pages divided by…well … 2 days (because it's been a long week), means 75 pages a day. Totally doable.	O Balancing act
		c. 150 pages, the day before it is due. You did this to yourself, it's fine.	O Pressure cooker
		d. How much time does it take to skim the text for keywords and/or find a summary online?	O Improviser

Assessing Your Responses

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

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

The Early Bird

- **Traits**: You like to make checklists and feel great satisfaction when you can cross something off of your to-do list. When it comes to assignments, you want to get started as soon as possible (and maybe start brainstorming before that), because it lets you stay in control.
- **Strengths**: You know what you want and are driven to figure out how to achieve it. Motivation is never really a problem for you.
- **Challenges**: Sometimes you can get more caught up in getting things done as quickly as possible and don't give yourself enough time to really mull over issues in all of their complexity.

- **Tips for Success**: You're extremely organized and on top of your schoolwork, so make sure you take time to really enjoy learning in your classes. Remember, school isn't all deadlines and checkboxes—you also have the opportunity to think about big-picture intellectual problems that don't necessarily have clear answers.

The Balancing Act

- **Traits**: You really know what you're capable of and are ready to do what it takes to get the most out of your classes. Maybe you're naturally gifted in this way or maybe it's a skill that you have developed over time; in any case, you should have the basic organizational skills to succeed in any class, as long as you keep your balance.
- **Strengths**: Your strength really lies in your ability to be well rounded. You may not always complete assignments perfectly every time, but you are remarkably consistent and usually manage to do very well in classes.
- **Challenges**: Because you're so consistent, sometimes you can get in a bit of a rut and begin to coast in class, rather than really challenging yourself.
- **Tips for Success**: Instead of simply doing what works, use each class as an opportunity for growth by engaging thoughtfully with the material and constantly pushing the boundaries of your own expectations for yourself.

The Pressure Cooker

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

The Improviser

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

Create A Schedule

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Questions and Answers About Schedules

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

Answer

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

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

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

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

Answer

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

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

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

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

Answer

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

Here is a time management calculator for first-year students at the University of Texas El Paso.

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

Answer

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

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

Answer

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

Get Better at Prioritizing

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

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

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

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

Procrastination Checklist

Do any of the following descriptions apply to you?

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

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

Strategies to Combat Procrastination

Below are some effective strategies for overcoming procrastination:

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

Video Guidance

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



Self-Check

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26.5: Writing in College

Learning Objectives

- Identify common types of writing tasks given in a college class
- Describe the purpose of writing tasks, and what an instructor might expect to see from your work
- Recognize strategies for success on particular types of writing tasks
- Define writing anxiety

Consider this: a recent survey of employers conducted by the Association of American Colleges and Universities found that **89 percent**of employers say that colleges and universities should place more emphasis on "the ability to effectively communicate orally and in writing."[1] It was the single-most favored skill in this survey.

In addition, several of the other valued skills are grounded in written communication:

- "Critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills" (81 percent)
- "The ability to analyze and solve complex problems" (75 percent)
- "The ability to locate, organize, and evaluate information from multiple sources" (68 percent).

This emphasis on communication probably reflects the changing reality of work in the professions. Employers also reported that employees will have to "take on more responsibilities," "use a broader set of skills," "work harder to coordinate with other departments," face "more complex" challenges, and mobilize "higher levels of learning and knowledge."[2]

If you want to be a professional who interacts frequently with others, you have to be someone who can anticipate and solve complex problems and coordinate your work with others,[3] all of which depend on effective communication.

The pay-off from improving your writing comes much sooner than graduation. Suppose you complete about 40 classes for a 120-credit bachelors' degree, and—averaging across writing-intensive and non-writing-intensive courses—you produce about 2,500 words of formal writing per class. Even with that low estimate, you'll write 100,000 words during your college career. That's roughly equivalent to a 330-page book.

Spending a few hours sharpening your writing skills will make those 100,000 words much easier and more rewarding to write. All of your professors care about good writing.



***Figure* 26.5.1**

What to Do With Essay Assignments

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

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

Summary Assignments

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

An effective summary does the following:

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

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

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

Defined-Topic Assignments

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



***Figure* 26.5.2**

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

1. **Focus on the verbs**. Look for verbs like *compare*, *explain*, *justify*, *reflect*, or the all-purpose *analyze*. You're not just producing a paper as an artifact; you're conveying, in written communication, some intellectual work you have done. So the question is, what kind of thinking are you supposed to do to deepen your learning?
2. **Put the assignment in context**. Many professors think in terms of assignment sequences. For example, a social science professor may ask you to write about a controversial issue three times: first, arguing for one side of the debate; second, arguing for another; and finally, from a more comprehensive and nuanced perspective, incorporating text produced in the first two assignments. A sequence like that is designed to help you think through a complex issue. If the assignment isn't part of a sequence, think about where it falls in the span of the course (early, midterm, or toward the end), and how it relates to readings and other assignments. For example, if you see that a paper comes at the end of a three-week unit on the role of the Internet in organizational behavior, then your professor likely wants you to synthesize that material in your own way.
3. **Try a free-write**. A free-write is when you just write, without stopping, for a set period of time. That doesn't sound very "free"; it actually sounds kind of coerced, right? The "free" part is *what* you write—it can be whatever comes to mind.Professional writers use free-writing to get started on a challenging (or distasteful) writing task or to overcome writer's block or a powerful urge to procrastinate. The idea is that if you just make yourself write, you can't help but produce some kind of useful nugget.

Thus, even if the first eight sentences of your free write are all variations on “I don’t understand this” or “I’d really rather be doing something else,” eventually you’ll write something like “I guess the main point of this is…,” and—booyah!—you’re off and running.

4. **Ask for clarification**. Even the most carefully crafted assignments may need some verbal clarification, especially if you’re new to a course or field. Try to convey to your instructor that you want to learn and you’re ready to work, and not just looking for advice on how to get an A.

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

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

Undefined-Topic Assignments

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

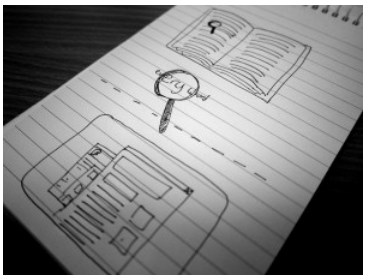


***Figure* 26.5.3**

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

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

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

Strategies for Writing Success

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

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

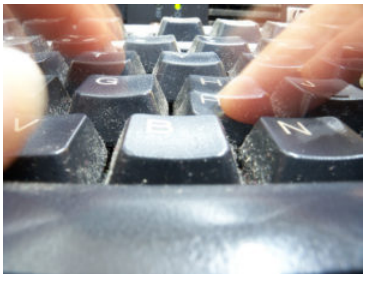


Figure 26.5.4

Summaries

Start with a Clear Identification of the Work

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

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

Summarize the Piece as a Whole

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

- Present the material in a neutral fashion. Your opinions, ideas, and interpretations should be left in your brain — don't put them into your summary. Be conscious of choosing your words. Only include what was in the original work.
- Be concise. This is a summary — it should be much shorter than the original piece. If you're working on an article, give yourself a target length of 1/4 the original article.

Conclude with a Final Statement

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

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

Informative and Persuasive Essay Assignments

Brainstorm



Figure 26.5.5

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

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

Research

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

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

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

Write a Rough Draft

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

If You're Having Trouble, Try Freewriting

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

Edit for Your Second Draft

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

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

Keep Rewriting until You're Ready for a Second Opinion

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

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

Evaluate the Response You Received

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

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

Writing Through Fear

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

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



***Figure* 26.5.6**

So here's my scary story: A few weeks ago, I sat down at my computer to revise an essay draft for an upcoming deadline. This is old hat for me; it's what I do in my personal life as a creative writer, and it's what I do in my professional life as a Walden Writing Center instructor. As I was skimming through it, though, a feeling of dread settled in my stomach, I began to sweat, and my pulse raced. I was having full-on panic. About my writing.

This had never happened to me before. Sure, I have been disappointed in my writing, frustrated that I couldn't get an idea perfectly on paper, but not completely fear-stricken. I Xed out of the Word document and watched Orange Is the New Black on Netflix because I couldn't look at the essay anymore. My mind was too clouded for anything productive to happen.

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

Here are some tips to help:

1. ***Interrogate your fear**. Ask yourself why you are afraid. Is it because you fear failure, success, or judgment? Has it been a while since you've written academically, and so this new style of writing is mysterious to you?*
2. ***Write through it**. We all know the best way to work through a problem is to confront it. So sit at your desk, look at the screen, and write. You might not even write your assignment at first. Type anything—a reflection on your day, why writing gives you anxiety, your favorite foods. Sitting there and typing will help you become more comfortable with the prospect of more.*
3. ***Give it a rest**. This was my approach. After realizing that I was having an adverse reaction, I called it quits for the day, which ultimately helped reset my brain.*
4. ***Find comfort in ritual and reward**. Getting comfortable with writing might involve establishing a ritual (a time of day, a place, a song, a warm-up activity, or even food or drink) to get yourself into the writing zone. If you accomplish a goal or write for a set amount of time, reward yourself.*

5. ***Remember that knowledge is power.*** *Sometimes the only way to assuage our fear is to know more. Perhaps you want to learn about the writing process to make it less intimidating. Check out the Writing Center's* ***website*** *for tips and tutorials that will increase your confidence. You can also always ask your instructor questions about the assignment.*
6. ***Break it down.*** *If you feel overwhelmed about the amount of pages or the vastness of the assignment, break it up into small chunks. For example, write one little section of the paper at a time.*
7. ***Buddy up.*** *Maybe you just need someone with whom to share your fears—and your writing. Ask a classmate to be a study buddy or join an eCampus group.*

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

Self-Check

References

1. **Hart Research Associates.** ***Raising the Bar: Employers' Views on College Learning in the Wake of the Economic Downturn.*** **20 Jan 2010, p. 9.** ↵
2. Ibid., p. 5. ↵
3. **Hart Research Associates.** ***It Takes More Than a Major: Employer Priorities for College Learning and Student Success.*** **10 Apr 2013.** ↵

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26.6: Computer-Based Writing

Learning Objectives

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

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

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



***Figure* 26.6.1**

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

Beginning Word Processing Skills

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

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

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

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

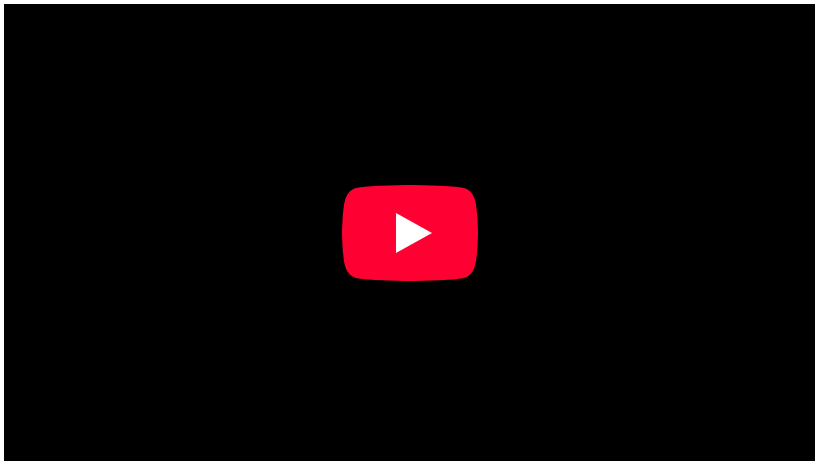
Getting to Know Word

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



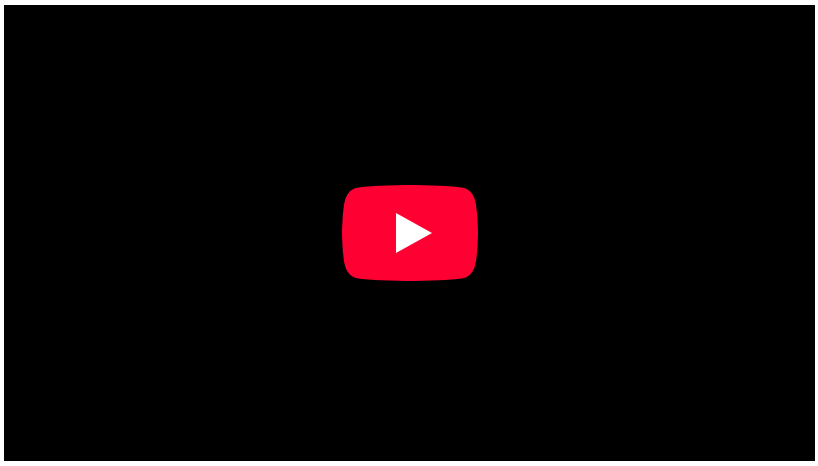
Creating and Opening Documents

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



Saving and Sharing

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



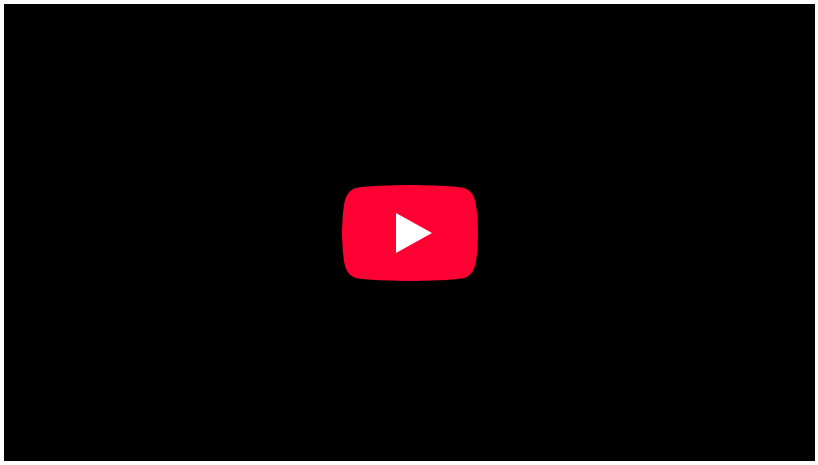
Text Basics

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



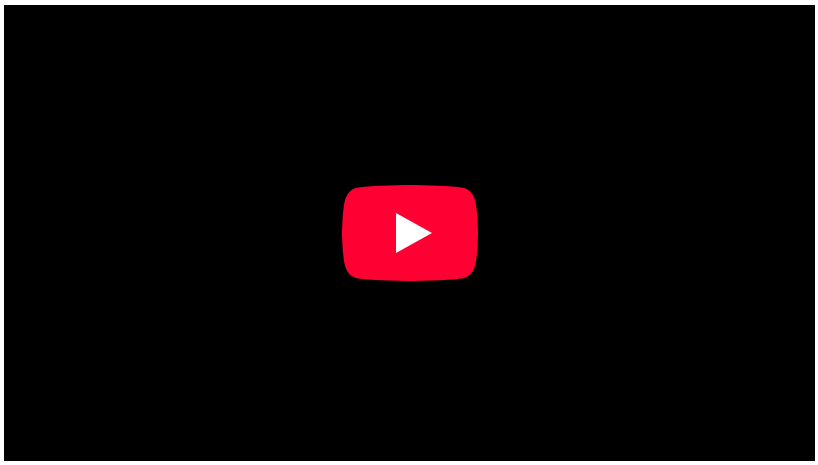
Formatting Text

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



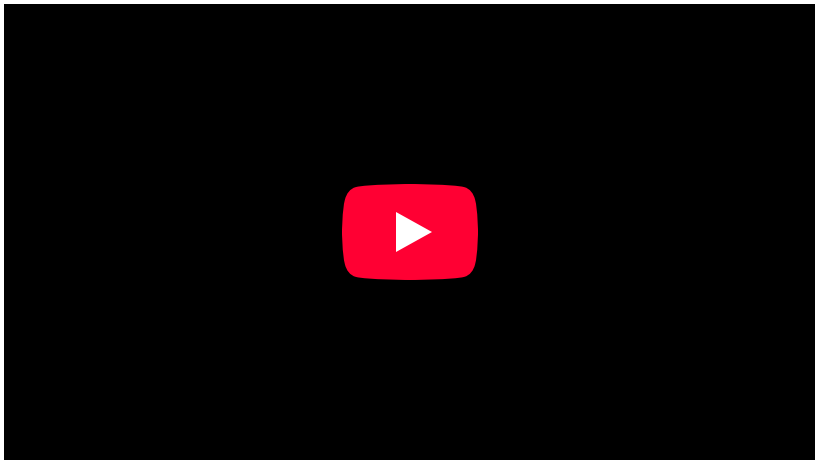
Page Layout

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



Printing

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

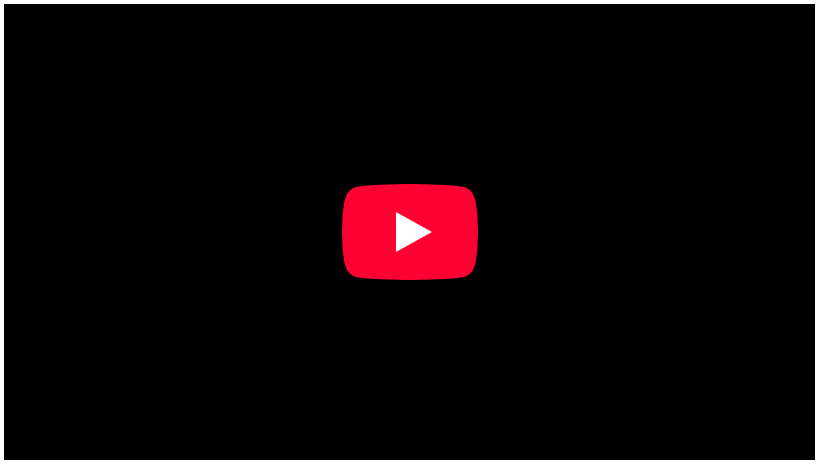


Intermediate Word Processing Skills

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

Line and Paragraph Spacing

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



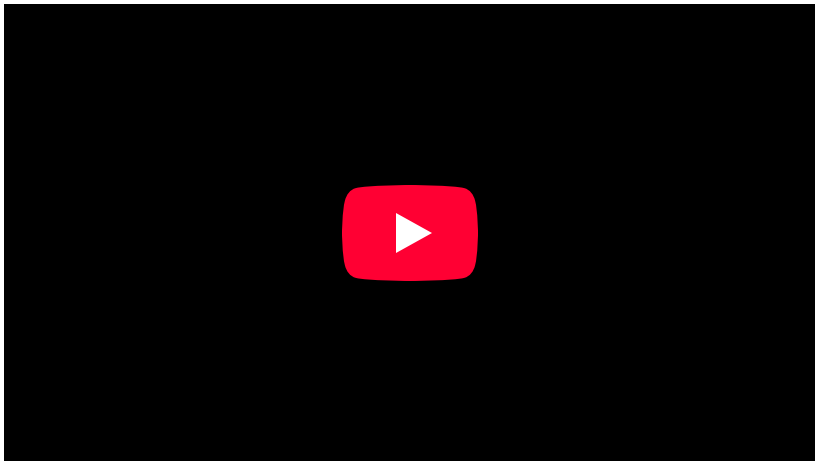
Spell Check and Grammar Check

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



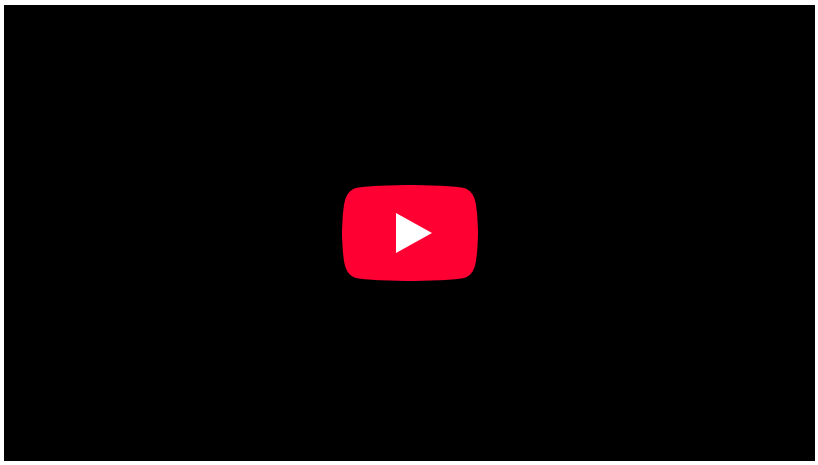
Headers, Footers, and Page Numbers

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



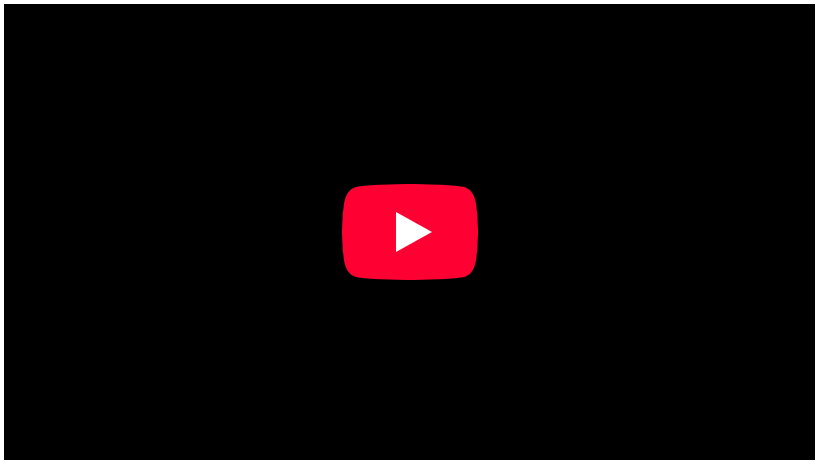
Track Changes

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



Word Count

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

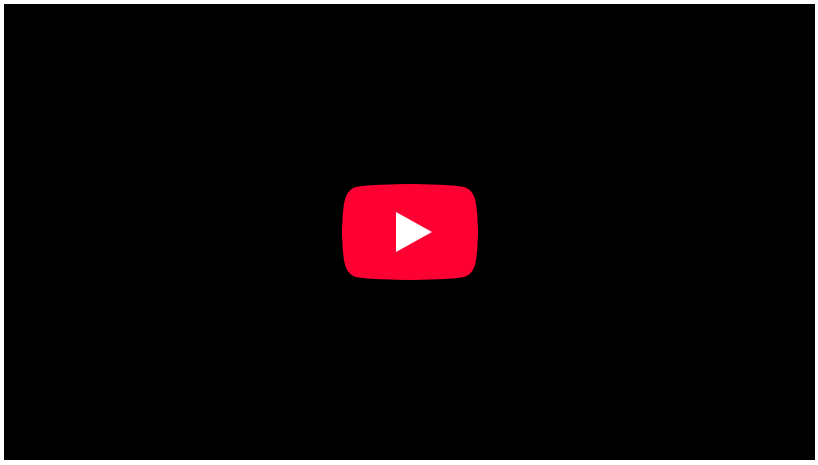


Advanced Word Processing Skills

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

Hanging Indents

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



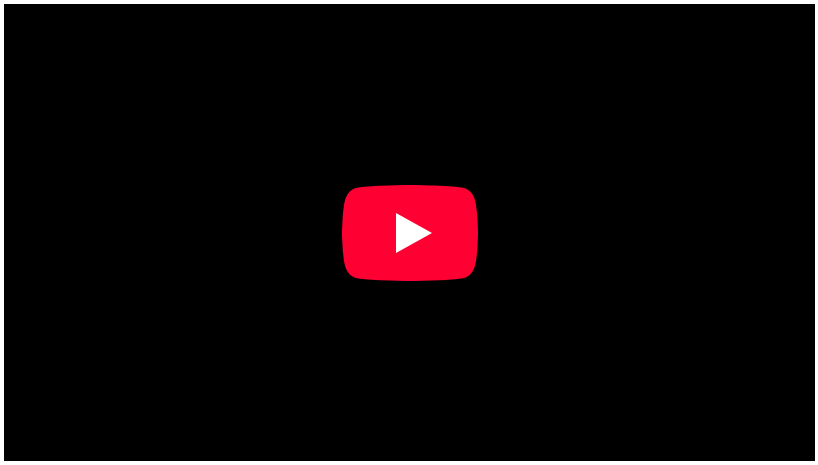
Bibliography Pages

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



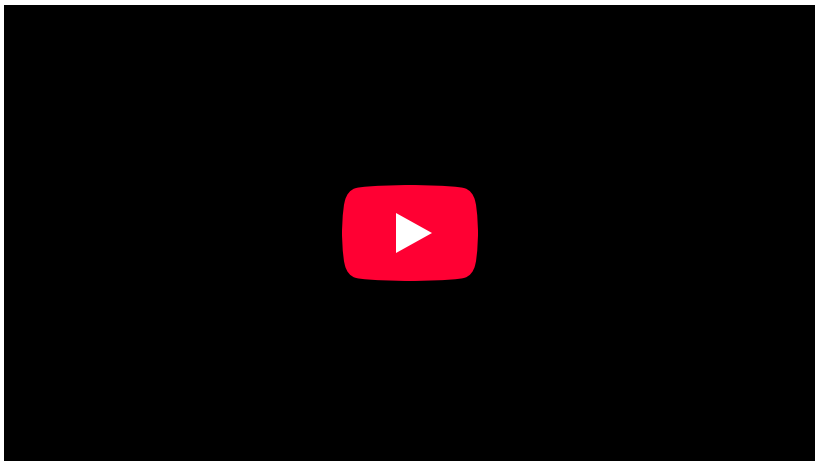
Alphabetizing Bibliographies (and other Lists)

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



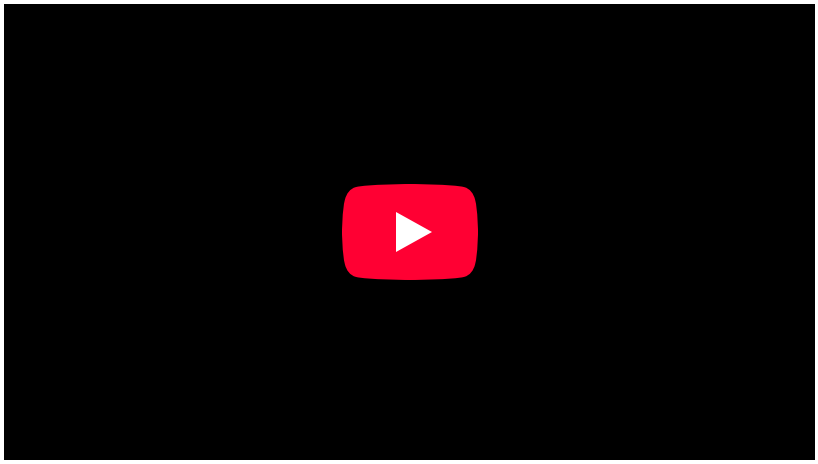
Inserting Pictures

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



Change Default Settings

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



Free Alternatives to Word

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

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

Self-Check

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26.7: Conclusion to Success Skills

Your Success Track

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

Application of Ideas

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



Symbols of Success

As you move more deeply into student life, consider selecting a symbol of your commitment to success. Consider your personal definition of "success" you determined earlier in this section. What would a physical representation of that success look like? Many people consider graduation caps or diplomas as symbols of college success. If those are meaningful to you, consider one of those as an option. Alternatively, yours can become more personal–an item that speaks to you as a sign of what you're working towards, and how you'll know you've "made it."

Some ideas from previous students include:

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

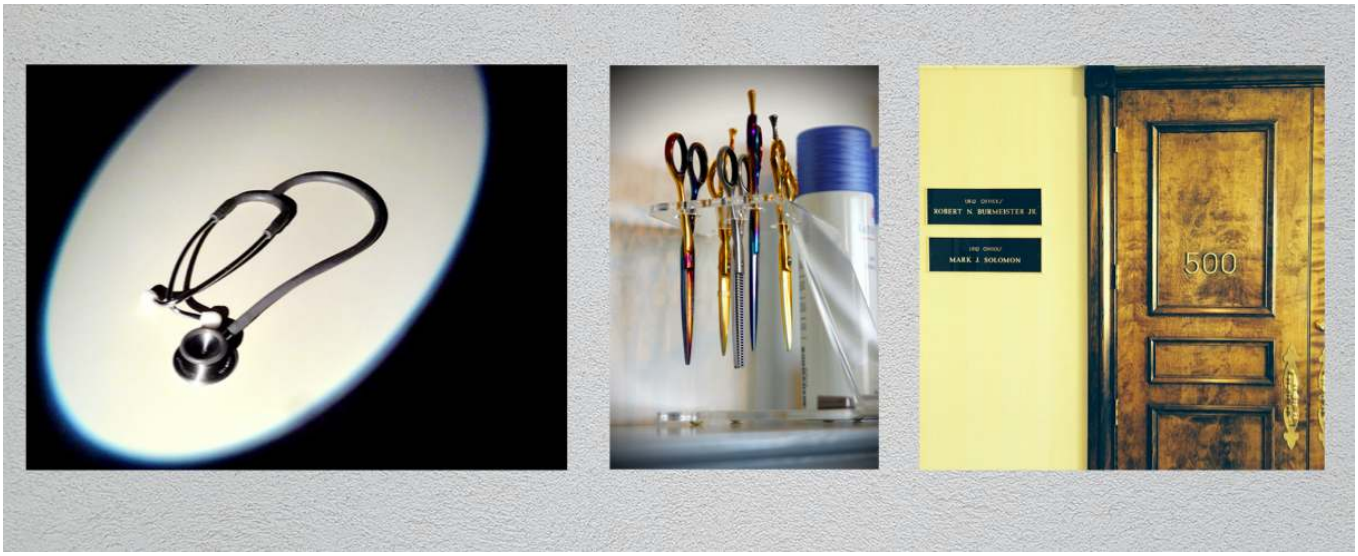


***Figure* 26.7.1**

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

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